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# THE

# LIFE OF CHRIST.

BY

DR. BERNHARD WEISS,

COUNSELLOR OF THE CONSISTORY, AND PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN BERLIN.

Translated

BY

JOHN WALTER HOPE, M.A.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

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1883.

TO

THE FRIEND OF MY YOUTH,

DR. GEORGE VOIGT,

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN LEIPSIC,

WITH HEARTFELT GREETINGS

FROM

THE AUTHOR.

# DEDICATION.

Dear Friend,

I have long cherished the thought of establishing a memorial of our youthful friendship in presenting you with one fruit of my studies. The wish, cherished in our early years, when we were at school together, that we might be able to have constant intercourse in our intellectual life and effort, has never been fulfilled. Completed works only have been passed from one to another, and afford proof that the desire for scientific progress is still unenfeebled, and the capacity for pleasurable production is not yet impaired.

This work does not then come to you unexpected. You are aware that for more than twenty years I have occupied myself with the investigation of sources in the field of gospel history, that I have not avoided the most laborious labour as regards the details of the comparison of texts, and have tested in all directions the methods of criticism, which are often so intricate, until I forced my way to perfect clearness regarding the history and the character of our evangelical tradition. But the work of criticizing the sources cannot be an end in itself: its object must be found in the historical construction of the life of Jesus; and this alone can be the final test of the correctness of the results of criticism. Knowing me as you do, you have long been aware that I would ultimately begin a work of this character; indeed, it has hardly been work to me: rather a gladsome fashioning of the matured fruit of long years of study; an expression, satisfying an internal want, of something of which the heart is full. Just because it is the outcome of a life entirely devoted to theology, ought it to be dedicated to you.

Not in spite of your being a profane historian, but for that very reason, do I present you with this book. It is high time that even those who are not theologians should begin to make unbiassed investigations into the condition and historical product of our evangelical tradition. For this, however, it is necessary that they should listen to other voices than those which hitherto have alone sought for acceptance in wider circles as the advocates of an historical criticism in the field of the New Testament, and have proclaimed their views, often only those of individuals, as the results of the latest theological science. Into the book which deals with the sources I have interwoven so much of the history of the investigations on these subjects, as to make it clear how unjustifiable such assumptions are. Even in the delineation of the life of Christ I was obliged to deny myself the pleasure of fashioning the results of my investigation of sources into a picture complete in itself, which carries its own justification in the fact of its being a unity and true to life. It has been necessary for me at every step to reckon with the various views which are the outcome of the differences in theological and critical fundamental assumptions; those I have illustrated here and there by the citation of well-known names. Tedious discussions of details I have tried to avoid, or have relegated them to the notes. It was no part of my plan to celebrate an easy victory over individual errors; I have tried rather to give the fairest possible representation of the views which were in sharpest contradiction to my own, and to refute them by means of the testimony of the sources. It was open to me to do this in a freer form, and one accessible to every educated person, because I believed that in my previous works on the Gospels I had given sufficiently, and in a severely scientific way, the basis on which rest my critical views.

The fact that my book deals with the historical origin of our religion constitutes what claim it has on your interest and on that of every educated person. Indeed, on the very first pages you will find the unconcealed avowal that religious faith, as regards certainty of itself, is and must remain independent of the results of historical investigation. But these results are not, on this account, by any means indifferent. There is no doubt that many among our people take up a

position of coldness towards, and waning interest in, real evangelical preaching, because in educated circles the suspicion was long ago awakened, that the facts on which it rests are, on account of the manner in which our evangelical tradition was dealt with in the Gospels, quite unreliable and indeed untrustworthy. That onesided critical school in theology which claims for itself alone the glory of being scientific, has in recent times asserted its ability to erect a genuinely historical structure upon the ruins it has left behind: but the meagreness of the materials which remain can only be concealed by the gaudy tinselling of the fruits of historical studies, and by very dubious additions in the shape of private hypotheses; their conclusions also must necessarily be very different from the presuppositions on which the evangelical Church rests. People certainly comfort themselves and others by holding the traditionary evangelical history to be still the transparent vesture of genuine Christian ideas; but what, perhaps, is sufficient for the philosophy of religion does not satisfy the religious need. Christianity, as it exists as an historical fact, and is defended by the evangelical Church on the ground of its historical records, is not a sum of new religious or ethical ideas, but a belief in the religious significance of historical facts which, because God Himself revealed by them salvation to the world, are in a position to awaken a new religious life, and to make it fruitful in the moral reformation of humanity. The methodical collecting and scientific presentation of those facts from the sources should not and can not produce belief in their religious importance; but they may remove prejudices, and open hearts for the operation of the evangelical proclamation of salvation resting on these facts.

The first volume, which I now lay before you, is of a somewhat preparative description. It only goes as far as the point where the historical movement of Jesus' life commences —its dramatic complication, so to speak. As to whether I have succeeded in sketching a really lifelike picture of this greatest drama the history of the world has seen, I beg of you to suspend your judgment till the second volume appears, which is now in manuscript. I can say, at least, that I did not enter upon this work until, through frequent scrutiny of

the sources, this picture had been more and more distinctly unveiled to me, had attained sharper outlines, and been more plastically finished before my eyes. In this, my methods are certainly far separated from those of the criticism which alone lays claim to the name "historical." I believe I have shown that that picture, moreover, cannot be gained from the older tradition only, but requires the aid of John's Gospel, whose historicity is unanimously rejected by that criticism on grounds which, as I venture to indicate, are untenable for an unprejudiced historical view. For this as well as for my whole position towards modern criticism on the one hand, and current apologetics on the other, the first volume is of fundamental importance. The entire fashion of Jesus' human personality, and the characteristics of His historical ministry, are there made sufficiently prominent. Even men of the most divergent standpoints will not be able to refuse the acknowledgment of my having endeavoured everywhere to state the questions vividly and tersely, and to answer them by systematic employment of the sources. Experience certainly teaches that people are only too ready—and this refers not alone to the party which repels all criticism of the evangelical sources—to complain of arbitrary treatment of the sources, while it is not in every case possible to justify in detail the view of the sources upon which the criticism is based. On this account, notwithstanding the justification of my view of the sources contained in the first book, I venture once more to refer to my earlier exegetico-critical labours on the details. In spite of renewed and most careful tests, I have only found it necessary to modify the views, verified there, in respect to unimportant items.

Do not be surprised if, in the midst of the warm controversies of theological schools and ecclesiastical parties, my book meets with anything but a favourable reception! Because I have never been able to identify myself with one of them, and because there is a common inclination to impose upon every theological work the *étiquette* of a theological standpoint, it will be easy to characterize my book as a production of the mediation school of theology, the very name of which, in the case of many both on the right and left, means condemnation. For my own part, I too must repel

this title entirely, because of its being utterly misleading. Between a supranaturalism which believes in the actuality of an objective divine revelation and of miracle in the proper sense, and the standpoint which regards both as inadmissible, there can be as little historical mediation as between the conception of Christ as a mere man—although the greatest and most unattainable, who possessed clearer ideas of God and of divine things, and lived a new and typical religious life—and the Christ worshipped by the Christian Church from the beginning as her Divine Mediator and Redeemer. In respect to this alternative, there is no doubt as to my position, either in this book or the others; I have never attempted to mediate between these opposites, because I am acquainted with their radical principles, and my scientific labours have only confirmed me afresh in joyous assurance of the faith which I did not gain from them, and to which no one can attain by scientific demonstration. Whether, on this account, my standpoint be an unscientific one, full of preconceived opinions, and my endeavour to represent the life of Jesus according to historico-critical methods be doomed to failure, concerning that I have expressed myself distinctly in the closing chapter of my introductory book. I know that what is said there will make no impression on the followers of modern theology, so called; what their verdict as to my book will be is certain, for it contradicts too flatly many of their principal dogmas and favourite opinions. But to you and the many others who, truly unprejudiced, are ready to listen to the other side before judging, I trust to be able to prove that honourable scientific endeavour can go hand in hand with orthodox faith.

It would be a mistake if you thought that on this account I hope to deserve the thanks of those whose faith I not only share, but for whose highest and holiest convictions I come forward with my scientific work. It is because I do this that I can only treat the Gospels as historical records, and must therefore employ historical criticism. But even yet, among the circles of the professional associates who share my opinions, there is a fear that for us this would be to attack and indeed to destroy the sacredness of the New Testament and its binding authority. In the very first chapter you will

see how I deal with this prejudice. I cannot assume that the question as to how far the details in the tradition regarding the earthly life of Jesus may or may not be credible, touches religious belief in Christ's person and work. I think it is a mistake to suppose that historical inquiry into the origin and character of our Gospels must either exclude the religious esteem which is their due, or every kind of historical criticism. For myself, the sacredness of the New Testament Scriptures and their binding authority do not rest upon a dogmatic construction of the doctrine of inspiration, which has in principle been given up even by the strictest scientific school of theology, although with its consequences they cannot resolve to break. In regard to these things, I have gone too much into detail in order not to be troubled perpetually with an unavoidable alternative. The only thing I claim towards the settling of the evangelical sources, is what I believe with perfect assurance can be inferred from an historical investigation as to their origin. But I hope that even the believing Churchman, though not a theologian, will be less offended by my manner of treating the Gospels, although it at first seem strange to him, than the theologian who lightly draws consequences from it, which I do not acknowledge. Whoever follows my investigations without prejudice will, I hope, be convinced that the love and reverence of Holy Writ will not be endangered by them.

I know right well that many will disagree not only with my method of treating Scripture, but also with the inferences I have drawn, because these contradict many widespread notions, and were not gained from finished dogmatic opinions, but from unprejudiced testing of the sources, and because they do not exhibit the picture of Christ agreeably to the Church's believing adoration of her exalted Redeemer, but as it appears from the standpoint of His earthly-historical life. I must be prepared for many finding my view tinged with the spirit of rationalism or of modern criticism, although I have contested it step by step. But I decline beforehand having this laid before any kind of dogmatic tribunal, and appeal to the sources, not, indeed, according to their actual words, but according to the treatment which I believe I have demonstrated corresponds alone to their origin and character.

I am far from thinking that I have discovered the last word in the solution of so many difficult questions; but I hope to have shown the way by which it may be found. Much as I desire my book to arouse interest outside theological circles, and to stimulate inquiry as to the historical form of the life of Jesus, yet it is not written for him who thereby finds his simple faith in the representations of the Gospels disturbed, and who feels no necessity for this. The Gospels, as they are, satisfy religious requirement, not only its barest necessities, but because according to the counsel of God they have received the form most suitable for that purpose. To many, however, in whom has been aroused at the present time an inquiry and questioning as to the holy things of our faith, I trust that my representation will prove a guide—not to my theological views, but to the Scriptures, which, if God will, shall in this way be apprehended and valued from another side.

Excuse the relapse of my letter into theology; but I do not desire that your impartial testing of my book should be disturbed by the condemnatory judgments to which it is exposed from right and left. I am well aware that from you there is nothing to fear, but you yourself must admit how in you I am addressing many to whom, by this book, I would willingly offer the hand of agreement as to the important questions which are discussed there. The conflicts which agitate this present time are very serious, and every earnest examination into their ultimate principles can only be a means of peace. In respect of the subject treated of here, however, these ultimate principles are not a species of speculative questions, but they are historical. This age has turned from a onesided preference of idealistic speculation, and longs for the realities of history. To it I would wish to render some service, and will rejoice if you can bear witness that to this end I have striven with seriousness and sincerity. The result is in the hand of God, who alone grants fulfilment to the desire.

With this I return to the starting-point of my dedication. As of old we, the historian and the theologian, were united by the friendship of youth, so this book will show you that with me and my efforts the theologian and the historian go hand in

hand. You know best how so much is owing to what we gained for all time in that youthful life and work together. Accept it kindly, and permit me to commend it to your indulgent criticism. The book does not require to begin by uniting what has never been broken since those beautiful days of our youth—the bond of affectionate love and mutual recognition. This offering, however, shall tell you that that remains the same, although the years may come of which we say, "I have no pleasure in them."—In old love and fidelity, your

BERNHARD WEISS,

BERLIN, *March* 31, 1882.

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# FIRST BOOK.

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## THE SOURCES.

# CHAPTER I.

## THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS.

IT is recorded in history that the founder of the Christian sect suffered the punishment of death under the Procurator Pontius Pilate (Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44). It was during the feast of Passover that the Council took action against Jesus for blasphemy, and induced the Roman governor to permit His crucifixion. Fifty days later, on the Jews' weekly holy day, the disciples of the crucified One appeared for the first time publicly in Jerusalem, with the announcement that their Master had risen again on the third day after His burial, and that now, having been exalted to heaven and installed in the divine sovereignty of the Messiah, He had poured out, as an earnest of the approaching completion of redemption, the Holy Ghost, promised for the Messianic time. There did, in fact, appear in them and in all believers the marks of quite an exceptional religious inspiration, which they knew to be directly wrought in them by God. They accused not only the popular leaders, but the whole people who by their concurrence had rendered themselves accomplices in the murder of their God-given Messiah, and demanded a penitent conversion. All must submit themselves, in proof of this, to baptism in the name of Jesus, and make an open confession of belief in the Messiahship of the Crucified, in order that they might have part in that completed salvation which He was to bring on His speedy return, and so escape the judgment which would be associated with it. In addition, there is promised to them the forgiveness of their sins: they are to share in the Spirit from on high, in order to have assured to them the salvation brought by the Messiah, which was presently to be perfected.

Thus there arose in Jerusalem a company of Jews who believed in the Messiah. Not a few, also, of the many who

came up to the feast were baptized, and carried the tidings of the crucified and risen One to every Jewish community scattered over the whole world. It was no new religion that was founded in Jerusalem; the newly-won disciples of Jesus, who among themselves called each other brethren, were and remained Jews. As in the temple-service, so in the dispersion: they took part as hitherto in the synagogue worship; with methodistical strictness they held fast to the law of Moses, and sought to fulfil it in the sense of their Master, by exemplary piety, severe morality, and the exercise of self-sacrificing love. They felt themselves to be born anew. The announcement of the exaltation of Jesus, and of His speedy return in divine glory, which was to bring about the fulfilment of all prophetic promises, bestowed on them a power never known till now, and manifestly from on high, which enabled them to live according to the commands of God; to profess their belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, even under the reproach and persecution of those of their fellow-countrymen who remained unbelieving; and even to labour for the spread among them of faith in the Messiah. In their common meals they celebrated the remembrance of the last supper Jesus partook of with His chosen disciples; they broke the bread as Jesus did that evening, and drank from the sacred cup, repeating the words by which Jesus had then pointed out the significance to them of His approaching death. In His blood shed on the cross they beheld the presentation of an expiatory offering, which cleansed them from all the guilt of their past life and fitted them for the new covenant-relationship with their Father in heaven, which they enjoyed in having the peace of a conscience free from guilt, and the hope of a glorious future. A document, however, like the Epistle of James, shows completely how the full consciousness of possessing God's love and forgiveness subordinated to itself all reflection upon the means by which they were obtained.

The new Messianic Church enjoyed for a time the favour of the whole nation; and while, from the very beginning, the leaders of the people naturally regarded with malignant feelings this resuscitation of the movement which they imagined they had for ever put an end to by the shameful death of its originator, they could take no steps against the confessors of

Jesus' Messiahship in face of their exemplary piety. It was when Stephen renewed, against the section of the people which remained unbelieving, the threatenings of Jesus, saying, that through such persistence in unbelief the destruction of the temple and of the existing theocracy would be brought on, that they surmised that the Messianic sect did in its ultimate consequences threaten the holy places of Israel; and this they knew how to make comprehensible to the people. Stephen fell victim to a popular tumult, and there at once began an eager persecution of the followers of Jesus, which collapsed of itself after many a deed of violence had proved the absolute impossibility of establishing anything valid or demonstrable against the members of the sect of the Nazarene. A young enthusiast of the Pharisaical party, Saul of Tarsus, who had been the real soul of the persecution, did himself, after seeing, on the way to Damascus, the appearance of the exalted Messiah, pass over into the Christian community, and begin to preach the new faith with the same fiery zeal which he had hitherto shown in its persecution. He found a centre of operations in Syrian Antioch, where, before this, there had not only been formed a considerable Messianic Church in the midst of the Judaism of the place, but through this Church the first Gentiles were won to faith in the Messiah. Antioch was the starting-point of the first regularly organized mission. Barnabas, one of the most prominent men of the primitive Church, and Saul, who henceforth called himself Paul, traversed as missionaries Cyprus and the south-eastern provinces of Asia Minor; while the synagogues, growing in hostility to their tidings of the Messiah, were closed to them, in one city after another they succeeded in gathering together from among the Gentiles communities of Messianic believers. Paul returned to Antioch with the full consciousness that he was called by God to be an apostle, and one especially to the Gentiles. As he related his experiences, this was recognised by the apostles originally chosen by Jesus, and they handed over to him the abundant harvest-field of the Gentile mission, in order that, on their part, they might put forth the utmost efforts for the conversion of Israel. In Jerusalem, also, was the question discussed, whether the Mosaic law, with all its regulations for the life and worship of the Israelitish people,

should be laid upon the newly-won Gentiles. But although this was regarded by many as the self-evident condition if the Gentiles desired to share in the salvation promised to Israel, and brought, or still to be brought by its Messiah; the first apostles, and, guided by them, the primitive Church as a whole, declined to settle the matter, leaving it to the soon-expected Messiah to arrange these things in the communities which confessed His name, and in the glorious kingdom that He was to establish. So first was begun the Apostle Paul's independent mission to the Gentiles, during which, both in east and west, particularly among the Gentiles, he founded and fostered very considerable churches. Paul's preaching was originally very simple. Among the Gentiles, he could not, of course, begin by proclaiming the impending fulfilment of all the promises made by the prophets to Israel, but only with the announcement that the judgment with which it was to be accompanied would come upon the Gentile peoples who were enemies of God.

That this world, steeped in idolatry and immorality, might escape the judgment, the announcement of which startled it out of its sleep of sin, God has in grace sent the glad tidings of His Son Jesus Christ, whom after His resurrection from the dead He clothed with divine glory, and appointed judge of the world, in order that every one who believes in Him and leads a life devoted to God, may be saved from the judgment. The power for this God works through the preaching and exhortation of His messengers, as well as through the Spirit, whom He imparts to those who are called in baptism to salvation. The more that Paul learned to know everywhere only the hostility of the synagogues, the more did every hope disappear of the realization of God's kingdom in Israel, and there was still left only the glory of the heavenly kingdom, to which Christ on His return would lead His faithful ones, along with those already dead, who would then be raised to a heavenly life as He Himself had been. But it was soon made necessary for the apostle to extend the basis of his original preaching, and to settle its principles, and this partly because of his natural endowment and his literary education, and partly by reason of the contest in which he was soon involved with a Jewish-

Christian party, which wished to admit the Gentile-Christian Churches, only under the conditions of Jewish proselytism, to participation in the salvation to be brought by the Messiah. Thus, to him, the sending of God's Son became an act of grace by which God had prepared a new way of salvation for a world sunk in sin and unable to do His will. The death of Christ on the cross was now the appointed means by which God had reconciled the world unto Himself, and acquitted it of the guilt of sin, in order to declare those who believed in it justified, and adopt them as His children; and the Spirit of Christ, the Son of God, which is bestowed on believers, was the specific method of assuring them of their salvation, and fitting them for a new life well-pleasing to God: the faith, however, God produces in those whom He has recognised and chosen as suitable, through the preaching of the gospel. Thus every attempt to assure oneself of salvation by fulfilling the Mosaic law, was regarded as a contravention of God's new gracious arrangement; as viewed by the inability of the natural man to carry out its requirements, it could only remain ineffectual; and every necessity had vanished for regulating by the law the new life of believers, because the Spirit taught them to know and perform perfectly the divine will. Finally, there was in the primitive apostolic preaching no doubt at all upon this point, that the Christ who ascended to God had been clothed with divine power and lordship; thus to the apostle who had not seen Christ's earthly human life, to whom Christ first appeared in His divine glory, it was from the beginning a settled thing, that He had on His ascension resumed an existence originally divine as Son of God, which He first quitted for the earthly human life in order to undertake the work of redemption. It was at a later period of his life, when the apostle was opposing a theosophic tendency within the bounds of Jewish Christianity, that, in order to establish that salvation is through Christ alone, the opportunity was first given him of further developing the view as to Christ's originally divine elevation, the position of the world as conditioned by that, as well as the original admission of the work of salvation into God's world-plan.

How soon also, within the primitive apostolic circles, the

necessity arose of developing the originally most elementary form of the preaching of Christ, is shown very clearly by the Epistle to the Hebrews, with its doctrine of the high-priestly sin-offering of Christ and of the divine Son, who, as the reflection of the divine glory, has carried out from eternity the creation and preservation of the world; as well as by the Revelation of John, which, in the picture of the slain Lamb, beholds the foundation of the work of salvation; and in the Messiah, who returns for its completion, a pre-existent Divine Being. This document brings us to the threshold of that event, which actually and definitively set Christianity loose from its relations to the Jewish nationality, in the bosom of which, according to the divine ordering of the history of redemption, it had grown up, although already this had in theory been accomplished by Paul. Along with the destruction of the Jewish state and the fall of the temple, which were at the same time God's judgments on the people that persisted in its unbelief of the message of salvation, there fell every hope of the realization of God's kingdom in the form of any Israelitish theocracy, as well as every possibility of still holding fast by the law which had been given to it. The hope to which the author of the Apocalypse still clings—of a temporal earthly realization of the kingdom of Christ—is nothing else than the perfected heavenly kingdom of God, ideally a fulfilment of the promise made to the twelve tribes, but which is actually being set up among the faithful from all peoples, languages, and tongues. In the oldest teaching of the primitive apostles, the salvation brought by Christ appears ever more and more as the preparation for what was to be wrought out for Israel by the returning Messiah; thus even the First Epistle of Peter shows how, in the community of believers in Israel, the highest religio-ethical ideal of the perfected theocracy could be seen already wrought out as to its principles, even if the heavenly realization, which was made sure through it, could only be grasped by an ardent hope. With Paul, the religio-ethical ideal, as such, seems to be already wrought out in actuality in the believer's consciousness of sonship, and in his possession of the Holy Spirit, as also, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in holiness and perfection through the blood of the new covenant. But in the

proportion in which, with both Peter and Paul, the heavenly realization—now, as the glory of the risen ones in God's eternal kingdom; now, as the Sabbath rest, in which the covenant promise of the Old Testament fulfils itself—is considered as being close at hand, in the same proportion does the life blessed through the fulfilment of that ideal reveal itself ever preponderatingly as a preparation for this last goal of hope; and even a nature so strenuous as Paul's was only very gradually brought to contemplate seriously an ethical reorganization of the existing regulations for the conduct of life, and a more permanent readjustment of the whole life of the Christian community, in accordance with the new religious standpoint. It was when the last decision regarding the fate of the Jewish people had taken effect without the intervention of the returning Christ, that the hope of this return, and of the accompanying heavenly final realization, was not indeed abandoned, but by means of it the impulse was given to seek and find even in present salvation the full possession of that which, though in another and a higher form, that redemptive future would realize. In the vision of God in His eternal image; in Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh; in the mystical communion with God, which is made possible through being and remaining in Christ, and which is only maintained and promoted by the Spirit and His operations; in the relation of Sonship to God, which by the necessary operation of the full revelation of God in Christ is ever coming nearer to moral oneness with God,—in all these has John, at the close of the apostolic age, found eternal life, even in this present time.

On this gospel of Christ rests the faith of the Christian Church; what it advances as its doctrine can never be aught else than the unified summary of this gospel, or the indication of its necessary assumptions and deductions. Whatever variation this gospel shows, even in the New Testament, in respect of the degree of its development, or in respect of the manner of its conception and expression, all forms of it agree in this, that it is not concerned with a doctrine communicated by Jesus, nor again with a command given by Him; because where occasionally something of this kind is spoken of, it is always assumed that Jesus only taught the perfect fulfilment

of the will of God written on the hearts of men or revealed in the Old Testament. This gospel of Christ is invariably concerned with the questions—how man attains to salvation; to a relation to God, bringing with it perfect peace; to the actual performance of God's will; to the certainty of present and future blessedness, *i.e.* to the realization in its fullest extent of the religio-ethical ideal. This is always the burden of the glad tidings which the apostles proclaim, that by the sending of Christ, His sufferings and death, His heavenly elevation, and the sending of the Spirit, which has been brought about by Him, this realization has begun, and its perfection is secured by the certainty of His approaching return. Strictly speaking, it is never once a doctrine regarding Christ which the apostles proclaim; for if it had been this, it would have discussed more directly the questions regarding the inner and divine relation of the Father and the Son; the right view to be taken of the Son's transition from an eternal and divine existence to a human and temporal one; the position of the Son in relation to the Father in the perfected kingdom of God,—questions with which the ecclesiastical development of doctrine has with justice largely occupied itself. It is rather to certain historical facts that the apostles bear witness; only they are not facts which can be reached or established by a scientific method, but facts which must be laid hold of in faith, and which must accredit themselves to religious experience; the central point of all these—but one to be grasped by faith—is certainly formed by the unique elevation of the person of Christ and the abiding religious significance of His work. Their message claims to be a message from God, which must be received in faith; they are conscious of being enlightened and impelled by the Spirit of God when they make known this message, and of possessing in that Spirit the guarantee for the inviolability of the same. In the last analysis, however, there is no proof forthcoming for the justification of this claim other than their special experience of the truth of their proclamation, the renewal and strengthening of the religio-ethical life gained on the ground of that, along with peace of soul and assurance of future blessedness.

This of itself passes judgment upon the modern idea, which

lies for the most part at the foundation of recent delineations of the life of Jesus. In order, it is said, rightly to comprehend the essence of Christianity, it is necessary to fall back from the teaching of the apostles regarding Christ, to what Christ Himself taught; from a historical scrutiny of the life of Jesus, a new point of view can be gained for the survey of what Christ was and had willed, in order that thus it may be separated from that which took shape in the apostolic doctrine under the contemporary influence of views regarding the person and work of Christ. Clearly a true historico-critical view must soon make manifest the utter ineptness of this undertaking. What we possess of traditions of the life of Jesus—regarding His words and deeds—is all entirely dependent upon the testimony of the apostles, who, during His earthly life, were in constant attendance upon Him. If, within this circle, erroneous conceptions of the person and work of Christ established themselves from the very first, it is quite inconceivable that these should not have largely influenced their representations of what they had seen and heard; and where, between our written tradition and recollections, there enters the medium of oral tradition, these could only be remodelled in accordance with descriptions derived from the apostolic preaching. We are, however, without any fixed standard for marking off these influences and these remodellings; and this is not to be wondered at, for that process of demarcation is undertaken in accordance with completely subjective points of view, and with philosophical assumptions which are totally foreign to historical inquiry. One thing in particular has been overlooked. At the basis of the whole apostolic preaching, lies the assumption that the work of Christ was by no means completed during His earthly life, that this was rather the antecedent condition and the beginning of a work which will be carried on by the risen Christ through means entirely new and with all-embracing success, and which will be completed only in the future. From the commencement, there was also contained in it the further assumption, that Christ by His heavenly exaltation has become something quite different from what He was in His earthly life; and the more that the knowledge was matured of the eternally divine existence of Christ, the more self-

evident did it become that the human earthly life of this Being was a condition of self-emptying and humiliation, which Christ assumed in order to the carrying out of His work, and from which, not till after His exaltation, did He return to full divine glory. Hence it necessarily follows that the element in which the apostolic preaching finds the peculiar significance of this person and work cannot, for the most part, be given full expression to in His earthly-human life; and only so can it be explained how so little reference is made to the earthly life of Jesus and its details. When there is no trace in the traditions of Jesus' life of what the apostles assert regarding His person and work, it may well be inferred, that in accordance with the conditions of His earthly life and with the stages of the development of His work, which then occurred, this could not yet be delineated. And so we lose every standard for criticizing, on the basis of these traditions, the apostolic preaching.

Indeed, the fundamental facts in Christ's gospel can neither be contested nor established from the facts of the life of Jesus. The central point of the apostolic preaching always remains this, that the expiatory significance of His death forms the fundamental presupposition for the new relation of the believer to God; that the abiding communion with the exalted Christ, which is brought about by the communication of His Spirit, fits the believers for a new religio-ethical life; that His rising from the dead is the pledge of our resurrection, and His approaching return the condition of the heavenly completion of salvation. These statements, however, are and remain quite independent of the historical question, whether and how far Jesus asserted or predicted these; for the fact that here future events are being dealt with which were totally foreign to the companions of Jesus' earthly life, placed manifold limits to their receptiveness of instruction as to the significance of the same. Were we not, on other grounds, justified in receiving as trustworthy the apostolic message regarding them, this belief could not be extorted by the method of historical proof; because the possibility could, by this method, never be excluded, that the views in question of the apostles were, at an earlier or later period, introduced into the speeches of Jesus, and because the hypothesis, that the assertions of Jesus

Himself regarding these matters were influenced by popular or contemporary ideas, can never be escaped by a purely historical treatment independent of the faith generated by the apostolic preaching. When the apostolic preaching bases the permanent significance of Christ on the divine Lordship of the exalted One, and ultimately on His original divine existence, the trustworthiness of this assertion cannot depend upon whether and how far Jesus, subject to the conditions of His human life and His earthly activity, was able to express Himself in regard to it, or considered it serviceable to and comprehensible by the understanding of His disciples. The more, however, that statements of this kind were found with unmistakeable clearness and dogmatic precision in our tradition, the more irresistibly would the question force itself upon the purely historical treatment, whether these sayings really belong to the oldest oral tradition or were introduced from the didactic standpoints of a later time; for the fact is established beyond dispute, that in the apostolic Church the full knowledge of Christ's divine elevation was only gradually matured, and was first perfectly developed by Paul, who was not an ear-witness of the speeches of Jesus. The apologetic voracity, which imagines that it cannot establish the faith better than by having as imposing an array as possible of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, into which it often naively introduces what has still to be proved, has frequently been only too active in preparing the way for criticism. Naturally the same thing holds good in regard to the miracles performed on Jesus or by Him; for not one of these affords proof of what current apologetic, confident of victory, infers from them as to the divine existence of Christ. This with marvellous credulity is repeated by criticism, only, indeed, that from the standpoint of the historical treatment to which that proof of the miraculous is serviceable, the obvious and indisputable conclusion may be drawn, that the presupposition of a representation of the person of Christ, however originated, which appeared indispensable, could very easily come to be assumed as having actually occurred, and so would be introduced into a representation of the course of the history of Jesus. Nowhere, however, in the apostolic preaching is the assertion of Christ's divine existence based upon His miracles, or on His

miraculous birth, which is never even referred to, or on His miraculous acts, which are only employed to prove His divine commission and His preparation by the Spirit, or on His resurrection, which appears exclusively as proof of His Messiahship and of the significance for salvation of His death as a stage in the performance of His Messianic functions.

There must be special note taken of one thing. The progress in the development of the apostolic preaching shows how the special significance of the manifestation of Jesus for the Jewish people and its destiny, which necessarily conditioned the view taken of His ministry, became gradually subordinate, in that preaching, to its universal and permanent significance; it shows how the latter was placed in the clearest light by Paul, who was not an eye-witness, and by the original disciples of Jesus only in proportion as the historical development excluded the nation, which, as such, remained unbelieving, from the blessings of Christ's appearing. For the historical treatment it is a necessary consequence of this, that Christ's earthly ministry must, for the most part, have borne a character that was unable clearly and fully to express its permanent religio-historical significance, because in form it was determined by the historical conditions of His appearance. Here is opened a wide field, on which, from its historical form, that universal significance of His life can neither be contested nor established. Taken by itself, a view of the significance and ministry of Jesus, however limited and conditioned by popular and contemporary prejudices, may just as probably have dimmed the picture of His life in handing it down, as the later tradition, which was, besides, directed exclusively to the permanent and universally availing significance of His appearance, may have obliterated the characteristically historical features of His ministry. Down to the present day, indeed, the representation of Jesus' life has always remained more or less dominated by contradictory dogmatic presuppositions, and certainly the conception of the historical form and development of His ministry has not seldom been made subordinate to the standpoints, so laboured for, as to His permanent significance. In order to make way for an unfettered and really impartial treatment of the life of Jesus, it will not do to take up a lower position in regard to

personal faith, an act which is equally impossible and unnecessary. But it will answer to recognise that that position towards the religious significance of Christ can ultimately be gained only from the apostolic preaching, whether or not it is there substantiated. The attempt of criticism to bring the historical inquiry into the life of Jesus into the field against the faith which has grown up from the basis of the apostolic preaching, is just as unjustifiable and impracticable as that of apologetics to gain from it support for that faith, which must have a firmer and deeper foundation if it is not to stand trembling before any and every justifiable blow of historical criticism. The Christian faith would have remained just as it is, and lost no part of what is its deepest foundation, had it pleased God to leave us only the apostolic teaching as it lies before us in the Epistles of the New Testament, and along with the Gospels, to deprive us of all information from which we might have wrought out for ourselves a detailed picture of Jesus' earthly life. Whoever, indeed, is won by means of the apostolic announcement to faith in Christ's person and work, as both are there presented, will certainly never believe that the picture of His historical life, which the apostles carried with them, and which Paul formed for himself, can have been one blurred throughout by subjective presuppositions, or that the Gospels, which are preserved to us as the sole records regarding this life, contain what is but a falsified picture, whether it be through the fault of that earliest tradition or in consequence of their distance from it. But when a scientific ascertainment and representation of the life of Jesus is concerned, it is self-evident that a start cannot be made from this assumption, it must be tested by an inquiry into the origin and formation of our sources. The final source is and ever remains the oral apostolic tradition.

Although the apostolic preaching, which was intended to awaken faith, and the apostolic letters, the aim of which was the promotion and purification of the religio-ethical life of the Churches, proceeded in scarcely the slightest degree upon the details of the life of Jesus, still it by no means self-evidently follows—though marvellously this has been inferred—that those who had been eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus had no inducement or reason for giving testimony regarding

that which they had seen and heard in His society. In the separate assemblies of Messianic believers, which were to them from the beginning a necessity next to that of participation in the worship of the temple and the synagogue, there must and would be continual reference to the reminiscences of the life of Jesus, in whose name they had bound themselves into a distinct company within the great community of the nation. Here it was naturally the sayings of Jesus which were brought back to recollection, as need arose for instruction and warning, for strengthening and consolation. In Jerusalem, where during long years the greater number of those who had formed the inner circle of the constant companions of Jesus lived and worked together, it was possible to attempt recalling to mind full discussions regarding this or that important question, or the speeches delivered by Jesus on various occasions, for the recollections of one supplemented and corrected those of the others. Now it was a conversation with opponents or friends, now a special experience or the performance of a cure which had given occasion for an important utterance of Jesus, and these were now recounted in order to lead up to this utterance. Some of the specially noteworthy events of the life of Jesus, and, above all, examples of His miraculous deeds, of themselves gave occasion for repetition. It is never, however, the historical details, the conditions of place or time, or the circumstances of the persons who, apart from Jesus, had played a part in this or that event, that attracted interest, and formed the subject of the rehearsal; it would always be the words or deeds of Jesus, around which these were grouped, and for which everything else only formed an outlined framework. These narrations do not serve for the gratification of curiosity or of historical investigation, but for the strengthening and quickening of faith, for edification in its widest sense. They confined themselves, therefore, to the public life of Jesus, of which the disciples had been witnesses, and in which Jesus had gained His significance for the people. Researches into the history of His childhood or youth, attempts to represent the inner connection of His history, or the course of development of His ministry, were plainly excluded.

However large was the number of those among the people

who had beheld individual acts of Jesus, and heard individual sayings and speeches, or had witnessed some specially memorable events of a life, the most important part of which was spent in the full glare of publicity, still the limited circle of the primitive Church in Jerusalem long remained the centre where the recollections of this life were most carefully preserved. Here the principal witnesses of this life lived side by side, their reminiscences and accounts could be amplified and assimilated, and thus there soon arose a number of addresses and narratives, on which the memory fell back with special predilection. It was here that the language was spoken which Jesus Himself had employed; and the poverty of the Aramaic dialect, which admitted of no great variation of expression, contributed to the early establishment of a fixed type of narration, which became the more settled even in details the oftener that the same subject was referred to. The main points in the utterances of Jesus, the principal junctures in the narration of the events in connection with which they were spoken, or which memory associated with them,—these took more and more a permanent form, from which there was, in their subsequent recital, an ever diminishing deviation. This form stamped itself on the memory of hearers who had not themselves been eye- and ear-witnesses, and was borne by them to wider circles where the apostles were not present in person. In so far as they dealt with Palestine, these notices might here and there be enriched by the recollections of isolated eye- and ear-witnesses; but the above-mentioned type of narration always formed the foundation on which anything further was based, and to which, in form and contents, these additions adapted themselves.

The idea of written memoranda was long excluded. To whom could they have been of service? There was no future for which men would have desired to preserve in writing these priceless reminiscences; for the Lord's immediate coming was expected, and with it the commencement of the longed-for completion of redemption. Those who bore the seeds of the gospel to the Dispersion had been themselves to a great extent eye- and ear-witnesses, or they conveyed in vivid recollection the lifelike tradition of the first witnesses. For the establishing of faith in Christ, for the fostering of the new religio-

ethical life, the apostolic preaching was sufficient, being, as we have learned to know it, the gospel of Christ, which has but little in common with the details of the earthly-historical life of Jesus. In the communities of Messianic believers which were formed among the Gentiles, there was often lacking even the first conditions of comprehension for details which were displayed on so thoroughly peculiar a historical background, and to supply the deficiency there existed neither occasion nor inducement. Even afterwards, when, owing to special circumstances, an evangelical literature had arisen and had rapidly developed itself, the oral tradition continued to be regarded as of equal value. During the first half of the second century, when the words of Jesus are referred to by the Apostolic Fathers, it is by no means everywhere the very expressions used in our historical Gospels which they cite. It was indeed only a portion of this much richer oral tradition which became fixed in writing. Even a Papias of Hierapolis says that he did not find himself able to derive so much advantage from the books as from the oral tradition. It was in the time of Justin Martyr, about the middle of the second century, that we first hear of the Gospels being read in the Sabbath services.[1] Manifestly it was only after the generation had died out which had itself heard the narratives of eye- and ear-witnesses, that it first became necessary to rehabilitate, by the written tradition, the oral, which now gradually disappeared and became even more unreliable.

We see from the writings of Justin, who, for his part, does not confine himself entirely to the written Gospels, least of all to their exact words, that already it was our four Gospels which were employed as sources of information regarding the history of Jesus. At a later period it was established beyond doubt by his pupil Tatian, that the latter had himself compiled a harmony of our four canonical Gospels, manifestly for the use of the Church;[2] and towards the end of the century, Irenæus refers to the fourfold form of the Gospels current in

[1] Comp. the quotation from Papias' introduction to his *Exposition of the Sayings of our Lord*, in Euseb. *Ch. Hist.* iii. 39, and in Justin's first *Apology*, chapter 67.

[2] Comp. A. Harnack, Tatian's *Diatessaron*, in Brieger's *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, iv. 4, p. 471 f.

the Church as being a long-established fact, and one which he seeks to prove to be an arrangement of divine providence.[1] To these sources we are exclusively directed for the life of Jesus. The occasional references to it in the other New Testament writings must be mentioned and considered in their place, but on the grounds above stated they are so few and so fragmentary that they cannot come into consideration as independent sources. We have heard the information given by Tacitus regarding Christ; the most contested passage of the Jewish writer Josephus, even if its authenticity were more certain than it is, has absolutely nothing essential to impart to us; the last remnants of the oral tradition which are preserved here and there in the oldest Church Fathers are equally unreliable; and in the proper place we shall have to estimate at their utter uselessness the so-called apocryphal Gospels. An inquiry, then, into the origin of our four Gospels, and their significance for the history of Jesus, must precede any delineation of the history itself.

Such an inquiry would be indeed superfluous if it were certain from the first that our four Gospels, just because they form constituent parts of the New Testament canon, had arisen in a plainly supernatural way, and through the method of their production had assured to them absolute infallibility and literal trustworthiness. There has been a time in our evangelical Church when it was thought that the permanent stability of the documentary factor, on which she herself is based, could not be securely established otherwise than by the assumption of some such divine miracle, by which to the sacred writers there was given directly from God, not only the impulsion to write, but also the form and matter of everything which was to be written; and so it remained quite undecided whether what was thus imparted was known from other sources or could have been heard of in other ways. Thus it is quite the same whether these writings proceed from those who were eye-witnesses or from those who were not, whether authors stood close to or at a distance from the events related, or whether their purpose was historical or didactic. This view is, for the most part, consistent with only one delineation of the life of Jesus, that which, in a truly remarkable way, pieces

[1] Comp. Iren. *Adv. Hæreses*, iii. 11 8, 9.

together the manifestly complete descriptions from the life of Jesus given us in four separate books, so that not a word is lost of the Gospels dictated by the Holy Spirit Himself. An attempt to form such a harmony of the Gospels was at the time of the Reformation made by Andreas Osiander, and was carried out to its ultimate consequences, so that whenever our Gospels in their report of events, or of the utterances of Jesus, differed as to the order, or even in the most insignificant details, he assumed that they were dealing, not with the same, but with different events and sayings. It was this attempt, however, at a logical carrying out of that view of the rise of the Gospels, which brought into clearest light the intolerably artificial and unnatural character of the subsidiary assumptions of which it stood in need. Even to the Würtemberg prelate Bengel, the miracle that Jesus wrought upon the mother-in-law of Peter appeared greater if lasting health followed it, than if she had still required to have one or two relapses, in order to be able to make two or three out of one miraculous cure. Sooner or later, however, and even with the most persistent disregard of these consequences, this attempt must have made shipwreck. Not only did there always remain plenty of discrepancies, which did not permit of being explained in this way, but it soon became established that every one of our Gospels offers, both in contents and form, peculiarities which remain unintelligible if the human authors in the composition of their writings acted, without independence, as the instruments of the Holy Ghost. It was but a miserable subterfuge to say that the Holy Ghost accommodated Himself to the peculiarities of these authors or the necessities of the readers, because any such accommodation would plainly have proved but an obstruction to the sole aim of such a divine miracle, which was to hand down the utterances of Jesus and the events of His life in a manifestly reliable and universally intelligible manner. But the facts contained in the Gospels themselves entered from the first a protest against this view. John does not refer to an impulsion from the Holy Ghost as necessitating him to write, but he speaks of the object with which he has written (John xx. 31); he does not lay stress upon matter communicated by the Holy Ghost, but upon what he himself has seen (John i. 14), and upon the truthfulness

of his testimony (John xix. 35, comp. xxi. 24). Still more definitely does Luke speak of his literary motives; he expressly puts his work in the same category with others which had a literary origin; he points to the sources from which he has drawn material (Luke i. 1–4). But even apart from their express statements, the construction of these writings shows that we have here to do with no original productions, every one of which can be referred to an independent impulsion of the Holy Ghost. Verbal coincidences are to be found which can only originate in the dependence of one upon another, or in their common dependence upon written or oral tradition; and, on the other hand, discrepancies frequent enough to betray literary motive so clearly, that here we must be looking very directly upon the conditions of human authorship.

It was not dogmatic prepossessions on which that old view of the origin of the Scriptures, and especially of the Gospels, made hopeless shipwreck, but on facts lying undeniably in our Gospels, and always challenging the attention of every unprejudiced method of treatment. At this time of day hardly any one would venture to contest this. People, however, content themselves with the admission, that in the details of the Gospel history there are certainly discrepancies and even mistakes, but they hold that these concern only unimportant points; so that, however you establish the compatibility of these with the plainly supernatural origin of those writings, still their thorough and equal trustworthiness and infallibility suffer no injury. An artificial harmony and apologetical special pleading are always striving to represent these discrepancies as really such only in appearance, and to brand any hesitation that arises as to this or that representation in the Gospels as pure scepticism or as the product of unbelief. The attacks of criticism do not do more than this artifice to bring the credibility of the Gospels into suspicion among unbiassed men, and to discredit the efforts of apologetics. Our concern is not with individual discrepancies in the representation which admit of being reconciled in one way or another, or with certain perfectly unimportant differences in the accounts of the sayings of Jesus or the details of the events, but with this, that these facts, however industriously

the attempt may be made to minimize them, irresistibly eliminate the old view of the origin of the Gospels; because the most insignificant of these facts, in respect of matter and form, stands in contradiction with any such direct inspiration, and because even after the supposititious solution of this kind of difficulty, there always remain, as has been shown, phenomena enough plainly to exclude that idea. Much more pressing is the question, What would justify us in entertaining such a conception of the origin of our Gospels? All inferences from New Testament passages which have no references to the Scriptures but to the oral preaching of the apostles, by which, strangely enough, through means of a circle of proof, it has been attempted to demonstrate that divine miracle, which is with injustice often exclusively designated inspiration, could, even in the most favourable circumstances, bear upon the apostolic writings only. Two, however, of our Gospels have never professed to be the work of apostles; and the apostolic origin of the two others is only guaranteed to us by ecclesiastical tradition. We know for certain, that since the middle of the second century the Church has always used exclusively our four Gospels, but we know absolutely nothing regarding the *motif* of their choice; we have unconditioned certainty only of this, that they were not made canonical because it was known that they had originated in the way in which the Protestant theology of the sixteenth century, in order to establish their credibility, believed they had originated. Did we wish to make our faith in the Gospels absolutely independent of the decision of the Church of the second century, we should not have the slightest guarantee for their origination in that plainly supernatural way.

A historical inquiry into the life of Jesus, then, must hold itself perfectly aloof from this view regarding the origin of the Gospels. It must treat them as human productions, the origin of which it inquires into by historical methods, and the significance of which, for the representation of the life of Jesus, it endeavours to settle by what it ascertains regarding the circumstances and object of their composition. There is only this alternative: all attempts to find a *via media* between the old Protestant view of the Gospels and this one must come to grief through the fundamental antagonism of

the two conceptions. When not only the believing method of handling Scripture, but also theological science in widespread schools, continually rises in opposition to this acknowledgment, it is owing to the fear that the credibility of the Gospel history, and even faith in Christ Himself, are thereby imperilled. Our faith in Christ, however, is based upon the apostolic message of salvation, and is quite independent of the question, How much or how little we can, with historical certainty, ascertain as to the earthly history of Jesus from the information regarding His life which has been handed down to us. It is indeed the privilege of the very simplest intuitive faith to be sure of this, that when historical information regarding the life of Jesus is preserved for us, it cannot, in accordance with the conditions of its origin, be altogether untrustworthy, or give rise in our minds to a false picture of the life of Jesus. But what circumstances they were by which, in accordance with the decree of God, there was assured to us the essential credibility of the picture of Christ contained in the Gospels, is not to be decided by a dogmatic *dictum*, the terms of which are notoriously in contradiction to the existing fact-basis, but is only to be established through a historical investigation. Independently of all more minute investigation, the fact that in the middle of the second century these writings were regarded as the most trustworthy memorials of the apostolic age, guarantees to us this, that at this time they were in existence, and thus for us they share, from the first, the general character of this epoch of Christianity. As the apostolic message advanced the claim to having been announced under the impulsion and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost,—and in case of its being received as credible, it can only be accepted under the recognition of this claim,—so also the delineations of the life of Jesus, which date from this time, whether they originated with the apostles or with the scholars of the apostles, could only be written under the direction of the Spirit, which everywhere gives believers assurance of the salvation which has appeared in Christ, and teaches them to understand it rightly. Every essentially erroneous view of the earthly life of Jesus would be incompatible with a true knowledge of the salvation which is in Christ; and in this sense the inspiration of the writers of the Gospels gives

security for the real trustworthiness of their delineation of the life of Jesus, for the elimination from it of all obscurities affecting the essence of the Christian faith, without our needing for this that special miracle. But for the historical accuracy and reliability in details of this delineation, the enlightenment and leading of the Spirit neither can nor will give any guarantee, because salvation and faith in the salvation brought by Christ are absolutely independent of historical acquaintance with the earthly life of Jesus. In accordance with this tendency, a decision regarding the character of the individual Gospels, and their value for investigating the life of Jesus, can only be formed from an historical inquiry into their origin and constitution.

## CHAPTER II.

### DISCOVERY OF THE EARLIEST SOURCE.

IN earlier times, men only exerted themselves to explain and remove the patent contradictions of the Gospels, to reconcile their discrepancies, and so to establish full harmony between them; their points of agreement appeared quite natural, issuing as they did from the same author, being inspired by the one Holy Ghost. The more, however, that regard began to be paid to the human origin of the Gospels, the more were men struck by this, that our first three Gospels, those called the synoptic, show an extent of agreement in the choice of material, in its arrangement, and even in the smallest details of expression, which can only be explained by the circumstances of their origin. There was, indeed, an idea derived from the patristic period, that our Gospels had made use of one another in the order in which, according to tradition, they had originated and were located in the canon. Augustine especially thought he noticed that Mark follows Matthew step by step, and really only abbreviates him (comp. *de cons. evang.* 1. 4); and this view remained dominant till about the middle of the eighteenth century. Easy as it was to explain in this way the coincidences of the Gospels, their discrepancies still offered as great difficulties. When the measure of human authorship began to be fixed, it remained quite incomprehensible how the later writers deviated so greatly from the work of an apostle, the eye-witness Matthew, whose name was borne by the first, and, according to tradition, the oldest Gospel, and neglected so much of its valuable material. Indeed, in his introduction Luke appears to exercise criticism upon his predecessors, at least to pronounce inadequate their work, whether it was at first hand or not (Luke i. 3). Although after this the hypothesis rather commended itself that Luke is the oldest of our synoptic Gospels, and that in

many respects it underwent revision or was made more precisely exact, first by Mark and then especially by the eye-witness Matthew, still the old tradition as to the order of the Gospels, which found its justification on many obvious and relevant grounds, contradicted this assumption too categorically for it to gain wider acceptance. On the other hand, when tradition was disregarded and attention fixed upon the relations of our four Gospels to each other, the hypothesis appeared much more natural, that the shortest of these had formed the starting-point, and had only been enriched by those which followed it by means of new additions. But this hypothesis of Storr's made it appear very extraordinary that the eye-witness Matthew should have placed himself for the most part in a position of dependence upon the writing of one who was not an eye-witness ; and manifestly there can with equal justice be brought against it this consideration, that this shortest Gospel, looked at in itself, could just as well be an abridgment of the two of larger and ampler contents, as their common root. Thus it was that the eighteenth century, dissatisfied with these various combinations, which were subject to perpetual modification and yet left the same difficulties unsolved, turned rather to the attempt to explain the coincidences of our Synoptists not through the use of one by the others, but through their common dependence upon an older source.

It was Lessing who first gave expression to the thought that this common root of our synoptic Gospels was to be sought in the so-called Hebrew Gospel, a document which, in the second century, was in use among the Jewish-Christian factions who had separated themselves from the Church. At the period of the rising Rationalism, which preferred to exercise its criticism on ecclesiastical tradition, the idea commended itself with quite exceptional force, that a document which had up to this time been regarded as heretical, was the older, our canonical Gospels the younger, and that they depended upon it. But the meagre remnants of this Hebrew Gospel which are preserved for us, when subjected to more searching scientific investigation, proved to bear a too manifestly secondary character in comparison with our Gospels. Thus this hypothesis also was soon given up, and an attempt was made to construct a primitive Hebrew Gospel out of our

Gospels themselves, embracing those portions which are common to our first three Gospels, and by the advancing of a whole series of amplifications, together with the translations belonging to them, to gain an abundance of evangelical information; while from the different combinations of these additions, both the agreements of any two of our Gospels and the differentiating characteristics of each could be explained. That was the well-known hypothesis of Eichhorn regarding a primitive Gospel, which appeared at the beginning of this century and excited the utmost sensation; but after one decade, during which all manner of attempts were made to correct and modify it, it fell into disrepute. The hypothesis of a series of sources of which not one trace has been preserved in our tradition, even where they would necessarily be expected to appear, is shown to be historically untenable by the fact that slavish dependence on the part of the evangelists upon a model, the value of which must, besides, have been destroyed by all these revisions and enlargements, is in direct contradiction to the spirit of primitive Christianity; as well as by the fact that the philological conditions of the time utterly discredit the idea of a contradictory employment of auxiliary translations by the first translators. The characteristics of each of our three Gospels asserted themselves in opposition to the hypothesis of their purely mechanical compilation from that hypothetical anterior work.

In the year 1818 the Church historian Gieseler appeared with the most strenuous opposition to this hypothesis, and substituted for it the view based upon an idea of Herder's, that the foundation of our written Gospels is formed by the oral type of narration in Aramaic, as it had been developed in Jerusalem within the circle of the first apostles. In order, however, to explain by means of this undoubtedly right thought (comp. p. 17) the actually existing coincidences of our Greek Gospels, it must be enlarged to embrace the idea of a complete oral primitive Gospel and of its translation into Greek,—a supposition which is contradicted by every natural view of the limits within which oral tradition, as regards form or contents, establishes itself, and so, ultimately, this hypothesis in artificiality and arbitrariness comes but little behind that of Eichhorn. Notwithstanding, the advance toward truth

made in this view has been very generally appreciated in the criticism of the Gospels, and has been turned to account in the solution of the synoptic problem. But only an apologetic which is intent upon keeping free of the literary dependence of our Gospels on one another or on older sources, in order that by acquiescence in this it may not be compelled too abruptly to admit the thoroughly human mode of origination of our four Gospels, and the intentional deviations of one from the others, will willingly take refuge in this haze of oral tradition, that therewith it may at least cover over a problem which it is not able and does not desire to solve. For a scientific treatment of the subject, there can be no doubt that the similarity of the order in long series of narratives, which is in no way necessitated by the chronological sequence, and the numerous verbal coincidences, not only in the main points of the sayings of Jesus and of the narratives, but also in the slightest turns of expression, even indeed in conjunctions and connecting particles, can never be explained by the oral tradition, and that the discrepancies which appear in juxtaposition with these coincidences do not usually bear the character of accidental variations as they arise in oral tradition, but the constant type of intentional literary modifications. Upon closer inspection, it further appears that even the extent to which the oldest oral model of narration has actually influenced our historical Gospels could not be reached till somehow it had been fixed in writing; but the freedom with which the oral tradition, as it descended from near the beginnings of the Gospel literature, constantly made new variations in the details of the picture on the basis of the given, fixed kernel, was what first gave to the writers of the Gospels the free impulsion by which they could remodel what lay before them in written form. Thus the hypothesis as to tradition, which refers the written Gospels to their root in oral tradition, not only required amplification by means of the hypothesis of the primitive Gospel, but it also made possible the combination of this with one form of the hypothesis that the Gospels made use of each other, with the result that many difficulties which the latter, in all forms of it, had hitherto manifested, were through this combination for the first time removed.

The circle of possibilities seemed for the present pretty

well exhausted, and even the outlook for new combinations appeared only to be repeating a fruitless creation of hypotheses, by which it was impossible to attain an established scientific result, when, in the year 1820, the criticism of the Gospels, which had hitherto been confined to the three Synoptics, turned against the Gospel of John, which up to this time had been generally treated as unassailable. The attack which Bretschneider in his *Probabilia* opened upon its genuineness had only this result, that theology in all its schools felt compelled to defend it energetically, and that the originator of the attack himself confessed that the genuineness of John's Gospel had by the recent investigations been only the more firmly established. He had laid special emphasis upon the differences between the fourth Gospel and the older ones; and the line of defence was now to prove, that where a deviation existed John's representation was the absolutely accurate one; thus in the course of discussion it became abundantly clear that in the synoptical Gospels not everything is exactly and correctly depicted, and that certain obscurations of the original are visible which could have crept in only during the process of handing down the oral tradition. It was then impossible for any one of our three Gospels to have originated directly with an apostle; not even the first, which had hitherto been impartially regarded as a writing of the Apostle Matthew, as in it especially the points of difference with John receive more emphatic accentuation. The results of these investigations were collected with great acumen and perspicacity by Sieffert in his work on the first canonical Gospels (1832). At the same time he pointed out with equal clearness, that to refer this Gospel directly to the apostle does not correspond with the tradition, for this speaks only of an Aramaic writing of Matthew. The older Protestantism, hampered by dogmatic presuppositions, attempted on the strangest grounds to prove this assertion of the Fathers to be an ancient error. During the period of Rationalism it gradually began to gain juster appreciation; but through its implication in the often extraordinary hypotheses which here disported themselves, it was rather discredited than commended. Sieffert pointed out that we have no longer any right to speak of a work of the Apostle Matthew, unless, at the same time, we are willing to accept

the statement that Matthew wrote in Aramaic, which in all ecclesiastical antiquity went hand in hand with this. It was then clear that our Greek Gospel of Matthew can in no sense be directly that oldest document. It was inevitable that the attempt of Sieffert to distinguish purely on internal grounds those portions of it which belonged to the original apostolic document should miscarry. In the same year in which his work appeared, Schleiermacher had, in his theological *Studien und Kritiken* (1832, 4), undertaken a more minute examination of the oldest testimony, to which our whole tradition as to Matthew's writing is to be referred, an assertion of Papias of Hierapolis (in Euseb. *Church History*, iii. 39), and proved that this assertion, according to which the Apostle Matthew presented a collection of the sayings of the Lord, is not at all relevant to the contents of our first Gospel. Schleiermacher may have gone too far in saying that this assertion makes the document to have contained exclusively statements and speeches of the Lord, because there are many of these which could not have been introduced without an explanatory historical addition. But that a Gospel which begins with a detailed history of a childhood, and ends with a continuous account of sufferings and of a resurrection, and which in its historical representation as well as in its pragmatical reflections manifestly pursues a doctrinal aim, could not be characterized as a collection of the sayings of the Lord, can only be denied by those committed to a foregone conclusion. By this there was given, however, if only in respect of form, a hint towards the distinguishing of our first Gospel from the oldest apostolic document.

Is it possible to gain a more definite picture of that document? Can these priceless sources be restored either in whole or in part from our Gospels? Weisse has pointed out the way to attain this in his *Gospel History* (1838); we owe to him the discovery of this oldest source. There are two things which, through his acute investigation of the literary relations of our Gospels, he has established beyond all doubt—that the first Gospel is dependent upon the second, and that the third is independent of the first. The first fact could not be admitted so long as it was maintained that the first Gospel was directly composed by Matthew; but whenever it was recognised that it could only be an elaboration of

the old apostolic document, a reliable standard was obtained by which to mark off its secondary additions. All those portions in which the text of the first Gospel indicated dependence upon Mark, could originate only with the evangelist, and not with the apostolic document redacted by him. The establishment of the second fact was not less important. Since a dependence of the first Gospel on the third, in accordance with the universal tradition respecting the order of the Gospels and with what is clearly apparent, cannot properly be discussed, and since it had further been proved that the third evangelist did not know our Matthew, so neither of them could have borrowed anything from the other. If it is found that, apart from what they had, in like manner, borrowed from the second Gospel, and in which they therefore coincide, both have in common large sections and especially speeches, often down to the minutest details of expression, then these can only be borrowed from a source common to the two Gospels. But if it were established by unanimous tradition that our first Gospel must preserve essentially the work of the Apostle Matthew, this would form a common source for only the first and third Gospels; and the fact that it was principally portions containing speeches which gave proof of having been taken from this source, plainly establishes this result, for that apostolic document would consist principally of a collection of the speeches of Jesus.

Unfortunately, the criticism of the Gospels has not quietly built further upon the foundation laid in such an exemplary manner by Weisse. In the fourth and fifth decades of the century it was absorbed in the contest with the Tübingen school, which, quitting the tried method of a purely literary criticism of sources, dealt with the Gospels only from the standpoint of its peculiar construction of history, and by its pertinacious representation of the Gospels as dogmatic tendency writings, hindered rather than helped the understanding of them. All those who, like Ewald, Reuss, and Meyer, set their face against this mode of conceiving them, had always in some way to connect themselves with Weisse; and in the sixth decade there at last began a successful carrying forward of the structure upon the foundation laid by him. There was indeed a twofold need for a structure of this kind. It had the

appearance of greater simplicity to treat our second Gospel, and that oldest source which besides it lay at the foundation of the first and third Gospels, as two perfectly independent works. From this view it was that Weisse started. But the hypothesis that the second Gospel was a source of our Matthew, was not without reason always confronted with the observation, that in many sections, especially where it deals with speeches of Jesus, its text is, as opposed to that of our first Gospel, a secondary one, and that even in individual narrative portions the fact of this appearance can only be contested in a very artificial manner, and therefore not completely. The simplest explanation of this was given after the beginning of the sixth decade, and was at a later period carried out in regard to all the details of the comparison of texts. If the second evangelist had known and employed the oldest apostolic document, but redacted it in a freer manner wherever the first evangelist has preserved its text more faithfully, his representation must appear as the original, that of the second Gospel the secondary. Hence it is that the work of criticism became in many portions a more involved one, because the first evangelist did often allow himself to be influenced by the free handling which the oldest source receives in the second Gospel. But if there are present in all our three synoptic Gospels various redactions of that oldest source, it must be possible to obtain with all the greater certainty the original text of the latter. Against this view, the only one that could settle the long-standing dispute regarding the connection between the first and third Gospels, in which each side derives from contradictory evidence a certain amount of justification, were ranged the defenders of an unconditioned originality of the second Gospel. They knew no other way of solving the difficulties antagonistic to their view, than by the hypothesis that our second Gospel is only the relatively most original redaction of a foundation document which lay at the basis of our three synoptic Gospels, and is sometimes preserved in our first and third in a more original form. This hypothesis of an original Mark, first thrown out by Holtzmann in his *Synoptic Gospels* of 1863, notwithstanding the approval given it by Wittichen, Schenkel, and many others, and so far even by Weizsäcker in his

*Investigations into the Gospel History* (1864), required fundamental readjustment. Indeed, after it had been repeatedly demonstrated how in every form it corresponded less and less with the obvious facts, and was constantly being involved in new and insoluble difficulties, it has lately, at least by its author, been given up in every shape.

The opposition to the simplest solution of the difficulties here presented had still one ground other than the presupposed originality of the second Gospel. The appearance which the text of the latter sometimes presents, of being a secondary one in comparison with the text of our Matthew, shows itself by no means only in the speeches, but also in the narrative sections; and when Holtzmann tried, as far as possible, to contest this fact, even Weizsäcker was obliged to admit it to a large extent. The admission, however, that even in those sections the first evangelist has preserved more faithfully the delineation of the older source, is hindered by the presumption that, according to the statement of Papias, that source contained exclusively utterances of the Lord. Now it is that aid is sought from the hypothetical primitive Gospel of Mark, which here and there would be preserved more faithfully in the first and third Gospels than in the redaction of it which is presented to us in the second Gospel. This leads directly to the second point on which an advance has to be made upon the position of Weisse, who himself shared in this assumption, because the method pointed out by him for the discovery of that oldest source made it necessary to break with the assumption that it could only contain utterances of the Lord. By this means it was shown that portions such as the words of the Baptist, the three temptations in the wilderness, the healing of the centurion's son, and at least one exorcism of devils, had a place there, because they are common to the first and third Gospels exclusively. But if certain narrative portions cannot from their nature be excluded from this source, it may be established from a comparison of the text of the first Gospel with that of the second, which of the narratives contained in the latter in a more free and ample version are embodied in the original source in a simpler form. It was of importance not only to determine with precision the extent of this source, but also to fix more definitely

the form which it had originally in its authenticated portions. At an earlier period a start had been made from the assumption that this form was most faithfully preserved in the first Gospel, and a "collection of speeches" was spoken of, which consisted substantially of the long addresses contained in Matthew's Gospel. On the other hand, Holtzmann pointed out with perfect justice that it was impossible for the third evangelist almost wantonly to break these long speeches into fragments; that he must rather have preserved as purely as possible the original form in which many groups of sayings, detached from one another, had been handed down; and that since this evangelist, as his very perspicuous construction shows, had made use of the oldest source in continuous sections, their very order even could frequently be recovered from him. When Holtzmann thought to reconstruct the form of this collection of sayings essentially from the third Gospel, that was not less one-sided than the earlier mode of starting entirely from the longer speeches of the first Gospel. Here a result could be reached only by a critical comparison of texts, dealing with the minutest particulars, and an ever deeper penetration into the diversity of the methods followed by the first and third evangelists in their use of the oldest source, in accordance with the conditions and the purpose of their composition.[1]

We must then abandon the hope of ever possessing the work of the Apostle Matthew, because it has been lost through the carelessness which ecclesiastical antiquity, enjoying as it did the rich possession of the oral tradition, showed towards the earliest documentary information after it had been substantially transferred to our first Gospel, and had received there a considerably developed form. That which was most

[1] After I had, in the *Theologischen Studien und Kritiken* for 1861, and in the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* for 1864–65, expounded my attempt to improve and develop the idea thrown out by Weisse regarding the sources of the first and third Gospels, and had reckoned with all the divergent views, I proceeded in my works upon the Gospels of Mark and Matthew (1872 and 1876) to carry through and establish in particulars my views by means of the explanation of details and the comparison of texts. For the following picture of the oldest source, and the substantiating of it in the delineation of the life of Jesus, I refer once for all to these works. There is no word said about it in one place, and no use made of it in another, the particular grounds of which will not be found in these treatises.

valuable in it, the reproduction of the utterances of Jesus in the language which He Himself spoke, was, apart from that, soon lost, for the Greek-speaking Christians early required a Greek translation, which alone was widely disseminated. It is something of this kind which as a common source lies at the foundation of our Greek Gospels. Large portions of this can be reconstructed with a great degree of certainty on the ground of the employment and redaction of it, accomplished from various points of view, in our three Gospels, and the knowledge gained from them of its accidence, which, not only in its general peculiarity, but also in many particulars, reveals clearly the Aramaic basis, forms another important point of vantage from which to pick out with greater certainty those portions which are derived from this source. Thus the extent of this original source can in substance be fixed with great probability, whatever doubt may remain regarding the origin of one or another portion; and in many places so distinct a picture may be formed even of its plan and construction, that where in individual instances this is not possible, yet this furnishes no invalidation of the profitable rehabilitating of this oldest source. We have found in it that documentary primitive Gospel after which the older speculative criticism vainly groped, and the methodical employment of which forms the firm starting-point for the solution of the synoptic problem, as well as a firm foundation and standard for the establishment of the most important deeds and speeches of Jesus. It is still true, indeed, that this oldest Gospel is not a complete history of the life of Jesus, nor is it in general a continuous narrative, but, as the express testimony of Papias affirms, its chief aim was to be regarded mainly as a collection of the sayings of the Lord; and from this it is clear that it can in substance have only been the committal to writing of that oral type of narration as it had taken shape in Jerusalem in the circle of the primitive apostles. Hence, besides an abundance of larger or smaller collections of the utterances of Jesus regarding a variety of subjects, there may have been preserved in it also, with greater fulness and accuracy, a number of longer speeches which He delivered on some more special occasions. What it contained of individual narratives of healing or of events, prominent on other grounds,

in the life of Jesus, formed for the most part only the merest framework for separate specially important sayings of Jesus. The thoroughly polished form of the representation of the speeches of Jesus, as well as of the narratives of His life, point to the origination of this source from that oral type of narration. The fact of its having that origin implied that the document confined itself entirely to the public ministry of Jesus, and that the whole history of the Passion remained excluded. For this could only have been given in the form of a continuous narrative; and as it had taken place in Jerusalem before the eyes of all, there was in that circle no need whatever for it to be recounted. The local origin of the oldest tradition embodied in this document proved of itself that in it there were communicated almost exclusively events and speeches belonging to the Galilean ministry.

Certain as it is that the chief design of this document, on account of its essential dependence on the words of the Lord, was substantially didactic, and certain as it is that through its origin in oral tradition every tendency to a historical pragmatism remained excluded, yet the first attempt at a literary memorandum must have necessitated the effort to give a certain organization to the formless body of tradition. It is clearly a mistaken idea to regard this document as a perfectly amorphous collection of materials. In the fact that the attempt was made by an eye- and ear-witness, points of departure for such an organization were from the beginning afforded. Little as it could be known regarding every separate saying of Jesus, or every briefer speech, when and where it was spoken, and little as a writing which had no proper historical environment afforded the opportunity of giving a chronological arrangement of the particulars, yet for the ear-witness there could be no doubt regarding the date of certain of the longer speeches. That the Sermon on the Mount, the speech on the occasion of the message of the Baptist, the great parable speech, and even the speech at the sending forth of His disciples, belong to the relatively earlier period; that the thorough instruction of the disciples, the warm disputations with his opponents, the speeches of warning delivered to the people, and especially the speeches of Jesus regarding His return, belong to the later period, was so

firmly established that this of itself gave rise to a certain mode of grouping. But, above all, there can be used for the settling of the chronology individual important occurrences, such as His departure for the eastern shore, the story of the feeding of the multitudes, or of the transfiguration, of which the relations in time to one another and to many of the speeches which have been imparted could not well be forgotten. The order of itself implied that the speech portions were collected together in larger groups, which were marked off from one another by narrative portions intercalated between them, and it is possible to point out the transition formulæ which in a stereotyped manner led from one thing to another. For the most part there could only be placed together in those groups speech portions which were somehow connected in accordance with topical points of view; and this is made very clear in those sections which belong properly to the history of the Passion, such as the prophecy regarding the fate of the disciples, and the last reprimand to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, the position of which is therefore strikingly anachronistic. In like manner, much that is found in the narrative portions could only have been arranged in accordance with topical standpoints, as is shown, for example, in the collocation of the healing of the leper with the Sermon on the Mount. But the numerous arrangements and connections of the speech portions among themselves, or of speech with narrative portions, in the case of which such a topical standpoint is plainly indemonstrable, afford important indications of what was the original chronological sequence of events.

This oldest source is no more without an introduction and an appropriate conclusion than it is, as to the arrangement of its principal contents, without a plan. The words of the Baptist formed of themselves the most suitable subject for the former, as well as the history of the baptism and the temptation; and the latter was most naturally formed by the last narrative portion which can be traced in the source, the story of the anointing at Bethany, the main point of which consisted in a reference made by Jesus to His immediately approaching death. It corresponds entirely with the character which this source has of being concerned especially with the

utterances of Jesus, that the only reference to the historical issue of the life of Jesus is that made in this saying.

Finally, it is possible to fix with great probability the time at which the Apostle Matthew wrote. If recollections at all accurate lie at the foundation of the statements of the Fathers regarding the time at which the Gospel of Matthew was drawn up, these can only refer to that original apostolic document, although from their statements they are already erroneously thinking of our Greek Gospel. That something of this kind did form their basis, is made probable by the fact that their statements, though quite independent of one another, yet coincide perfectly in their contents. When Irenæus says that Matthew wrote when Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel and founding the Church in Rome (*Adv. Hœr.* iii. 1. 1), he can only be thinking of the second half of the sixth decade; for if the apostles were in Rome together, this can only have been the case after the burning of Rome, during the last years of Nero, and thus between the years 65 and 68. But when Eusebius says that Matthew, when he quitted Palestine, bequeathed his Gospel to the Hebrews as a substitute for his oral preaching (*Ch. Hist.* iii. 24), this brings us to the same time; because Matthew, like the other apostles, would only leave the country when, along with the outbreak of the revolutionary war in the year 66, the fall of the Jewish State, which was regarded as the judgment of God against those who did not believe in the true Messiah, had already been definitely sealed (comp. Euseb. *op. cit.* iii. 5). The fact of this conjunction receives remarkable confirmation from a striking indication in our source. In the section occupied by the important speeches regarding his return, where Jesus is warning His disciples, in view of the signs foretold by Him of the final catastrophe, to quit the country districts, there are inserted these words, "Let him that readeth understand" (Matt. xxiv. 15). These words can only have been written when the apostle saw in process of fulfilment the signs which Jesus had foretold, and by these his readers would be reminded that the time had come which Jesus had indicated for flight. When, then, Eusebius speaks of a revelation through which the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem were induced to flee to Pella (*op. cit.* iii. 5), this can only be the

legendary echo of the fact that in the year 67 the work of the Apostle Matthew appeared, and during this historical crisis that interjected portion gave the warning for flight.

There is thus made clearly manifest the inestimable significance of this oldest source. Some seven-and-thirty years after the death of Jesus, a personal witness put on record His most important utterances and deeds, as well as a large number of the more significant events of His life.

## CHAPTER III.

### MEMOIRS OF PETER.

JUSTIN MARTYR, who designates our Gospels memoirs of the apostles, written partly by themselves and partly by their disciples, makes a quotation found only in Mark (iii. 17), and expressly asserts that it is found in the memoirs of Peter (comp. *Dial.* 106). What he means by this we gather from the universal later tradition since the end of the second century, which ascribes our second Gospel to a certain Mark, who, as the companion and assistant of Peter, had written on the basis of his communications. Now we know from the New Testament a John Mark, who was a near relative of Barnabas of Cyprus (Col. iv. 10), and accompanied him when he, along with Paul, undertook the first missionary journey, but quickly separated himself from them; and when, on that account, Paul at a later period did not wish to take him as a companion, he went with Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts xii. 25, xiii. 13, xv. 37–39). After some years, in Cæsarea we find him again beside the imprisoned Paul, on the point of journeying to Asia Minor (Philem. 24; Col. iv. 10), and hear, moreover, that he had been summoned by the latter to come to him in Rome (2 Tim. iv. 11). But besides these occasional relations with Paul, there is always room enough left for that relation to Peter so expressly emphasized in the tradition, which also finds its points of connection in the New Testament. For in the First Epistle of Peter (v. 13) Mark is called a son of the apostle, which must plainly be taken in the spiritual sense of his having been converted through the instrumentality of Peter; and in fact we learn from the apostolic history that he was the son of a certain Mary, in whose household in Jerusalem Peter must have been especially well known and trusted (xii. 12 f.). The son of this house was not a disciple during the lifetime of Jesus, and has had nothing

substantial to recount from his own eye- and ear-witness—he could only relate what he heard from his master Peter.

This tradition regarding the origin of our second Gospel had long to suffer great disfavour on the part of criticism. Certainly the supposition that it is allied with the circle of myths which at a later period surrounded Peter's residence at Rome was one perfectly untenable, for it was Eusebius who first actually brought the two things into conjunction; and, besides, even the assertion which transfers the origin of the Gospel to Rome, and only assumes the facts which are well established regarding the residence of Peter, is by no means borne out by the oldest witnesses. The presupposition that it is only the necessity for giving to the second Gospel apostolic sanction which has given rise to this tradition, is one also quite groundless, because, before Eusebius, there is no mention of any such sanction; and still more expressly is this excluded by the oldest tradition, which asserts that the Gospel was first committed to writing after the death of Peter. But that tradition would be on internal grounds altogether untenable, even if our second Gospel should prove to be a mere compilation from the first and third. This hypothesis, first brought forward by the Englishman Owen, was widely disseminated in Germany through the authority of the great textual critic John James Griesbach, and there were repeated attempts made, with great acumen, to establish it; for a long time, especially in the second decade of the century, it was to such an extent the dominant view, that even men like Sieffert and Bleek, carried away with it, found it an insurmountable barrier to a profitable carrying on of their investigations on the field of gospel criticism, which were in many respects so serviceable. In fact, this hypothesis forms in the history of gospel criticism—which otherwise, in spite of its extraordinary aberrations, is always making a real advance, and gaining gradual acceptance for its results—the sole instance of a pure blunder, one which for long but delayed a real understanding of our second Gospel.

It has indeed been thought possible to point out in a few instances how the evangelist used the first and third Gospels alternately, and combined their texts. But on closer investigation these points of vantage for the hypothesis were seen to be a mere mirage; rather was it directly proved that this

hypothesis must inevitably be wrecked through the perfectly inexplicable arbitrariness with which the evangelist followed now one, now the other, and also through the way in which —while even in those sections where he ought to follow one of the two, he shows by omission and interpolation his dependence on the other—he has collated both of them with the greatest care. It remained just as unintelligible how the evangelist should have omitted so much important matter present in each of his sources, as, on the other hand, how he should often have employed the most insignificant material gained from one of them to amplify the other. If, from the standpoint of this hypothesis, one considers in detail the rise of the text of the Gospel, it is seen to be such a wonderful mosaic, formed from the text of both sources, that often in the same verse there appear in regular interchange some words taken from one source and some from another, to which he on his part could have made none but the most trifling and unimportant additions. Unnatural as such a constant comparison and combination of the two gospel texts must have appeared, just as inexplicable did it remain how, notwithstanding, a document should have arisen which displayed throughout one style, and that with a definiteness of character such as is hardly possessed by any other of our Gospels. The thoroughly perspicuous construction of our Gospel could, in short, be only completely misunderstood from the standpoint of a hypothesis according to which the evangelist has done nothing but make a meagre compilation from two fully-informed gospel books, and add to what was taken from these two brief stories of acts of healing and a few additional details which appear purely as marvels. This unfortunate hypothesis would long ago have been consigned to neglect had it not been seized upon by the Tübingen school, in order, by means of their "tendency" conception, to inspire it for a short time with a new appearance of life. Through it there appeared at least to be won a new step towards the explanation of this unintelligible constitution, concerned as it was with the reduction to a neutral representation through a mediating tendency of the Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian Gospels. But this attempt also was wrecked, not only on the arbitrariness which was soon sufficiently proved to belong to this tendency theory

as a whole, but also on the fact that the contradictions in the Gospel requiring reconciliation no longer existed in the other Gospels, but in them had already been reconciled. When Keim, however, tried to lay this hypothesis actually at the foundation of a representation of the life of Jesus, in spite of his incessant mockery of this, the youngest of the three synoptic Gospels, which does not at all touch our Mark, but only the inverted image which criticism has formed of its origin, he saw himself necessitated to prefer in many cases Mark's representation as being the more original; and in this way the whole hypothesis, according to which Mark must be throughout secondary and devoid of independence, was proved to be untenable.

Although apart from this hypothesis our second Gospel is, according to the view held by the primitive Church, treated as merely dependent upon our first, still it could not have arisen upon the ground of what was independently communicated by Peter, because all in it by which alone it exceeded the first Gospel was too little to be referred to a special source. Had it only been acknowledged that our first Gospel is frequently dependent in considerable portions upon our second, then the latter would have shown a great abundance of independent material first reduced to writing by its author, and the origin of which was, in fact, explained by tradition in an exceedingly credible manner. It would then be possible to consider attentively how the Gospel begins its representation of the life of Jesus with the moment when Jesus summoned Peter to a permanent companionship with Himself, as well as how the whole of the first portion turns on a visit of Jesus to the place of residence and the house of Peter, which is related with details that could only remain in the memory of one who had a special share in the incident. It must then be full of significance that the life of Jesus with His inner circle of disciples, in its various phases, and the comprehension of it, which under the training of Jesus slowly ripened, has found here an especially minute delineation; that repeatedly events are recorded at which only the three trusted followers of Jesus, of whom Peter was one, were present; that Peter's acknowledgment of Jesus, and his humiliating reprimand (viii. 29, 33), form a

main feature of the whole delineation, and that especially in the history of the Passion he plays so strikingly prominent a part; that, indeed, the whole Gospel ends with instructions given to him (xvi. 7). It is now manifest that what appeared to be insignificant sketches so long as there was ascribed to the author of the second Gospel only that which in it went beyond the first or third, do, when taken along with many similar traits which from it alone had passed over to the other Gospels, betray a pervading effort towards a vivid clearness and a highly coloured painting of details such as could have been found only in one who was either himself an eye-witness, or had often heard an eye-witness relate the experiences which he had in the company cf Jesus. The more that this Gospel is treated as an independent work, and not, as has hitherto almost exclusively happened, with continual reference to its supposed dependence upon the first or on both the other Gospels, the more it is recognised that we have here to do with lifelike delineations, which, unless they are to be referred to artificial fabrication, can only be explained by the relation in which the evangelist stood to an eye-witness.

The question is only as to how far the patristic tradition, according to which the Gospel of Mark is based upon what was communicated by Peter, can be considered trustworthy, or in what direction we are to look for its ultimate source. Now this same Papias of Hierapolis, from the preface to whose *Exposition of the Words of the Lord* Eusebius has preserved to us that valuable reference to the oldest writing of Matthew (comp. p. 29), has, according to the latter, in that very place given information regarding a writing of Mark, in support of which he refers to statements of the presbyter, that is, of the last of the circle of that generation which had seen Jesus, by which we know that Papias himself had intercourse with and derived information from him. It was he who related that Mark, having become the recorder[1] of Peter's words, wrote down accurately, though without regular order, what he recollected of the sayings and deeds of Christ. Papias, on his part, saw in this plainly a certain defect (which the presbyter had admitted to exist in the Mark-document), and he explains it by the fact that the author

[1] [Played "Boswell" to Peter's "Johnson."—Tr.]

was not himself an ear-witness, but had only heard Peter, who from time to time communicated in his discourses the utterances of the Lord, without having any idea of arranging them in their proper order. On this account no blame attaches to Mark if he, in the reproduction of his recollections, attended only to faithfulness and completeness. Since the time of Schleiermacher it has often been called in question whether this is applicable to a writing like our second Gospel; rather was it thought that here we have intelligence of Mark's unarranged memoranda, which perhaps lay at the foundation of our second Gospel in just such a way as the work of Matthew, attested by Papias, underlies our first Gospel. In this way, however, it was partly omitted to distinguish the original statements of the presbyter from the remarks of Papias upon them, and partly the judgment of both had been estimated by the impression which the second Gospel makes upon us, instead of asking according to what standard these men could alone have formed their judgment regarding the Mark-document. For we know that Papias, relying probably on the same source, speaks at the same time of a work of the Apostle Matthew which had the utterances of Jesus arranged in their original sequence, and thus it is clear that they can have judged the Mark-document only in accordance with the arrangement of this document; the presbyter, without doubt, directly; Papias, perhaps, only in accordance with the manner in which he believed that this writing was reproduced in our first Gospel. This judgment of theirs is most completely confirmed by the constitution of our second Gospel. If we compare this latter with the picture of that oldest apostolic document which we can now gain from our first and third Gospels, it is clear that not only do the narrative sections in our second Gospel appear largely in another order, but especially that often the individual sayings of the Lord, which we there find in their original connection, are here, as occasion serves, thrown together with topically allied utterances, or are grouped together in new arrangements. There is no doubt that Papias is quite right in referring this to the fact that Mark had so often heard Peter in his discourses employ the individual utterances of the Lord, and make new combinations as suited his purpose. And when the presbyter

praises his accuracy, and Papias his faithfulness and amplitude, this corresponds perfectly with the way in which, in the second Gospel, many narratives that in the oldest apostolic document form the merest framework to detached significant utterances of Jesus, are related with vivid colouring and a series of additional details.

If there be no doubt that in the second Gospel we have before us that Mark-document which received as early and reliable an attestation as possible, it is a false conclusion which has been drawn from that old account, that this writing must have been exclusively based upon what Peter communicated. Even were it dubious whether or not the presbyter and Papias only desired to entertain this view, as it is only from this point that both make a start in defining and explaining the deviations of it from the oldest Matthew-document, still the correctness of their assertion could thereby by no means be disproved, even if they themselves had remained unaware of the fact, that while Mark was committing to writing his recollections of what had been communicated by Peter, that Matthew-document was already known to, and had on various occasions been employed by him. That this was the case is placed beyond doubt by the fact that a speech of ample dimensions, such as that regarding the second advent in chap. xiii., cannot possibly have been handed down orally by Peter; and so, if it was not an entirely free composition of Mark's, which would be against all analogy, it must have been shaped out of the written memoranda of the ear-witness. That this was so is proved by the fact that fragments of other speeches, and many individual sayings of the Lord contained in it here and there, do, in spite of the great freedom of their reproduction, still show so manifest a relationship with the literary version of them in that source, that it cannot have been unknown to the evangelist, and by the fact that even in its so much ampler reproduction of individual narratives the representation always attaches itself again to the oldest form of narration, even in cases where its own course is by this visibly interfered with. It is proved in my *Gospel of Mark*, by a most minute analysis of the method of narration observed in the Gospel, that often, in spite of its originality, that work shows itself on the whole to be conditioned in

particulars by an older form of delineation, and that, on the background of the Gospel's pervading peculiarity of expression, those points are all the more clearly visible where distinctive modes of expression derived from the oldest source make their appearance in it. It cannot be assumed that in such instances a proper collating and literary employment of the oldest Matthew-document has always found a place; but it must be remembered that Mark, whose family belonged to Jerusalem, had long known and been accustomed to the oldest type of narration as it had taken shape there, before it was fixed in the Matthew-document, and before Mark, in his attendance on Peter, found the opportunity of hearing and appropriating the narratives of this eye-witness, after the characteristic fashion of his distinctive peculiarity. It could not then fail to prove true, that the memoranda which were undertaken on the basis of what Peter communicated were enriched by the oldest type of narrative underlying the Matthew-document, and were in their conception frequently conditioned by it.

That oldest intelligence already assumes without question what Irenæus expressly says, that Mark first wrote after the death of Peter; and when the later Church Fathers are found generally assuming or declaring the opposite, they are in this case influenced by their concern to provide, through the apostle, an express authorization for his work or a guarantee of its credibility. If it is beyond dispute that Peter never intended to draw up a connected picture of the life of Jesus, but only related, as his discourses gave opportunity, detached particulars from that life so full of incident, and communicated individual utterances of Jesus, it was impossible for Mark to occupy himself with noting down his reminiscences without making the attempt to arrange them into a picture of this kind. Towards the accomplishment of this, however, the Matthew-document, owing to its special characteristics, afforded him but feeble points of connection. It is true that the connected delineation of the Passion, which is in this work quite awanting, could easily have been put together by him from what was told by Peter, or from what he had already heard of it in Jerusalem, perhaps partially even from his own personal experiences. For a beginning he could utilize the facts, known to all, regarding the appearing of the prophet, the favourite of

the people, while the oldest source would supply him with everything he required in connection with the baptism and temptation of Jesus; but as regards a connected survey of the public activity of Jesus, there was an utter absence of well-established points of connection. With reference to the date and location of individual events, he could gather much from the Matthew-document; but as to their inner connection and course of development, he found there just as little as he could learn directly from his recollections of what Peter had said. In order to obtain this he was driven to start solely from the facts themselves as such; and if here and there he made mistakes in his combinations, that was almost unavoidable. Nothing can be more uncritical than for new delineations of the life of Jesus—as, for instance, that of Schenkel—to be founded as to their plan upon Mark exclusively, as if he had related each incident in exact historical order, and as if from this order the pragmatical conjunction of all events could be directly deduced. This one-sided over-estimate of the Mark-document is indeed only the recoil from its earlier depreciation by the Owen-Griesbach hypothesis, but is none the less untenable on that account.

Every more careful analysis of the Gospel of Mark shows that the evangelist does himself least of all make any claim to an estimation of this kind. It is clear that his intention was to group the materials given by tradition in accordance with certain topical points of view. Thus we meet in the second section with a number of narratives which bring before us the beginning and rapid development of the hostility which Jesus found among the dominant classes (ii. 1–3, 6). The evangelist has, by his manner of delineating, made it very clear indeed that he does not present a chronological order of events, but throws light upon this side of the life of Jesus through a purposely selected series of narratives. This is not less clearly shown by the section which describes the training of the disciples (viii. 27–x. 45), for that is not only brought into obvious connection with the thrice repeated prophecy of His death, but especially in chaps. ix. and x. the exhortations to humility towards one another, as well as the instructions regarding marriage and children, as to property and its sacrifice, appear to be arranged in a purely topical

fashion. Also in the section devoted to Jerusalem (x. 46–xiii. 37) this artificial grouping is quite manifest, particularly from chap. xii. onwards, in which the high priests, the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and finally the disciples, follow each other in succession, in order to show the relation in which Jesus stood to all the various forces and classes among the people. It cannot be by chance when the narrative in which Jesus points out His jealously attentive hearers as His true relatives (iii. 20–35) is put alongside of the parable speech, in which Jesus reveals to this circle the secret of the kingdom of God, which was to remain hidden from the obdurate people (chap. iv.); or when alongside of the narrative of the expedition to the eastern shore, where Jesus was for the first time rejected, is placed the raising from the dead, at which He along with His bold utterance was laughed to scorn (chap. v.) ; and then follows the story of His rejection in His native city (vi. 1–6). When we see that this whole section has immediately before and after it the narratives of the choosing and the sending forth of the disciples, there can be no doubt that there is here an artificial grouping. It is only this that can account for the fact that the section which follows is concerned with the two feasts; that the first is followed by the dispute regarding the washing of hands, and the second by the one as to the giving of a sign; that each of these sections contains an example of the disciples' defective comprehension, and each of them is brought to a conclusion by a strictly analogous description of an act of healing (vi. 14–viii. 26). The particular analysis makes this topical grouping all the more manifest, as, for instance, when the journey into the land of the Gentiles, where Jesus did not shrink from crossing the threshold of an unclean Gentile dwelling (vii. 24), is connected with the conversation regarding what was clean and unclean.

But it is also apparent how the groups thus formed have been arranged by the evangelist according to a method which brings to expression his view of the course of development of the public activity of Jesus. For the first section, which turns on the first visit of Jesus to the town of the earliest called disciples and on His first tour, plainly gives us a picture of the earliest successful activity of Jesus, when it found everywhere undivided and ever increasing admiration (i. 14–45).

As a counterpart to this, there is that section in which the quickly developing conflict with the dominant classes among the people caused opposition to grow into deadly enmity (ii. 1–iii. 6). In the third, we see also in His popular activity the separation being completed between the acceptance and the lack of appreciation which His teaching and deeds of healing met with (iii. 7–vi. 13); in the fourth, we find Jesus at the culminating point of His popular activity; but we see as well the conflict with opponents growing more keen, while the continually renewed proofs of the still as defective comprehension of Him on the part of those whose selection was recorded in the previous section, as well as on that of those disciples sent forth for the first time, made it necessary for Him gradually to retire from His popular activity (vi. 14–viii. 26), until, in the following section, He devotes Himself exclusively to their instruction (viii. 27–x. 25). While in the first three sections the activity of Jesus is confined to Galilee, indeed principally to the environs of Capernaum, in the last two we see Him undertaking extended journeys to the different regions of the Holy Land, and even beyond its borders, until in the sixth His activity concentrates itself upon Jerusalem (x. 46–xiii. 37), there to find a close in the history of the Passion (chaps. xiv. and xv.), which finally, in the scene at the open grave, opens a perspective that reaches to the appearance of the Risen One (xvi. 1–8).[1] Certain as it is that these points of view, in accordance with which the Gospel was written, will be regarded as correct views as to the course of development of the life of Jesus, gained by Mark from the facts communicated by Peter, it is just as plain that these by themselves will afford us no sufficiently reliable picture of the order of events and their pragmatic connection; that, indeed, important crises which have determined that course of development, have quite possibly failed as yet to be assigned here their due weight. On the other hand, it is clear that this perspicuous construction of the Gospel allows the points to be brought clearly into view

[1] That the present conclusion of the Gospel (xvi. 9–25), according to the testimony of the Codices as well as from its peculiarity of idiom and method of delineation, did not belong to the original Gospel, may be regarded now as universally granted.

where connections establish themselves which do not appear to be accounted for by them, and which then can only have been given to the evangelist in oral tradition or in that oldest Matthew-document.

Although the Gospel of Mark manifests the intention of giving a picture of the life of Jesus, that was assuredly not the sole motive for its composition. A Gospel which announced itself as the glad tidings of Jesus Christ the Son of God (i. 1), which in the introduction brings Jesus forward as the Son of God, who was heralded by the forerunner, appeared in conformity with prophecy, and was anointed in baptism and sustained in temptation (i. 2–13), can only have had the didactic object of strengthening and establishing faith in the Messiahship of Jesus through the delineation of the course of His life. It is not without a purpose that its culminating point is found in the confession of Peter as to His Messiahship, which was confirmed in the period spent at Jerusalem by the Messianic demonstration on the part of the people, as well as by His own assertions, which became more and more explicit up to the time of His confession before the Council (xii. 6–10 f., xiv. 62); and, finally, in a certain way even by the Gentile captain at the foot of the cross (xv. 39). When we consider how significantly the divinely necessitated fate of Jesus forms the central point in the training of the disciples till the significance for salvation of His death was given expression to by Him with increasing clearness (x. 45, xiv. 24), how it was always being pointed out in the history of the Passion that the individual stages of this had been predicted by Jesus Himself or by the Scriptures, and how the Gospel closes with an allusion to His resurrection,—it is clear that this delineation forms at the same time an apology for the Messiahship of Him who died on the cross. What, after all, was the special *motif* of this establishment and defence of belief in His Messiahship, will be clear to us only when we see that the one long speech with which the Gospel presents us is that uttered by Jesus regarding His second coming (chap. xiii.), the first announcement of which (viii. 38) received its attestation in the sense of the Second Epistle of Peter (i. 16–18) through the transfiguration on the Mount, and to which Jesus triumphantly

referred at the commencement of His deepest humiliation (xiv. 62). It was manifestly the delay of the second coming of Jesus, expected immediately on the ground of expressions like ix. 1, which led to the search in His earthly life, apart altogether from this last decisive proof of His Redeemership, for those elements which might afford a guarantee of it for combating pressing doubt, and for strengthening anew the certainty of His second coming. This didactic aim, however, was nowhere consciously brought to the front; the facts are allowed, as in an epic poem, to tell their own tale; the main interest is formed by the narratives as such, concern for the subject-matter and its details, and the effort to attain a vivid, distinct picture and description. On this account the didactic element in the speeches of Jesus retires into the background; apart from the long speech on the second coming, only sayings and groups of sayings have been communicated, and these are in vital connection with the whole situation, or are woven into animated conversations. Indeed, even in the minutiæ of the style there is visible this literary peculiarity of our bright-colouring, vividly-depicting evangelist.

The Gospel of Mark certainly does not possess exactly the same value as a source that the oldest apostolic writing does; but while any critical reconstruction that we can make of the latter is only partial, we have the former lying before us in its perfect form; for the hypothesis that our second Gospel is only a redaction of this other source, has been proved to be in all its forms untenable. The Mark-document, however, always remains a source of the first rank, because it reflects with perfect directness the impression produced by the narratives of the eye-witness of the life of Jesus. As a guarantee for the literal authenticity of the utterances of Jesus, it is far behind the Matthew-document; but while the picture which the latter presents of many events, in connection with which this or that word so full of significance was spoken, is only an outline, and hence often an incorrect picture; and while the representations which it makes, as to the circumstances in which these events occurred, are never vivid, the Mark-document does, in this particular, amply supplement for us the want which attaches to our oldest source from the conditions and object of its composition. Even where there is

ground for the assumption that the evangelist developed in a wider and freer way a single narrative not directly founded upon the information of his eye-witness, and where he plainly indulges in descriptions which merely express his idea of the course of events, without basing it on the explicit evidence of an individual case, his representation is of invaluable significance to us. For we are here listening to a native of Palestine, who, in the circumstances of which he is treating, is quite at home, and who, from the descriptions of the eye-witness of the incidents of this life, had at his disposal such an amplitude of details, and at any rate preserved such a lifelike impression of them that his descriptions, even where they do not in particulars quite correctly reproduce what actually occurred, can in a higher sense claim to be thoroughly faithful to reality. It is indeed conceivable that a criticism which, in accordance with its philosophical presuppositions, must aim at resolving the material of the evangelical tradition into a shapeless collection of legends, was interested in regarding as the valueless ornamentation of an artificial writer, the rich historical detail which our source affords, and which opposes the most strenuous resistance to this resolving process. Towards the attainment of this end a welcome handle is afforded by the Griesbach hypothesis, which sees in our Gospel only an artificial compilation adorned with the appearance of a certain independence. But before an impartial criticism of the sources, those attempts, which are based not so much on a solid foundation as on airy conjecture, cannot endure, as is shown in a special way in Keim's *Life of Jesus.*

Clement of Alexandria is the first to inform us that Mark wrote in Rome and for Romans; and this much is at once obvious, that a Gospel which is largely occupied in explaining to its readers Jewish customs, localities in Palestine, and Aramaic expressions, cannot have been written for natives of Palestine. When we see how the evangelist expressly connects what Jesus said about marrying again with the circumstances of the Roman law of divorce (x. 12); how in the story of the widow's alms he reduces the coins to Roman money (xii. 42), and assumes the official position of Pilate to be sufficiently well known to his readers (xv. 1); how even his style, through its frequent Latinisms, points to an author who

wrote amid Latin surroundings,—we can only explain the tradition by regarding it as adequately established. With regard to the date, Irenæus informs us that Mark wrote after the death of Peter and Paul, about the end of the sixth decade. It is of more importance that there is in the Gospel no reference to the period after the destruction of Jerusalem, although the later Gospels show how inevitably the powerful impression made by this appalling deed must have left its mark upon them. Even the prophecy of the fall of the temple (xiii. 2) does not give the slightest indication of the manner in which that did historically come to pass; and if the second coming of Jesus appears to some degree involved in a direct connection with the catastrophe in Judea (xiii. 24), it only follows from this, and what we gather in addition from the didactic tendency of the work, that men were now beginning to settle themselves in view of a delay of the second coming, as appears also in the Apocalypse, which was undoubtedly written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Indeed, the reproduction of an expression like ii. 26 seems to point expressly to this, that the shew-bread, the enjoyment of which was reserved for the priests, was still, at the time when the writer lived, presented in the temple. During the latter years of the sixth decade the work of the Apostle Matthew, which appeared in the year 67, could easily enough have been known in Rome in a Greek translation; and thus there arose about the year 69 the work which along with that forms the foundation of our evangelical tradition, and for us a source of the life of Jesus in many respects of equal value.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS.

SINCE Irenæus, ecclesiastical tradition is unanimous in ascribing our first canonical Gospel to the Apostle Matthew. This tradition is, in the form in which it presents itself, untenable, and even in contradiction with itself, inasmuch as it is unanimous also in holding that Matthew wrote in Aramaic, while our first Gospel is without doubt an original Greek document. Still this tradition cannot be destitute of a foundation in fact, for the remotest ecclesiastical antiquity speaks of a work of this apostle (comp. p. 29); and this work, through the ample use which, since the first half of the second century, has been made of written evangelical information, cannot possibly have been completely lost. Its early disappearance is rather to be explained by the fact that the essence of its contents had found its way into other evangelical writings, and that it thus lost all value in the eyes of a generation whose sole interest was in the facts recorded, and which did not in the least occupy our standpoint of estimating the comparative values of sources of information. The fact that our first Gospel passed current in the Church as the work of the apostle, gives ground for the conjecture that that apostolic document has been in its most complete form incorporated in this Gospel, and that here we may rightly be regarded as possessing its essential contents. This conjecture is established in its fullest extent by the analysis of the first Gospel.

A comparison of the first and second Gospels shows that they must be in close relationship to each other in respect of authorship, for they are at one as to contents, arrangement, and expression to a degree which cannot possibly be fully explained from the oral tradition. So long as the assumption that the first Gospel is a directly apostolic document was proceeded upon, this relationship could only be thought of as

consisting in this, that Mark, the pupil of an apostle, used that work of Matthew's. But this assumption contradicts the whole older tradition, which refers our Gospel of Mark to the reminiscences of Peter, contradicts the distinctive peculiarity running all through it of plan, method of narration, and linguistic expression; and makes shipwreck on the perfect impossibility of discovering any plan or method according to which Mark must have abridged our first Gospel. If our first Gospel can, even apart from that, be proved to be not a directly apostolic document, it is not difficult to attempt to explain that relationship through the employment by its author of the Mark-document. And it can actually be shown that the entire contents of the second Gospel—with the perfectly insignificant exceptions of a few unimportant fragments, the omission of which can very easily and clearly be explained—have been transferred to our first Gospel. On the other side there is the fact that the whole plan of the first Gospel is not only essentially conditioned by that of Mark, but that it represents itself as only a carrying out of the latter on a larger scale. When Mark began the delineation of the public activity of Jesus with a picture of His work of teaching and healing belonging to the first and as yet untroubled period of His ministry, which connects itself with especially fond reminiscences of Peter's, our first Gospel, by means of a partial repetition of the heading (iv. 23, comp. ix. 35), incorporates, in its first and most distinctly defined principal portion, in the longest of His speeches (chaps. v.–vii.) a picture of the method of teaching employed by Jesus, and in a long series of narratives of cures (chap. viii. 9) introduces a picture of His ministry of healing, of both of which that heading had already given intimation. When Mark gave, in the second part, a picture of the rising enmity towards Jesus, and, in the third, a picture of the separation between those among the people who received Him and those who did not, the first evangelist, in the second chief portion beginning with the new heading (ix. 35), gives a picture on a larger scale of the insensibility and hostility met with by Jesus (chaps. x.–xiii.). Only in these two portions does a certain independence show itself in its composition, in accordance with the *motifs* of which all deviations from Mark can be amply explained; just

as, on the other hand, the individual points where this perspicuous composition appears to have been subjected to interference are susceptible of explanation from the regard paid to the order preserved by Mark, and from the dependence upon him. From chap. xiv. onwards the first evangelist follows, without any deviation, the order of Mark, although the way in which he frequently treats the narrative portions, which are arranged by the latter in accordance with purely topical *motifs*, as if they followed one another in chronological order, shows that to him these *motifs* are no longer obvious, and that that arrangement can have originated only with Mark. He shows himself the redactor with special clearness in the section which describes Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, because those portions which are arranged by Mark in a purely topical fashion he seeks to bind together and form into a continuous dramatic plot. On the detailed comparison of his delineation with that of Mark, there is met at every step the effort to indicate more precisely the chronological and topical connection, and pragmatically to account for it: to decide with greater accuracy localities and persons, to elucidate the subject-matter or give it a form more lifelike and vivid. Finally, his whole text, when treated solely with regard to the language, proves itself to be a redaction of the text of Mark to such an extent, that even a number of the most striking linguistic peculiarities of Mark have been transferred to our first Gospel.[1] In consequence of this dependence for its forms of expression upon a Greek Gospel, it is impossible for our first Gospel to be only a translation of the Hebrew Matthew; and on account of its obvious employment of the second Gospel, originating as that does from one who was not an apostle, it cannot possibly be directly the work of an eye-witness.

It is evident that the dependence of our first Gospel upon Mark is insufficient of itself to explain its composition; what was taken from that forms only the framework in which an abundance of material, in part wholly new, was inserted. The sketch of the early history, which was borrowed from

[1] The proof of this was led in my work on the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, in the exegesis of details, by means of an accurate analysis of their constitution and a thorough comparison of the parallel passages in all their particulars.

Mark, appears here significantly extended by the Baptist's preaching of repentance, and by the interchanged utterances at the baptism and temptation of Jesus. In the first main part, Christ's method of preaching is exemplified by the great Sermon on the Mount, of which Mark has nothing; and in the descriptions of His deeds of healing there appears a group of narratives—the lepers, the visit to the eastern shore, the healing of the lame man, and the raising from the dead—which Mark introduces in another place in a form so brief and fragmentary, yet withal so decided and moulded, that they must have originated in another source; and in addition there is the healing of the centurion's son, of the two blind men, and an expulsion of demons, none of which are to be found in Mark. The second part opens with the commission-speech, and of this Mark has preserved only a few expressions; then follow the rich speech-portions of chap. xi., which are connected with the message of the Baptist, and are quite awanting in Mark. In chap. xii. the evangelist introduces in its circumstantial connection the speech of defence against the calumnies of the Pharisees, of which Mark again contributes only a few sentences, and joins to it the speech against those who demanded a sign, which in the former is entirely awanting; in chap. xiii. he substantially enlarges the parable-speech. He follows Mark altogether in chaps. xiv.–xvii.; then chap. xviii. is occupied with a variety of speech-material which were introduced here plainly because they were found in Mark (ix. 33–50), but are given in much greater fulness than by him. In the portion immediately succeeding, a parable (xx. 1–16) is joined to a conversation taken from Mark, and the similitude of the rebellious workers in the vineyard is enlarged to a great trilogy of parables (xxi. 28–xxii. 14); then follow the denunciations of chap. xxiii., which occupy the place of a brief warning in Mark (xii. 38–40); and in chap. xxiv. not only does the speech on the second coming, as found in Mark, appear supplemented with entirely new material, but it is continued through the whole of chap. xxv.

That these new materials are borrowed from a second source, is proved by what is made to appear very clearly in the constitution of our Gospel. It is frequently the case that sayings and groups of sayings, which the evangelist

has taken from Mark in the connection in which he had them, and in harmony with his view of them, are repeated in quite another connection and in a light to some degree modified, and this is only to be explained by the fact that he found them in this connection, and looked at in this light, in a second source. This source must mainly have contained speech-portions, and when it did give narratives these were unlike the others, being in a simpler and briefer form; for it is only in this way that it can be explained why it is principally in speech-portions that the first evangelist has supplemented the foundation gained from Mark, and how it is that in those narrative-portions, where he presents us with an independent delineation, this distinguishes itself as being simpler and more original from the ampler and freer representation of Mark. This agrees exactly with the picture of the work of the Apostle Matthew, which we, in accordance with the oldest tradition, were required to form; and only because it depended upon this early evangelist to make this oldest source accessible in a newer form to his readers, do we understand how he would frequently turn back from the unequal though more ample representation of Mark to the simpler delineation of this his main source. There is here disclosed to us very clearly the foundation-thought of its constitution. The form of the oldest apostolic document, which was really only a collection of material, was no longer adequate for the later period. A complete representation of the life of Jesus was desired, and to the evangelist who was not himself an eye-witness of the life of Jesus, nothing presented itself as being such but the oldest attempt in this direction as it is given to us by the Mark-document. The latter is laid by him at the foundation, and affords the historical background for his delineation, and more especially there is borrowed from it the whole history of the Passion. Within the framework thus granted, he tries to place the material derived from the apostolic source, partly introducing particular passages into suitable places to supplement what is there already, partly inserting these in larger masses, as they are now found deposited in chaps. v.–vii., x., xi., xviii., xxiii.–xxv.

When, however, we make a closer examination of these speech-groups, it is clear that in their present form they are

not directly drawn from the source. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's prayer (vi. 7–15) evidently interrupts the course of the definitely arranged polemic against the three examples of the Pharisaic practice of virtue; and the whole section about anxiety and the amassing of treasure (vi. 19–34) not only has nothing to do with what is most manifestly the definite subject of the speech (v. 17–20), but it severs the connection between that polemic and what is plainly a continuation of the same (vii. 1–5), to which there is added, after a fresh interruption (vii. 6–11), first the conclusion (vii. 12), then a glance back towards the commencement of the speech (v. 17). In the commission-speech, the interpolation containing the prophecy of the fate of the disciples (x. 16–39) evidently severs the connection of the threatening (x. 14 f.) with the promise (x. 40–42), and brings in groups of sayings which are plainly out of harmony with the historical situation, and a main section of which (x. 17–22) is given by Mark (xiii. 9–13) in quite another connection, and is also repeated in this place by our evangelist in a somewhat modified form (xxiv. 9–14). In chap. xxiii. the parenetic section (xxiii. 8–12) plainly interrupts the course, throughout polemical, of the speech, by the denunciations pronounced against the ruling classes among the people; and the middle of chap. xxiv. is so plainly the conclusion of a speech on the second coming (xxiv. 32–36), that all that follows this can only have been added by the evangelist. These examples make it evident that in the large groups of speeches of the first Gospel, there have been collected together into larger wholes many groups of sayings retained in an unconnected form in the oldest apostolic writing; and this observation is established in the clearest manner by the fact that we find these collected and preserved in the third Gospel in this original state of separation. The evangelist has sought not only to arrange the materials of the apostolic source within the framework of the Mark-narrative, but also to form them into larger and more comprehensive groups. In this attempt, some portions, which he did not succeed in arranging in either of these ways, may have gone amissing; but all that we can ascertain from an analysis of the third Gospel, regarding the condition of this source, shows us that apart from a few parables, which are extremely difficult

to fit into the speech-construction of our evangelist, there must have been extremely little of anything of this kind. In like manner, not only does the comparison of texts of parallel passages in the first and third Gospels show us in how much more faithful and original a form the speech-portions of the oldest source are contained in the former than in the latter, but it is only the faithfulness with which it reproduces, which makes it possible for us very often, in spite of the interpolations, to perceive clearly the connection which was interfered with by them, and in spite of the changes in their connections and in the view taken of them, which the interpolated sayings undergo in the position awarded them by the evangelist, to establish with certainty their original meaning and connection. Accordingly, tradition has with perfect right always believed that in our first Gospel it possessed the old apostolic writing according to its real contents. It was only a new, more comprehensive form, and one enlarged by the ample material of the Mark Gospel, for which the old original was willingly forgotten and allowed to perish.

Besides both these sources, the evangelist was not entirely without oral tradition, as is shown especially by the narratives from the early history in the first two chapters; but apart from the story of the temptation (xvii. 24–27), of the end of Judas (xxvii. 3–8), and of the watchers at the grave (xxvii. 62–66, xxviii. 11–15), Mark's representation is enriched only by a few maxims spoken by Jesus, and some unconnected details. The separation of these portions succeeds all the more easily as there appears in them the distinctly marked characteristics of the evangelist's language, by which it is clearly distinguished from the linguistic peculiarities of the apostolic source, as well as from those of the Mark representation which is for the most part embraced in the Gospel. There are, in addition, some explanations of parables and a number of pragmatic reflections interwoven with the delineation, that more than anything else indicate the points of view from which the evangelist himself regards the history which he relates. Throughout the whole Gospel these are always employed to indicate that in the individual events of the life of Jesus, and in His activity, the Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament has been fulfilled. Indeed, these indications

are exceedingly instructive for the understanding of the whole construction of our Gospel. So often as the indications of this foretold in the Old Testament—such as the healing of the sick by Jesus (viii. 17), His attitude towards His enemies (xii. 17–21), His parable-discourses—are not found about the end of the sections which treat of the corresponding branch of His activity, but strangely enough in the middle of them, this is explained by a glance at Mark, where all these passages appear as eddies in the current of his representation, and which the evangelist employed as points of attachment for these reflections. Just as important is another phenomenon. The current Greek translation of the oldest apostolic document does not offer an independent translation of the Old Testament expressions which the latter contained of course in Aramaic, but, with the exception of one quotation (Matt. xi. 10; comp. Luke vii. 27) where this translation did not correspond with the original nor with the application made of it, it reproduces the translation of the Septuagint, which was relied on by Greek-speaking Jews. And Mark, too, has rendered the Old Testament expressions, which occur in the speeches of Jesus, according to this translation with also but one exception (xiv. 27), which has the same ground. Where our evangelist derives from Mark or from the apostolic source, his quotations follow simply the version of the Septuagint; but where he inserts independent quotations into his delineation, he does indeed for the most part employ the Septuagint, which was commonly used by himself and his readers, but being a learned Jew who knew and understood the original text, he goes many times directly to it; indeed, there are some statements which he could only have gained from the original text, for what he extracted from it is not at all the sense given by the Septuagint.

From these pragmatic proofs of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in the history of Jesus, it is now clear that although we have here to do with a complete biography of Jesus, which begins with a narrative of His birth, introduced by a genealogical table, and closes with the farewell on the hill in Galilee, the tendency of this work is throughout not biographical, but essentially didactic. The attempt is perpetually being made to establish that there is in it this didactic

tendency, and that the author desired to prove to Jewish Christians the Messiahship of Jesus. But the Jewish Christians as such already believed in the Messiahship of Jesus; so there must have been, just as in the Gospel of Mark, a special occasion present which made the strengthening of their faith appear a necessity. This occasion was no longer merely the delay of the second coming; for our Gospel, which already uses the Gospel of Mark, introduces us to a later period. Many coincidences show that its author had already become acquainted with the Apocalypse (comp. especially xxiv. 30), which was written after the beginning of the year 70; and the allusion, introduced into a simile of Jesus, to the destruction of Jerusalem (xxii. 7), shows that this event lay already behind him, even if the prophecy as to the second coming (xxiv. 29 f.), which is reproduced quite without change, proves that it can have been written only immediately after the event. The promise might still be fulfilled by the Lord's return immediately after the catastrophe. But along with the fall of the Jewish state and its capital, all national hopes, which for the Jewish Christians always connected themselves with the Messiahship of Jesus, were for ever shattered. Whatever they had found in Jesus or had understood regarding Him, the Messiah of Israel as He was promised by the prophets it appeared that He could not be, for He had certainly not made Israel, through the completion of its theocracy, the divine rallying point of all the nations of the earth. The fact was obvious that the Gospel was being preached to all nations, and was finding its place among them, while Israel had forfeited its blessings. Indeed, the catastrophe which happened to them, showing as it did Israel forsaken by God and trampled under foot by the Gentiles, was much more in immediate connection with the appearance of Jesus. An earthly realization of the kingdom of God in the form of a national theocracy, such as prophecy held out hopes of, had not taken place, and after this catastrophe never could. There remained now only the hope of the final completion in the world to come—the heavenly kingdom. With the fall of the Jewish state and of the temple at Jerusalem, fell also for ever a large portion of the legal ordinances of the Old Testament, and thus the development of a new epoch which began with the appearance

of Jesus seemed to be involved in the destruction of the sanctuaries of Israel, which the Messiah was to come to establish for all time and make perfect.

It was these circumstances which prepared the severest shock for the faith of the Jewish Christians, and to remove this stumbling-block was the didactic aim of a Gospel in which the old apostolic document, with the help of the Gospel of Mark and individual oral traditions, was worked up into a comprehensive picture of the life of Jesus. It begins with a genealogical table, the aim of which throughout is to show that Jesus is the legitimate heir of David's kingly house, in whom, according to the divine direction of His destiny, the kingdom should be again set up in Israel; for though born of a virgin, in conformity with the promise, He received valid adoption (chap. i.) at the hands of Joseph, one of the Davidic line, who in obedience to the divine command had taken to his home the woman with child. But the single incident which is recorded of His infancy makes significant allusion to the fact that Gentiles coming from a distance paid homage to the Messiah child, but that the king in Israel pursued it with deadly hatred, so that it had to be saved through a marvellous dispensation (chap. ii.), which contributed also to the fulfilment of the prophecy. It is not without design that the evangelist brings forward in the early history the fact that the Baptist had already directed severe rebukes towards the dominant parties among the people (iii. 7). With a plainly apologetic purpose, he remarks that the rearing of Jesus in despised Nazareth (instead of in the ancient royal residence) is already indicated by prophecy (ii. 23); and with a like purpose does he refer to an Old Testament prophetic word as fulfilled in the fact that Jesus first began to declare His message of salvation among the inhabitants of northern Galilee, of whom Gentiles formed a large element; and soon afterwards it is stated that the inhabitants of the surrounding Gentile countries came to Him and sought for help at His hand (iv. 24). Thus at the very beginning of the Gospel intimations are not awanting that it was thoroughly in accordance with prophecy that Jesus appeared as the Messiah of Israel, but that from the first the leaders of the people showed themselves hostile to the cause

of the Messiah's kingdom, while, on the contrary, Gentiles were inclined to accept Him.

That Jesus did not attack the sanctuaries of Israel, is shown by the evangelist's choosing the great speech as the first example of His teaching, and by his enlarging it to a comprehensive legislation for the kingdom of God, in which Jesus recognises the Old Testament legal revelation in its fullest extent and to its every tittle, though teaching that it should be understood and fulfilled in quite a different way from that in which the scribes and Pharisees understood and fulfilled it (chaps. v.–vii.). In an expression inserted by him into the conclusion of the speech, the evangelist expressly represents Jesus as excluding from His discipleship those who acted lawlessly (vii. 22 f.). Into one of the first narratives of healing, too, in which Jesus laments over those among His people who were unbelieving, he does not omit to insert a prophecy of Jesus which refers to the rejection of Israel and the participation of the Gentiles in salvation (viii. 11 f.). Still the speech at the sending forth of the disciples, with which the evangelist opens his second main section, and which in his representation appears as a prophecy regarding the later mission of the apostles, shows that Jesus originally appointed the Twelve exclusively for the mission within Israel, intending therefore salvation for His own people (x. 5 f.). But the prophecies of the fate of the disciples interwoven into this speech already give rise to a foreboding as to the reception which they would meet with among their own people. Chap. xi., in the speeches collected together there, shows directly how even the Baptist was in error as to Jesus; how the people, in their childish self-will, desired only an immediate perfecting of the Messiah's kingdom; how the towns in which Jesus had performed the most of His miracles remained impenitent; and how the truth which brings salvation remained concealed from the wise and prudent in the nation. From the twelfth chapter we learn that it was the Pharisees who persecuted Jesus with relentless hostility, and sought by means of calumnies and testing questions to turn away from Him the people, on whom then the judgment on account of obduracy, foretold by prophecy, is through the parable-speech of Jesus accomplished. It is not without a

purpose that the evangelist here in a prophetic word again refers to the ultimate participation of the Gentiles in salvation (xii. 21). But he expressly points out that Jesus Himself did not yet place His foot upon Gentile soil, and that He only fulfils the request for help of the Canaanitish woman with a most emphatic reservation of His exclusive destination for the people of Israel (xv. 21–29). In the dispute regarding the laws as to purification he expressly inserts a statement, according to which Jesus desires the abrogation only of the Pharisaic tradition, while He explicitly recognises (xv. 13) the law which His Father has planted, just as on a subsequent occasion, in spite of this keen polemic against the scribes, He expressly recognises them as far as they are only emphasizing the law of Moses (xxiii. 2 f.).

After the malignity of the ruling parties has once more been confirmed, of whose erroneous teaching Jesus had to warn His disciples (xvi. 1, 12), and it has been shown that the people, as a whole, have no capacity for perceiving the significance of His appearance (xvi. 14), the evangelist introduces the promise made to Peter, which makes it clear that Jesus had to give up hope of the establishment of the kingdom of God in the community at large, and look forward to the gathering of a narrower Messianic Church within the circle of His own people (xvi. 18). With this is connected the fact that the only narrative which he inserts into the section, taken wholly from Mark, points to a future in which the children of God are free from the temple tribute, and when the whole constitution of the temple worship is called in question (xvii. 24–27). The intimations, which are now beginning and always growing clearer, regarding the destined sufferings of Jesus, were already furnished to the evangelist by Mark. But the way in which he places in the foreground of the section devoted to Jerusalem an important disputation of Jesus with the chief priests and the ruling parties among the people, makes it very prominent that this result was through their own fault, and that in consequence of this the kingdom of God is passing over from the Jews to the Gentiles (xxi. 43), and the rebellious capital is to be handed over to destruction (xxii. 7). Notwithstanding this there is distinct and repeated reference made in the history of the Passion to the fact that

each individual incident has come to us precisely as it was foretold by the prophets. Finally, our evangelist alone makes special mention of the fact that the Gentile governor disclaims participation in the guilt of His death; that the people, incited by their leaders, but with mad infatuation, call down upon their heads the punishment for the deed (xxvii. 24 f.). But, above all, what is recorded of the watchers by the grave shows how the chief men among the people, who seduced them to hostility towards Jesus, at last attempt to destroy by a monstrous fraud the impression made by the miracle of the resurrection, and so to discredit it that the message of the risen One would be rejected by the people (xxviii. 15).

In the thoroughly characteristic closing section of our Gospel (xxviii. 16–20), He who had been elevated to the right hand of God appears to His disciples on the hill of Galilee, and proclaims Himself as the King of heaven and of earth. He who was born heir of the kingdom in Israel has not ascended the throne of His Father as He should have done, because His people, led away by those in authority, rejected and killed Him; but He has become, by the hand and power of God, the Messianic Ruler of the world. No more to Israel does He send His commands, as He purposed at first, but to all peoples, because, through the fault of the people of Israel, the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to the heathen. No longer does He direct to the law for instruction, but to His commandments, in which, indeed, the will of God, revealed in the law, is perfectly fulfilled, only in a form other than that which was once looked forward to for the theocracy in Israel. No more does He promise that Jehovah will make the temple His dwelling-place among His people, for the temple has fallen in ruinous heaps. But He promises to His disciples His abiding divine and gracious presence. That is the sum of what the Gospel proclaims to the faithful in Israel; by which it aims at removing every stumbling-block and strengthening their faith anew till the approaching day of the second coming.

According to the traditional hypothesis, the Gospel was written by a Palestinian for Palestinians. This hypothesis is obviously incorrect. Readers who require to have interpreted to them the names Immanuel (i. 23) and Golgotha (xxvii. 33),

the passage from a psalm which Jesus used as a prayer on the cross, cannot possibly have been Palestinians, the language of whom is Aramaic, even if, according to i. 21, they know the meaning of the name Jesus, which was in common use among the Jews in all places. The Jewish customs connected with purification and the Passover were certainly familiar to them, for the evangelist omits the relevant explanations given in Mark; because these would be observed as carefully in the dispersion as in Palestine, and every pious Jew learns to know them, because he once at least makes his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or hears what others have to say about it, in addition to what he has, apart from this, learned regarding them from the reading of the Old Testament in the synagogue. A custom, however, like that of the yearly amnesty at Easter appears to be unknown to them (xxvii. 15); and the way in which Nazareth and Capernaum, or places like Gethsemane and Golgotha, are introduced, shows that it was not written for readers who were familiar with the geography of their fatherland. That Antinomian libertinism on which the evangelist repeatedly makes sayings of Jesus to bear (vii. 22 f., xiii. 41, xxiv. 11 f.), in order to do battle with it as being something which seriously threatened the Christian life of his readers, can have made its appearance only in Gentile-Christian circles, where Paul's doctrine of freedom was misunderstood and abused; and this points us to the dispersion, where we, according to the other writings of the New Testament, meet with this phenomenon.

Of greater importance for us is the fact that the author cannot be a native of Palestine. He is certainly a learned Jew, who reads the Old Testament in the original; he knows the names of the Roman procurator and of the high priest at the time of Jesus; he reverences Jerusalem as the Holy City (iv. 5, xxvii. 53); in more than one place, however, the accuracy of his knowledge of Palestinian localities and circumstances is more than doubtful, and the way in which he speaks of "that land" (ix. 26, 31) shows incontestably that he himself was no Palestinian. It is only thus that the construction of the whole work can be explained. In the year 70 there must have been so many eye-witnesses living in Palestine, as well as others who, through what was related

by eye-witnesses, were acquainted with the life of Jesus as a whole, that an author who desired to form the materials of the oldest apostolic writing into a connected history of Jesus did not require to have recourse to a work which, like the Gospel of Mark, is by one who was not an eye-witness. But above all, he must have had to deal with quite another body of traditions—the testimony of eye-witnesses; while all that our evangelist adds to his source is not only extremely scanty, but bears manifold and distinct traces of not being formed at first-hand. Then, too, the way in which he tries at one time to adjust the representation of his main narrative-source, at another to explain more definitely how it arose, or even to develope it, shows that here purely literary *motifs* are brought into play, and that he has not at his disposal an independent tradition regarding these matters. It is only in this way that it was possible for him to adopt from Mark the whole historical background of his narrative, even when that plainly rests on the unreliable compilation of one who was not an eye-witness, and when we are obliged to correct it from other sources, or by means of historical criticism, and also that it was practicable for him to build further on the same basis, without regard to the literary *motif* of the Mark-document. All this is comprehensible only of a Jew who lived in the Dispersion, within the circles of which detached traditions of the history of Jesus were certainly circulating, but who sees that for this history he must direct himself substantially to documentary sources.

At a distance, in the countries of the Gentiles, where the pious Jew, as well as the believer in the Messiah, always felt himself a stranger, and whence he looked with a yearning that was never at rest towards the Holy City, the metropolis of his own country, awaiting with redoubled and eager longing the time when the commencement of the Messianic realization should, according to the ancient prophetic promise, gather together again the scattered children of Israel to the hill of Zion: it is there that the catastrophe of the year 70, which destroyed all these hopes, would be felt the hardest blow. It is there that the gospel, which in this fateful moment established anew faith in the Messiah, solving as it did the dark riddle of this destiny, must have been a labour of faith, which carried these rich blessings to Jewish Christians who were

farther afield. It must have been this gospel of the Jewish Christians, with its allusions to what had taken place through the fault of the people, and to the transference which Jesus had full in view of the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles, which chiefly contributed to bring about an ever more thorough union of the believers in Israel with the great Gentile Church. Not without reason the second century, and, resting on its authority, the universal Christian Church, have always heard in this Gospel Matthew himself speaking, whose original work is irrevocably lost to us, but whose invaluable memoranda are there preserved, and are of value to us in the proportion in which discernment of the historical origin and literary construction of this Gospel of the Jewish Christians teaches us how to restore these in their original form.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE GENTILE CHRISTIANS.

OUR third canonical Gospel, as well as its continuation, the Acts of the Apostles, has, since the time of Irenæus, been unanimously ascribed by tradition to Luke, a Greek physician, whom we first find mentioned by Paul in the letters written during his imprisonment (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24; comp. 2 Tim. iv. 11). From the Acts of the Apostles, however, it is clear that his acquaintance with Paul began at a much earlier date; that he accompanied him when he crossed for the first time from Asia to Europe; at a later period he was with him on his last journey to Jerusalem, as well as when he was being transported to Rome, and was a sharer in the shipwreck at Malta. That the record of these journeyings originates with Luke is now admitted even by those critics who hold that the Acts of the Apostles is the work of a later writer, who only made use of these memoranda of Luke, as it is otherwise extremely difficult to explain how tradition should have come to ascribe the authorship of the book to a companion of Paul, whom he very seldom mentions. But without the hypothesis of an intentional deception, criticism has not yet succeeded in giving an explanation of any degree of probability of the way in which the narrator includes himself among the *dramatis personæ* in those portions which ought to consist of the memoranda of some one else; and the manifest relationship between those portions which are written in good Greek, and the preface to the Gospel, which forms a truly classical period, leads to the conclusion that the companion of Paul, who there relates events in which he had a personal share, was, as tradition assumes, the author of both works. At a later date the view prevalent in regard to it was, that it bestowed apostolic authority on a Gospel written by one who was not an eye-witness; but it is Origen who

first appears to found it upon a plainly erroneous interpretation of a Pauline passage (2 Cor. viii. 18), and it is Eusebius who first tells us that the passages in which Paul speaks of his Gospel were held to refer to the Gospel of Luke; for the custom which belonged to a later time of calling the writings containing narratives regarding Christ, Gospels, now extended to the New Testament, in which only the tidings of salvation which He proclaimed were designated by this expression.

It was only a later period, which had lost every historical conception of the circumstances of the apostolic age, which could dream of wishing to draw a parallel between the relation in which the Gospel of Luke stood to Paul, and that in which the Gospel of Mark stood to Peter. That the author of the third Gospel was a follower of Paul can be demonstrated, quite apart from the proof afforded by the construction of its continuation, the Acts of the Apostles. It is not so much individual coincidences with peculiarities of Pauline expression, or isolated allusions to passages in the Pauline Epistles, that are here to be considered. Too much stress ought not to be laid on the fact that the appearance of the Risen One to Peter, mentioned by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5), is attested by Luke only (xxiv. 34). Perfectly decisive, however, is the fact that the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, given in the third Gospel, in proportion as it deviates from the older tradition, comes more and more into accurate agreement with the Pauline account (1 Cor. xi.). That for his special information as to the life of Jesus, Luke was indebted to Paul to the same degree as Mark was for his to Peter, cannot be thought of. Paul had not himself been an eye-witness of the life of Jesus; and the perfect silence in his Epistles regarding the details of this life, makes it sufficiently plain that what information he had gained from the first apostles was far from being of such extent and significance as to enable or incline him to supply a follower with material for a picture of this life. Indeed, Irenæus, with whom our tradition regarding the Gospel of Luke begins, shows himself perfectly conscious of the fact that information as to the source from which Luke borrowed his information is only to be derived from the preface to his Gospel (i. 1–4), and

that this leads us back directly to the primitive apostolic tradition.

In this preface Luke gives us, in the first place, to understand that he himself had not been an eye-witness of the life of Jesus, but that he had followed with the very greatest care the tradition of the eye-witnesses. Whether he means by this oral or written tradition, his expression does not determine. But as we know of the work of one eye-witness which is certainly older than our Gospel, the supposition is probable that in his researches this one would not escape him. He expressly draws a parallel between his undertaking and the works of others, who likewise, on the basis of the tradition of eye-witnesses, have attempted to arrange in an orderly way the events of the life of Jesus. He does not actually say that he has used these attempts in his own; but the idea of the Church Fathers, that he found fault with and placed his own in opposition to them, is quite untenable. Certainly they cannot have proved sufficient for him, or he would not have undertaken a new one; but attesting, as he did, the fact that they rested upon the tradition of eye-witnesses, it is impossible that in his inquiries concerning these he should pass over those sources, secondary though they might be. Of such attempts, of which there were several in his time, we are acquainted with at least one that corresponds completely to his description, our Gospel of Mark; and the fact that before this, a short time after its origination, it had been made use of in the composition of our first Gospel, attests the extent of its dissemination and the value set upon it, and it may therefore be taken for granted that Luke was acquainted with and used it. This hypothesis is confirmed with the utmost clearness by the comparison of the third with the second Gospel. Only the unfortunate hypothesis of Griesbach has been able to shut its eyes to the fact that throughout large sections Luke shows himself dependent upon Mark for his arrangement and his mode of delineation; that often in these sections his text presents itself in form and matter simply as an elucidation, amplification, adjustment, and simplification of the text of Mark; that the narrative of the third Gospel often presupposes characteristic traits in Mark which are passed over by the redactor; that even the linguistic peculiarities of

the second Gospel are in many cases adopted, and in contrast with the radically different style of Luke clearly prove themselves to be an element originally foreign to him.[1]

We know of still another attempt to represent on the basis of the tradition of eye-witnesses the events of the life of Jesus in an orderly manner,—one, however, which, unlike the Gospel of Mark, does not depend mainly upon the oral tradition of an eye-witness, but on the written tradition of the Apostle Matthew; and that is our first Gospel. But certainly as it can be demonstrated that Luke employed the Gospel of Mark, so certainly can it be proved that he was not acquainted with our canonical Matthew. In those passages where the peculiarities of both evangelists are brought forward most strikingly, in the story of the Nativity and the various appearances of the Risen One, there is not the slightest trace of their being connected with one another; indeed, their reports are so thoroughly mutually exclusive, that it is impossible that the one evangelist can have been acquainted with the work of the other. Even where Mark's Gospel has been made use of by both, it has been done in a perfectly independent manner. Luke has not accepted one of the alterations on the order of the narratives as given by Mark which the first evangelist made in his first two parts, in consequence of the construction of his work being here possessed of a relative independence, while admitting some deviations the *motif* of which was perfectly different; and in the account of the dissensions at Jerusalem, in which the first evangelist completes most fully the report of Mark, Luke holds firmly by the simple sequence of events as given by Mark. He has the brief warning to the scribes instead of the fearful denunciations of woe which close the scene in Matthew, although he introduces this in another—if historically unlikely—place, and ends with Mark's innocent narrative of the widow's mite, which the first Gospel must have eliminated as disturbing the dramatic movement. Where in individual sections both reproduce Mark's narratives, Luke as seldom gives the interpolations characteristic of the first Gospel as does the first evangelist those characteristic of Luke. This is brought forward in a

[1] The proofs of this, by means of a thorough comparison of texts, are given in all their details in my *Gospel of Mark.*

highly characteristic fashion in the history of the Passion, where the first Gospel follows Mark exclusively. It is abundantly evident that each has in a different manner appropriated and interpreted the representation of Mark; and where both elucidate, explain, and adjust his text, it is done by each in a way all his own. On the other hand, a number of examples has been pointed out where, in their treatment of Mark's idiomatic mode of expression, or in their omission of single phrases of his, both evangelists are certainly in striking agreement; but, in these extremely rare instances, the coincidences arise from the identity of the subjects.[1] When at a later period the desire has again been shown to admit on this account an acquaintance on the part of Luke with the first Gospel, the fact is overlooked that it is absolutely impossible to explain how—these quite unimportant idiomatic coincidences apart—it has not exercised a more all-pervading influence on the composition of his Gospel.

Indeed, it is the fact that Luke was not acquainted with our first Gospel, and yet has a great quantity of material in common with it, which has led to the discovery, so decisive for the criticism of the Gospels, that this source which the first evangelist has combined with Mark's narrative was employed by Luke also, along with the second Gospel (comp. p. 30). This only confirms what even apart from this we should have gathered from his preface, viz.: That the oldest apostolic document formed for him a second source, from

[1] They may be explained in different ways, and several do of themselves afford points of contact. Further, it must not be forgotten how easily the text of the second Gospel, in an age which was far removed from that of our witnesses to the text, and in which the farther distant it was the less was it protected by the idea of a meaning which should itself provide a law for it, or even by sanctity, may have had additions made to it, or have been changed in expression, without its being necessary to reckon with an original Mark (comp. p. 32), and how easily a comprehensive law of uniformity may be enforced in the case of the text of our first and third Gospels as actually appears in our various readings. Even if they remain unexplained and inexplicable, the evidence which is here afforded by so many facts of quite unequal importance can by no means be discredited. This is apparently all the more confirmed by the fact that not only did none of the pragmatical reflections of the first evangelist, particularly his proofs of the fulfilment of Scripture, find their way into the Gospel of Luke, but none even of his peculiar idioms and turns of expression, although otherwise the latter shows itself to have been very largely influenced by its sources in idiomatic expression.

which he derived the tradition of eye-witnesses. Just as in the first Gospel, so here it not unfrequently happens that sayings which Luke at one time introduces in the connection in which Mark has them, are repeated by him in another place in the connection in which they are found in his other source. Only thus is it possible to explain the recurrence in chap. x. of the speech on the sending forth of the disciples, which is given in chap. ix. as it is in Mark. But the way in which he has combined the material of the oldest source with the narrative of Mark in quite a different manner from that in which the first evangelist has done so, only establishes anew the fact that he does not know our first Gospel. Of the great groups of speeches of the latter there is not a trace; rather has he retained in their original independence the various series of sayings which by the first evangelist are pieced together into larger wholes, and not seldom in cases where the first evangelist has interpolated them into Mark's narrative, or has brought them into connection with the fragments contained in Mark. It is only so that there can be explained the peculiar phenomenon, that while in other respects the first evangelist has preserved the speeches of the apostolic source with greater faithfulness than Luke, who often gives them in the form of a free redaction, yet where the first evangelist introduces such material in addition to Mark, he allows himself to be largely influenced by the very free version of the latter, while they are found in a still more original form in Luke, who introduces them in the connection in which they were in the oldest source. In the case, too, of the narrative portions of the oldest source, Luke not infrequently falls back, from the highly coloured picture given by Mark, on the simpler version of the oldest source, and thus connects himself with the first Gospel not only through like omissions, but sometimes also through the use of the same expressions. But the fact that this occurs only sporadically makes it plain that it is not acquaintance with the first Gospel, but the employment of a common source, which has given rise to these coincidences. Where both employ materials which are not found in Mark, their mutual independence is shown by this, that they try in very different ways to elucidate, explain, and interweave them.

It is decisive for this conclusion that the whole construction of Luke's Gospel is very clearly explained on the supposition of the employment of these two sources. There is not found here any formation of topically arranged groups of narratives such as those on which the construction of the Gospel of Mark depends, and which have been partly transferred to our first Gospel. In a more historical manner the whole public activity of Jesus is divided simply into His ministry in Galilee and Jerusalem; and between these, the first and third divisions, is inserted a second, which depicts the extra-Galilean ministry, which the evangelist not incorrectly represents as a life of continuous journeying outside of Galilee, the final goal of which was Jerusalem. The first of these divisions rests simply on Mark, whom, with the exception of a single transposition explicable from its didactic aim (comp. p. 86 f.), Luke follows unbrokenly up to the choice of the apostles (iv. 14–vi. 19). Luke finds that the oldest source has placed the so-called Sermon on the Mount immediately after that incident; and now not only does he insert this speech, but he introduces along with it a variety of materials from the same source in the order in which they stood there, as far as the great parable-speech, from which he takes only the parable of the sower (vi. 20–viii. 8), because by means of the conversation which Mark connects with that he returns again into the current of this source in order to follow it without variation on to the end of the Galilean ministry (viii. 9–ix. 50). There is certainly a number of narratives omitted here (Mark vi. 45–viii. 26), partly because they took place outside Galilee, partly because they concern circumstances which had lost their significance for his Gentile-Christian readers, partly because the evangelist, embarrassed already by the abundance of material, was, of two related narratives, wont to adopt only one. But as for the rest, there is in this narrative, apart from the repetition of the anecdote of the visit of the relatives of Jesus (viii. 19–21), neither any variation from the sequence of Mark, nor the introduction of anything new. In contrast to this, the second division begins with a great interpolation (ix. 51–xviii. 14), in which materials from the apostolic source are actually employed. It is plain that Luke inferred from the contents of the commission-

speech, contained in this source, and which forms the first important part in the division which is taken from it, that it presupposed the conclusion of the connected Galilean ministry of Jesus; and under the assumption, not altogether justifiable, that in that source the materials were arranged in chronological order, he considered himself able to allocate all that followed to this activity carried on at a distance from Galilee, or to the journeys of Jesus. It is just the interpolation which is of such incomparable importance to us, because we can gather with greater certainty what was the order preserved in that source, and can with perfect certainty decide what was the original form of a large portion of it. Luke returns to Mark in order to glean from him what he states regarding the ministry of Jesus in Perea and Judea (xviii. 15–xix. 27). Here also there is very little omitted, and that on grounds we have already learned to recognise, while an occasional parable is inserted from the apostolic source. In the third division (xix. 28–xxiii. 56), which contains the ministry in Jerusalem with the addition of the history of the Passion, Luke was, of course, quite dependent on Mark, from whom he borrows the single incident which he contains regarding the history of the resurrection (xxiv. 1–11).

The preface of Luke's Gospel speaks, however, of many attempts to arrange the facts of the Gospel history, although up to this time we have discovered only one which Luke had lying before him. It is, indeed, by no means asserted that all the writings which the evangelist has in view were comprehensive representations of the life of Jesus; it can only have been the public life of Jesus, or a single view of it, His teachings, His works of healing, His contests with the Pharisees, which were represented in such writings; and the very fragmentary character of these documents may have brought it about, that owing to the existence of our more complete Gospels they were quickly forgotten, and have disappeared without leaving a trace. No doubt Luke has incorporated in his Gospel everything essential which he found in these sources, and it thus exhibits a wealth of new material supplementary to what was derived from Mark and the apostolic source. Since in the preface he expressly claims to be acquainted with all that

had happened from the first, we need not be surprised at his finding a work, the special object of which was to relate the history of the birth of Jesus and that of His forerunner, from which he borrows the rich contents of his first two chapters, and perhaps the genealogical table in the third. This source is doubtless to be referred to a Jewish Christian of Palestine; for the whole manner of narrating is of set purpose manifestly formed after the model of the sacred history of the Old Testament, and the strongly Hebraic character of the language contrasts so strangely with the faultless period of the preface, that it can only have been written by one who was at home in the Old Testament, and whose native speech was the dialect of Palestine. In the preliminary history of the Baptist there is combined not only the portion supplied by Mark and the apostolic source, but also a call to repentance by the Baptist to the various classes of the people (iii. 10–14), and this must have been derived from a special source. In the history of the public activity of Jesus we find a number of narratives of which Luke must have found a representation quite *sui generis* in the sources which are peculiar to himself, such as the calling of Peter (v. 1–11), the appearance of Jesus in Nazareth (iv. 16–30), the healing of the centurion's son (vii. 2–10), and the dispute concerning the greatest commandment (x. 25–37). As he interwove both of the former in the first portion of his first section, which he borrowed from Mark, and has combined them harmoniously with the representation of Mark, so has he introduced the two latter in the interpolations from the apostolic source, and combined them with his representation. Other narratives belonging to special sources only connect themselves after a fashion with the similar narratives of Mark and the oldest Matthew-document, without being identical with either of them. Thus he borrows from them a raising from the dead (vii. 11–17), the story of an anointing (vii. 36–50), a healing on the Sabbath (xiii. 10–17), and the story of the woman who blessed the mother of Jesus (xi. 27, 28); but also some singular incidents, like that of the rejection of Jesus in Samaria (ix. 52–56), the story of Martha and Mary (x. 38–42), the grateful Samaritan (xvii 11–19), and Zacchæus (xix. 1–10). As regards speeches

only a few parables appear to have been borrowed from this source, such as the prodigal son (chap. xv.), the rich man and Lazarus (chap. xvi.), the Pharisee and the publican (chap. xviii.), perhaps also the prophecy regarding Jerusalem (xix. 39–44).

His sources must also have included the history of the Passion; for here we see Luke deviating so thoroughly from Mark, that this can only be explained by his having had before him quite an independent representation of the same subjects. In the history of the last Supper he takes for the most part a course peculiar to himself. Even if the narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper rests on the Pauline tradition, still the unmasking of the traitors and the presumptuous saying of Peter are related here so differently and in such a peculiar connection, that our author must have had before him the representation of another source. This is so in the case of the prayer in Gethsemane and the proceedings in the Council. The scene before Herod is peculiar to him (xxiii. 4–16), and a series of incidents in the details of the crucifixion, especially the word to the daughters of Jerusalem (xxiii. 27–31), and the conversation of Jesus with the two malefactors (xxiii. 39–43), as well as in the history of the resurrection, the narrative of the disciples belonging to Emmaus, with that of the appearance on Easter-eve (xxiv. 13–43). Since the materials peculiar to Luke extend over the whole range of the life of Jesus, from the announcement of His birth and that of His forerunner to the appearances of the Risen One, and since there is almost no side of this life, which is readily handled by tradition, that is not represented by some narrative or another, the call of the disciples, intercourse with publicans and sinners, conflict with the scribes, cures on the Sabbath, contact with Gentiles and Samaritans, the raising of a dead man, the parable-speeches and prophecies regarding the future, the supposition is ever suggesting itself, that besides Mark's Gospel there lay before the evangelist another comprehensive delineation of the whole life of Jesus, even if his assertions regarding the many men, to whose attempts he already refers, will scarcely permit of all the materials peculiar to himself being allotted to this source. True, we are in no position to ascertain the construction or date of composition of that

original source, or of anything else used by him. It is only certain that they were not the accounts of eye-witnesses, but such as repeated, and perhaps not at first hand, the tradition of eye-witnesses; this is made clear by the fact that these sources do not, apart from a few parables and isolated sayings, offer anything really new in the form of speeches. It is very remarkable that in a large number of these narratives there are coincidences with Johannine traditions, although in many places these appear to be introduced by the evangelist into his material in accordance with oral tradition; and as at least the principal source, which begins with the nativity, originated in Palestine, we are warranted in assuming that in these other sources there were embodied many traditions of the greatest value, derived from the circles of eye-witnesses, if not, in the strictest sense, of apostles.

Just as little can it with perfect certainty be established that Luke used exclusively documentary sources. Since he, at all events, came to Palestine in Paul's company, the possibility must not be excluded of his becoming acquainted there with oral tradition; for even his account of the Lord's Supper does by no means necessarily depend upon what is given as known regarding it in the Epistle to the Corinthians, but rather on the mode in which Paul, according to this Epistle, was wont to recount the institution of the Lord's Supper, and to repeat it at the ceremony of breaking of bread. Apart from isolated notices, such as that of the ministering women (viii. 2 f.), it is less individual portions of material peculiar to him, than the way in which he sometimes reproduces the material taken from his sources, which leads back to the oral tradition. Certain as it is that he was acquainted with and made literary use of the oldest Matthew-document, still, many coincidences in expression with that document, which are found in places where he has made literary use of Mark, less suggest reminiscences of these expressions, than the way in which he was involuntarily influenced by the oldest type of narration, which really obtained fixation in it, and thus became more stereotyped. In like manner also, many striking deviations from the representation of Mark's Gospel are to be referred, not so much to literary *motif*, as to the way in which events, which were related with especial

frequency, came to be represented, both as to form and matter, in oral tradition. In this way will be perhaps most easily explained those coincidences with the expression and representation of the first Gospel, which have lately been leading men into error as to the indubitable fact of the independence of each other of the first and third Gospels (comp. p. 75). For as the first evangelist rests more designedly and comprehensively upon the oldest Matthew-document, while Luke is influenced only by the type of narration found in it and fixed by its means, and as both are already affected by a free and, in certain points, constantly progressive oral tradition, coincidences between them might be discovered which did not owe their origin to any literary accommodation.

It is, after all, certain that Luke compiled his Gospel mainly from documentary sources. Only so can it be explained why the style of the preface to the Gospel, showing as it does the hand of a practised Greek writer, never occurs again, but gives place to the Hebraic style of his sources. It has, indeed, been attempted to prove that a style peculiar to Luke does not fail to characterize the whole Gospel, and from this the inference has been drawn of a thoroughgoing redaction of his sources; but in doing this, expressions which, recurring with great frequency, are designated as Luke's, do demonstrably originate with his sources. In truth, the peculiarities belonging specially to the author are really confined to certain preferences in lexical expression, alongside of which the portions borrowed from his sources appear all the more distinct through the preservation of grammatical niceties of the Greek tongue; but this does not extend to the style throughout. Much more is a sound literary appreciation shown when the evangelist, in places where he is plainly giving an independent remodelling of the representation of his sources, does not do this in the smooth, perfectly Greek, periodic style, of which the preface is an example; but rather, in order to preserve the unity of the representation, in the manner of expression and delineation which was stamped, by his Jewish-Christian sources, as the specific form for the delineation of the sacred history. It may be on this account that he has preferred to employ certain strongly Hebraic modes of expression found in his sources, through which the separation from his literary additions of

what was taken directly from the documentary sources is made considerably more difficult.

The way in which Luke gives information regarding the origin and aim of his work dedicated to Theophilus, indicates that he is already addressing himself to his undertaking with the consciousness of being an historian. The manner in which he tries to find sure ground in regard to the date of the birth of Jesus (ii. 2), and the fact that he not only speaks of the important year with which the gospel history begins, but characterizes it by means of the political circumstances of Palestine, shows that he already feels the necessity of bringing his narrative into relation with the great events and prominent circumstances of the world. We cannot tell whether the artistic manner in which, in the prefatory history, the narratives of the annunciation and birth of Jesus and His forerunner are interwoven with one another, is to be ascribed to Luke or to his source. While, however, the other evangelists on occasion naïvely refer to and describe the arrest of the Baptist, Luke closes the narrative regarding the Baptist with its announcement, so that with the express mention of the age at which Jesus began His public ministry he might pass on to give its history. Luke's whole manner of dividing this public activity into that exercised in Galilee, beyond Galilee, and in Jerusalem, shows that he is trying to enable himself and his readers to gain the historical point of view from which to survey it. It is only attachment to a sham method of harmonizing which could enable any one to assert that Luke arranges his materials in accordance with topical standpoints. He expressly says in the preface that he is about to relate everything *in order*, by which, as he is concerned with a history, only the historical sequence can have been meant; and we have already seen that he commences the extra-Galilean activity at the point where the retrospect of Jesus upon His Galilean ministry seemed to indicate the close of it, and to refer all that followed to the latter period. In doing this he certainly assumes that the sequence observed in his sources is a chronological one, which is not altogether the case in the apostolic source, and still less so in Mark; but that he tries to group the materials of these two sources of his according to the chronological order which,

as he believed, could be deduced from them, permits of no doubt. It is self-evident that much could only approximately be assigned its place in a period, and that only when the indications given in his sources yielded presumptions regarding individual events allocated by him. On what principles he proceeded in trying to combine the materials borrowed from other sources with those contained in his two main ones, it is impossible for us in any way to ascertain, for we have no acquaintance with those sources; but the way, often so difficult to understand, in which they are inserted between the portions borrowed from Mark and those from the oldest apostolic document, proves that he was not led in this case by an idea of topical arrangement, as is so common in the older Gospel-documents. Even throughout chaps. xv. and xvi. the point of view of a collection of parables is not the main one. The way, too, in which he abbreviates the older delineations, and avoids the repetition of similar events, shows an effort to give a more artistic form to the narrative as a whole. The historical standpoints followed by him explain his attempts to discover, through comparison, an historical background for speeches which were given in his source without any definite statement as to what gave occasion for them; a background which then sometimes for the first time made possible the linking together in a definite connection of what his sources had contained in aphoristic form. Here belong the numerous remarks in preparation for something coming after, or in reflection upon what is past, by which he links together not only individual groups of narratives, but also the large divisions of history; also the frequently-occurring rectifications of the older representation, plainly based on reflection on the course of development of the history, and numerous embellishments of the same, which rest solely on his conception of the presuppositions and consequences of the events related. It is the latter which often gave to his manner of narrating a warmer *tone,* and here and there the first traces of a more subjective colouring, such as the older Gospels were entirely without. In these alterations there has sometimes been traced a movement towards criticism by which he had attempted to effect a choice among his various sources. But the means for such a criticism were awanting to the Gentile Christians,

the age, besides, being entirely without this faculty. He certainly claims in his preface to surpass his predecessors in accuracy as well as in completeness; but that relates undoubtedly to the fact that, from the varied representations of his sources, he chooses the most vivid, or seeks by harmonizing them to supplement one by another. There is here no reference to historical criticism in our sense of the word, which separates the reliable from what is in any degree uncertain.

It is especially to be considered, that in spite of the strong emphasis laid on the historical intention and capability of the Gospel, it is not a biography in the purely historical sense. The preface declares unequivocally that the author pursues the didactic aim of convincing Theophilus by his narrative of the trustworthiness of the doctrines in which he had been instructed. Luke himself is a Pauline Gentile Christian; and so, too, Theophilus and the wider circle of readers, among whom the Gospel was closely associated with his person, are to be sought for on the soil of Gentile Christianity, where the Pauline doctrine was dominant. Confirmation is thus plainly given to the fact that not only are places in Palestine expressly introduced as being unknown to the readers, but at the close of the Acts of the Apostles particularly, Italian localities of subordinate rank appear to be known to the readers (comp. xxviii. 13, 15) to a degree which can only be assumed in the case of Roman Gentile Christians. Above all, it is only reference to this circle of readers that can explain the fact, that from the rich materials given by tradition, which relate to the position taken up by Jesus towards the law and the traditions of the Pharisees, only so much is taken in general, or in its original form, as is indispensable for understanding the contest of Jesus with the dominant class among the people. For the Gentile Christians were expressly declared by Paul to be free from the law as such; and they had no minute view of the details of Jewish customs, to which those Pharisaic traditions had reference; indeed, here and there indications are not awanting that to the evangelist himself they were no longer quite intelligible.

It is thus the Pauline doctrine of which Luke desires to give his readers confirmation from the history of Jesus Himself;

and here, doubtless, there comes first of all into consideration the decreeing of salvation for the Gentiles, of which indications have been seen in the evangelist's introducing a genealogical table, which represents Jesus not only as the son of Abraham and of David, but by carrying back His genealogy to Adam signifies His destination for the whole human race. It was certainly the retrospect towards this Pauline fundamental doctrine which induced him rather to omit altogether passages of the oldest source, like Matt. vii. 6, x. 5 f., or the history of the Canaanitish woman with its main burden in Matt. xv. 24, which without any more precise exposition might easily have been explained as being contradictory of this doctrine. As the Acts plainly has the tendency to demonstrate and justify the course of history, through which the salvation, destined in the first instance for Israel and offered to her, did, under manifestly divine guidance, gradually pass over to the Gentiles; so the narrative of the Gospel seeks to prepare the way for this course of development. The single demonstrable case in which Luke has arranged a narrative according to a purely topical, as opposed to the chronological order, although with indications sufficient to make the chronological position quite clear, is the placing of the rejection of Jesus in His native town at the beginning of His Galilean ministry, which, plainly foretelling the treatment which Jesus was to meet with afterwards at the hands of His people, refers to the fact, which is expressly explained in the representation which he selects from his sources, that the Gentiles instead of Israel were to partake of salvation. It is just as worthy of notice that the extra-Galilean ministry of Jesus also begins with His rejection in a Samaritan village, even if the evangelist was able to suppose that in this case he had given it its proper chronological position. Criticism, indeed, in a number of parables and even of histories, which it really regards as fabrications, has found introduced the theme of the rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles, although in regard to the one there is no intimation given, and in regard to the other a perfectly different reference is indicated by the evangelist. But at least one expression (xiii. 30) has, through the connection in which it was placed by Luke, been put into a relation to it which it did not originally possess, and in the

parable of the banquet (xiv. 16–24) there is introduced by his allegorizing embellishments, the Pauline thought that the Gentiles are destined to fill in the kingdom of God the gap left by the rejection of Israel. Here again it is clearly shown that our Gospel is independent of the first, for of the more definite way in which the latter accentuates, in the parable, the rejection and punishment of Israel, there is nothing to be found in Luke; while at the close of his Gospel there is nothing regarding the solemn sending forth of the apostles to the heathen, but instead there is in the speeches of the Risen One (xxiv. 4) a more general reference to the salvation destined for the Gentiles.

It is self-evident that the main doctrines of the Pauline system, which had already been formulated, could not be given expression to in the speeches of Jesus without introducing into them an entirely foreign element; for even in the single passage where the idea of justification is to be found (xviii. 14), it is by no means of so distinctly Pauline a stamp that it must needs have been introduced by Luke. On the other hand, the didactic aim of the Paulinist is seen in this, that there is an evident preference for relating such histories as bring into the foreground God's love for sinners, the coming of Jesus for the salvation of sinners, and, above all, the forgiveness of sins which is brought by Him, and also such as are directed against self-justifying pride or seeking for reward, while, as opportunity offers, that significance of faith on which salvation is based is there expressly defended or emphasized. It may also be remembered how Luke, in an expression originally of a much more general purport, introduces the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost (xi. 13), which in the Pauline system first obtained its full, comprehensive significance, as well as how, in a thoroughly Pauline fashion, he gives a model for and exhortation to prayer. Throughout it is not indeed specially Pauline, although not in antagonism with Pauline conceptions, and it was certainly regarded by Luke as a consequence of Paul's doctrine, when he brings forward so readily and with such emphasis the danger of riches and the blessings of poverty. But where he allows no opportunity to slip of giving an exhortation to beneficence, and, indeed, of enjoining the sacrifice of all worldly

goods for the sake of love to your neighbour, he has whetted the sayings of Jesus to a one-sided pointedness, which would appear to his teacher Paul scarcely prudent. It has, indeed, been often assumed that this ascetic view of the world was peculiar to one of his sources; but since it dominates for the most part the character and the reproduction of the materials which are taken from Mark and the apostolic source, and since its after effects are manifest in the narratives of the Acts, they must be ascribed to the author of the Gospel himself.

Tradition gives us no kind of sure data for determining the date of composition of the Gospel. From the fact that the Acts of the Apostles breaks off with the year 63, it has often been inferred that it was written at this time, and that the Gospel which precedes it was written still earlier, though this assumption makes the employment of the apostolic source and of Mark's Gospel perfectly impossible. The definite indication given by the prophecy of the fate of Jerusalem (xix. 43, 44), puts it beyond doubt that the Gospel, if not its source, was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. In the speech on the second coming, it is distinctly asserted that the persecutions foretold by Jesus were already begun before the other particularly mentioned signs of the end (xxi. 12), and that Jerusalem had been for a time trodden under foot by the Gentiles. People now had accustomed themselves to the thought that, out of regard to the winning of the heathen world, Christ's return, which originally was to commence in direct connection with the catastrophe in Judea, was still for a time delayed (xxi. 24). But as the evangelist holds firmly to the prediction, that the generation which had witnessed Jesus' appearance would also see the end, the prognostications of which the evangelist saw fulfilled in his own time, it is difficult for us to set down the composition of the Gospel as having taken place much later than the first decade after the year 70.

The Gentile Church founded by Paul probably received her Gospel shortly after 80 A.D. But with the destruction of the Jewish state and temple, the reasons had vanished which in earlier times served to maintain the state of separation between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians,

and early in the second century we see how the Gospel of the Jewish Christians, together with that of the Gentile Christians, and along with the Mark-Gospel, which lies at the foundation of both, were a common possession of the great collective Church.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE JOHANNINE QUESTION.

THE rapid development of the literature of the Gospels during the last sixty years shows that it met a crying want in the Church. For nearly a century the oral tradition was preserved in conjunction with it, but this came to be more and more influenced by the written testimony; and where, in the writers of the first half of the second century, we meet with words of the Lord, which at that time formed, next to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the canon, so to speak, of the Church, they bear everywhere the stamp of the Synoptists, without connecting themselves exclusively with any one of our three evangelists. Moreover, it is only now and then that, in the writings of the so-called Apostolic Fathers, such as Barnabas, Hermas, or Ignatius, we come upon more or less explicit points of harmony with the peculiar mode of expression, and the speeches of Christ, of our Fourth Gospel. We find introduced in Polycarp a passage from the First Epistle of John, which doubless originated at the same time and from the same author as our Fourth Gospel; and a similar use of this Epistle by Papias of Hierapolis is credibly attested (in Euseb. *Ch. Hist.* iii. 39). It is, however, about the middle of the century, and in Justin Martyr,—of whose ample quotations from the *Memoirs of the Apostles* a preponderating number are to be referred to the synoptic type,—that there is found an indubitable allusion to the history of Nicodemus contained in the Fourth Gospel, along with other detached correspondences with the version there given of the history and the words of the Lord. His whole Christology is already influenced by the conceptions of the Fourth Gospel, and is by him referred to his *Memoirs* and to the doctrine proclaimed by Christ in a fashion which can only hold good of this Gospel and the

speeches of Christ contained in it.[1] The so-called Clementine homilies, which took their rise within Jewish-Christian circles, contain indubitable allusions to the narratives and sayings of the Lord given in the Gospel (comp. xix. 22 with John ix. 2, 3; iii. 52 with John x. 9, 27); and the whole doctrine of æons of the Valentinian Gnosticism visibly rests on the Fourth Gospel. Indeed, in Gnostic circles there seems to have been a prepossession in favour of employing this Gospel in a more comprehensive manner much earlier than it was so employed within the Church; but the darkness which envelopes the rise of Gnosticism, and the confounding of earlier and later which often appears in our meagre sources, hinder its being established with complete certainty how early it began to be used in this way.

Along with the three others, our Fourth Gospel had already been woven into a whole by Justin's pupil Tatian, in his *Harmony of the Gospels* (comp. p. 18); and a century after the rise of our synoptic Gospels (*circa* 170) he quotes, in his apologetic work, a sentence from the prologue of the Gospel just as if it were a passage from the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament (comp. *Orat. ad Græc.* 13 with John i. 5). Towards the last quarter of the second century the historical narratives of the Fourth Gospel began actually to be employed in the ecclesiastical circles, which up to this time had been dominated almost exclusively, in their view of the history of Jesus, by the synoptic record. Melito of Sardis speaks of a ministry of Jesus extending over three years, which he can only assume on the authority of the Fourth Gospel; Apollinaris of Hierapolis alludes to the incident of the spear-thrust, and explains the older Gospels by the statements of the Fourth regarding the day of the death of Jesus; Polycrates of Ephesus describes the Apostle John as the disciple who lay on the breast of the Lord, a statement which would be derivable from the Fourth Gospel only if it originated with this apostle. Theophilus of Antioch, who died about the year 181, is the first expressly to quote the Gospel as Johannine; but towards the close of the century we see it acknowledged and made use of in all sections of the Church as a work of the Apostle

[1] Comp. Justin, *Apol.* i. 61 with John iii. 3-5; i. 6 with John iv. 24; *Dial.* 88 with John i. 20. In addition to the last-named, see especially *Dial.* 105. 48.

John, and the fourfold number of our Gospels is regarded as having been handed down from antiquity. The most important witness belonging to this period is unquestionably Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who died at the beginning of the third century. His family belonged to Asia Minor; he had been a pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna, and had had much intercourse with the presbyters of Asia Minor, who had themselves seen the Apostle John, because, as we learn from the Apocalypse, he had, not long before the destruction of Jerusalem, removed his residence to Asia Minor. From Irenæus we know that the Apostle John lived in Ephesus till towards the end of the century, being the last of the apostles, and thus of great age. An attempt has lately been made, in the interests of opposition to the Gospel of John, to cast doubt on this tradition, men trying to render it credible that Irenæus had confounded with the apostle another pupil of the Lord's living in Ephesus, and whose name was John. But the way in which he reminds a companion of his youth of what had been imparted to them by their common teacher Polycarp regarding his relations with the Apostle John, and points out to the Roman bishop that Polycarp, in opposition to one of his predecessors, had appealed to the mode of observing the Passover shared by the apostle, excludes any confusion of this kind just as effectually as is done by what he says about that which he heard from the presbyters of Asia Minor who were contemporaries of John, *e.g.* a statement of his about the age of Jesus, which can only be inferred from the Fourth Gospel, or a tradition in which direct appeal is made to a sentence of this Gospel.[1] We know, in addition, that before him Polycrates of Ephesus, who during his manhood had intercourse with Polycarp, appealed, in opposition to the Romish Bishop Victor, to the John who was buried in Ephesus, as being a defender of the mode of keeping the Passover observed in Asia Minor, and undoubtedly indicates him as the beloved disciple of the Fourth Gospel. Contemporaneously with, but quite independently of him, Clement of Alexandria drew up a history of the activity of John in Ephesus; and there is in Apollonius a much earlier and quite similar tradition. But if John lived

[1] Comp. Iren. *Ep. ad Florinum*, in Euseb. v. 20; Euseb. v. 24; *Adv. Hær.* ii. 22. 5, comp. with John viii. 57; v. 36. 2, comp. with John xiv. 2.

till towards the close of the first century in Ephesus, it is inconceivable that, in the circles in Asia Minor (which possessed at first hand the tradition regarding the apostles), in which during the seventh decade the Fourth Gospel was the influential one, and which supplied Irenæus at a much earlier period with his information as to its origin, a Gospel could have been accepted as Johannine of which the contemporaries of the apostles had known or related nothing. Such a one, through the acceptance which it gained in heretical circles, would rather lay itself under suspicion than be recommended to the Church teachers in the severe conflict with this same jealous and dexterous Gnosticism.

Our Fourth Gospel, however, claims from the beginning to be written by the Apostle John. The older Gospels give us no clear intimation regarding the person of their author; it is only tradition which ascribes them to this one or that. Our evangelist claims to be one of those among whom the Word become Flesh lived and made His glory manifest (i. 14); in regard to one specially important event he appeals to his testimony as being that of an eye-witness (xix. 34, 35). He does not indeed say who he is; but at the very beginning of the Gospel he introduces two disciples (i. 35), of whom only one is named, the other remaining unnamed, and of whom things are told which only for those who had a share in the incidents could have an interest deep enough to make them worth while recording. Thus at the last meal (xiii. 23, 24), in the entrance-hall of the high priest's palace (xviii. 15, 16), and at the open grave (xx. 2–8), there appears in close proximity to Peter just such an unnamed disciple, and he is expressly designated as he whom the Lord had loved, and who lay on His breast at the last meal. This beloved disciple is particularly indicated as standing at the foot of the cross (xix. 26); and when immediately thereafter the apostle appeals to the witness of his own eyes (xix. 35), he cannot but desire to be identified with this beloved disciple. Apart from Peter, there were only the two sons of Zebedee forming the innermost circle of those who enjoyed familiarity with Jesus, and of these James died at far too early a period to come into consideration as the author of the Gospel, therefore this beloved disciple can only be the Apostle John.

There was certainly in antiquity a pseudonymous literature, which cannot be criticized from the standpoint of the literary customs of our own day, or judged as forgery. For it is just the *naïveté* with which the author strives to find a higher authority for his words by laying them in the mouth of one of the celebrated men of the past, in whose spirit he desires to speak, which justifies this literary form. Quite otherwise is it in this case; the author mentions no name; he only gives it to be understood that it is the unnamed disciple so repeatedly introduced who is writing here from his own personal knowledge; he leaves it to be inferred from the comparison of one passage with another that this eye-witness cannot be any one but John. It was Renan who, before the face of modern criticism, said that it was not a case of pseudonymous authorship such as was known to antiquity, it was either truth or refined forgery—plain deception. There is still, however, one thing to be considered. The Gospel closes with a statement, made in the most formal manner, regarding its object (xx. 30, 31). It has been disputed whether the concluding chapter is an addition made by the author himself, or the work of another hand. But the similarity which exists between it and the Johannine method of narration proves only that its contents are intimately connected with the Johannine tradition; there is no lack of indications which betray a strange hand, and at the conclusion it is clear that the addition was really made with the design of correcting the erroneous comprehension of a word spoken by Jesus to the beloved disciple (xxi. 23). The necessity for this correction would first occur when the hope, built on the words that John should live till the second coming of Jesus, remained unfulfilled. The addition was then made to the Gospel immediately after the death of John; for it never appears without the addition even when it first gains publicity. The author of the supplement explains in the most formal and unequivocal manner that the beloved disciple, mentioned immediately before (xxi. 20), has attested and written down the facts which were related in the Gospel; while, at the same time, in the name of several, it ratifies the truth of his testimony (xxi. 24). Thus the hypothesis is categorically excluded, by means of which concession was

being made to critical doubt as against our Gospel, and which had otherwise much to recommend it,—that the Gospel only bears the name of the Apostle John as far as it is founded on the Johannine tradition. There is but one alternative. Either we have here a refined forgery, which intentionally and by means of an unveracious witness claims for the Apostle John a writing of the second century, in which case it is inconceivable how that unnamed number, for the sake of whose understanding the author writes the supplement, could assume that their testimony would have any weight whatever with readers, or else we have actually speaking here the Johannine circle in Ephesus, in which other followers of the Lord lived, and in which the facts of the Gospel history were well enough known to give attestation to a Gospel that in many points does not agree with the older tradition. One member of this circle has in its name added this closing word to the final chapter as it was about to pass away from this circle to the Church, which, of course, knew quite well from whose hands it received it, and who those were who spoke here. Thus we have in it a witness to the origin of the Gospel as ancient and reliable as we could ever wish to possess. So we understand how, within the circle of the presbyters of Asia Minor, who had themselves known these witnesses, there reigned the most indubitable certainty regarding the origin of this Gospel, and how through it the apostolic origin of the Gospel was so firmly established that an Irenæus who had himself much intercourse with the members of this circle, and the other Fathers at the end of the second century and beginning of the third, who received the Gospel from that circle, were so absolutely certain of the apostolic origin of the Gospel, that, in spite of the abuse of it by heretics, no doubt regarding it ever prevailed in the Church.

The pure Greek of the Gospel was at one time thought not likely to have been used by the fishermen of the Lake of Gennesareth. No one doubts now that the lower classes in Galilee, coming as they did into daily contact with the Greek influence which surrounded them, and which had already penetrated the peculiar people, may have had a thorough knowledge of the Greek language. If John had

already lived for some score of years with Greek surroundings, he must have attained a certain proficiency in the use of the Greek tongue, and there is, in fact, through the Greek vesture of this Gospel everywhere visible the style of a Palestinian. This non-periodic form of the sentence; this simple manner of connecting events, which makes no use, for the explanation of their logical relations, of the rich store of Greek particles; this liking for antitheses and parallelisms; this circumstantiality of the narrative and poverty of language in expression; this entirely Hebrew collocation of words show—more than individual violations of Greek idiom, although these are not altogether awanting—that the Gospel, although written in Greek, was thought out in Hebrew. The inclination to introduce Aramaic expressions, the etymological explanation of a Hebrew name (ix. 7), allow us plainly to recognise the Palestinian, to whom even the primary text of the Holy Scriptures seems, from some of his quotations, not to have been wholly unknown. He shows himself everywhere very accurately acquainted with the topography of Palestine. He knows the extent of the Lake of Tiberias (vi. 19), and the distance of Bethany from Jerusalem (xi. 18); he distinguishes expressly the insignificant Cana of Galilee from another place of the same name, and knows that one descends in going from there to Capernaum on the shore of the lake (ii. 12, iv. 47). The locality in which Jacob's Well is situated stands most vividly before his eyes, and he knows the traditions which are connected with it; he knows the names of perfectly insignificant places; he is thoroughly acquainted with every spot in Jerusalem and the temple. He mentions the names of the most unimportant Jewish feasts, and measures time according to the Jewish reckoning; he is well acquainted with the ritual ceremony of circumcision and the feast of the Passover, with the punishment of the bann of the synagogue, with the domestic customs of the Jews at marriage and burial; he knows the time at which the restoration of the temple by Herod was begun. He is acquainted with the relations between Jews and Samaritans, the position of the party of the Pharisees in the Sanhedrim; he gives the relation of Annas to Caiaphas, and the limits which the reserved right of the Roman governor put to the power of the

Sanhedrim. He distinguishes in the most accurate way the mass of the Galilean pilgrims to the feast from the populace of the capital; he characterizes very strikingly the darkness in the minds of the Jewish doctors; he introduces us, as no other of the evangelists does, to the manifold forms of the Jewish expectation of the Messiah.

It has, indeed, been said that the way in which the author, in the prologue to his Gospel, establishes a connection with Philo's doctrine of the Logos, argues at least an Alexandrian Jew and not a Palestinian. But when in this way it has been attempted to prove the spuriousness of the Gospel, it is overlooked that this mode of reasoning revolves in a circle. If, indeed, it has been demonstrated that the Gospel does not originate with an eye-witness, that, in the speeches of Christ, the author is only developing his own dogmatic system, then it is a justifiable question to ask where he got this system, and in that case the Alexandrian philosophy of religion offers a convenient point of connection. But even then one would expect that the essential peculiarity of Philo's doctrine, more especially the dissipating of the Old Testament idea of God by means of Hellenic philosophy, would be reflected in our Gospel, while the very opposite is everywhere manifest. But if the author has obtained his conception of the eternal and divine Being of Christ through the sayings of Jesus and through the impression made by His life; even if it was first through the light which fell on His earthly life from the contemplation of the exalted Christ, there is no ground for regarding it as borrowed from Philo, and indeed there is no possibility of its being so. The question, whether he chose to designate the eternal Being of Christ by "Word" in conformity with a practice which had, through the Alexandrian philosophy of religion, become current in Asia Minor, or whether he formed it directly from the Old Testament or the Palestinian Targums, is, then, relatively indifferent, and must be decided by historical considerations, which are by no means so favourable to the first hypothesis as is commonly thought. What the evangelist teaches regarding the Eternal Word is at all events not shaped out of contemporary conceptions, but is the result of his theological meditation, which sought and found in the Old Testament the key to the explanation of

what he had perceived to be loftiest and unique in the life of Jesus.

In all this there is certainly no occasion for the raising of a Johannine question. Criticism has torn to shreds the external evidence for the Gospel. Baur would find no trace of the Fourth Gospel before the last quarter of the second century. His followers have gradually had to concede one after another of the testimonies which he impugned; all that has been discovered since then, the Philosophoumena with their ample quotations of John from the Gnostic writings, the ending of the Clementines with the history of the man born blind, the Syrian commentary on Tatian's *Diatessaron,* has positively refuted assertions of criticism long and obstinately clung to. The last energetic opponent of the genuineness of the Gospel has latterly been compelled, by the external evidence, to push back the origination of the Gospel to the second decade of the second century, and the obvious impossibility of conceiving a forgery of the Gospel taking place so soon after the death of the apostle, has made it necessary for him to contest the tradition of the apostle's residence at Ephesus, a position regarded as untenable hypercriticism by all prudent representatives of the Tübingen school, ever since Lützelberger first played this trump. Even the most unfettered handling of the history of the Fourth Gospel in the second century must lead to the admission that it is not unfavourable to its authorship being apostolic. The witness of the Gospel to itself is certainly, now here, now there, contested; but its disintegration makes shipwreck on the simplest historical facts. The supposition that the Gospel, in accordance with the direction of its tendency, subordinates Peter, who in the synoptic Gospels is the uncontested head of the apostolic circle, to the beloved disciple, and that this proves it to be a forgery, rests upon a forced interpretation of perfectly natural details,—such as, that Peter, through the instrumentality of the disciple who lay on the breast of Jesus, asked who it was whom He referred to as His betrayer, that it was John who ushered him into the hall of the high priest, and as the younger ran before him to the grave, all of which have self-evidently nothing to do with a primacy of Peter or of the beloved disciple. A Gospel which represents Jesus as con-

ferring on Peter, at their first meeting, the name of "the man of stone;" which, more significantly than the Synoptics, emphasizes the great confession of Peter; which represents him, along with John, as attaining at the open grave to undoubting belief in the resurrection (xx. 8, 9), and in the supplementary chapter expressly reinstates him into his office of shepherd after his serious fall, which is related by the Synoptists as well,—cannot certainly have the object of degrading Peter. It comes then to this, that the testimony of the Gospel to itself leaves us only the choice between a refined forgery and a decisive attestation of its apostolic origin. In view of the numerous facts which indicate accurate acquaintance on the part of the author with Palestinian localities and circumstances, condemnation appears to be from the very first passed upon the miserable attempts of criticism to establish the existence of individual error and instances of the confounding of one thing with another, which are shown by the context itself to be impossible, or to father upon it the idea that in Israel the office of high priest fell vacant annually. That the Fourth Gospel is the work of a Palestinian, would be certain even if we had no occasion to ascribe it to the Apostle John.

The Johannine question is an outcome of the critical school founded by Ferdinand Christian Baur; it is, moreover, the vital question for the Tübingen school. We have not to do here with new considerations brought forward by it, or new grounds of doubt of the apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, which, after it was first contested by Bretschneider (comp. p. 29), seems to have taken firm root among all theological schools. With this question there stands or falls the whole view of the school as to the course of development of the apostolic and post-apostolic age. The Tübingen school cannot, without breaking with all its presuppositions, admit the genuineness of the Johannine Gospel. It starts from this, that the first apostles, fettered by legal and particularistic views, from the very beginning took up an attitude of hostility to the Apostle Paul, who had been called at a later period, refused to recognise his apostleship, turned aside, by their legal pretensions and their attacks on his person, his Gentile-Christian churches, and in opposition to his higher views held fast to the end their elemen-

tary conceptions of Christ's person and work. It was in the second century that there began gradually to form, partly from the Pauline side, partly from that of the primitive apostles, an approximation between the two opposed tendencies, which, about the middle of the century, in the common strife with the heretical Gnosticism, led to the unity of the Catholic Church. In this case our Fourth Gospel, which in its conceptions is far superior to the alleged contradictory views of the apostolic age, cannot originate with a primitive apostle, but only with a Gentile Christian of the second century, who was the originator or the representative of the final complete reconciliation of all antagonisms in a higher universalistic view. If John, at a later period of his life, entered the Pauline field of operations in Asia Minor, he can, according to the view of this school, only have done so in order to reform in a Judaistic sense the work of the Apostle Paul. This is attested by the Apocalypse at the end of the sixth decade, which, with its severely legal and particularistic tendency, gives documentary evidence of the hostile position taken up towards Paul by the primitive apostles. Witness also the contests as to the Passover in the second century, in which the Judaizing tendency of the members of the Church in Asia Minor led them to observe the feast of the 14th Nisan in conformity with the Jewish rite; while the Westerns opposed this, appealing to the Fourth Gospel, which represented Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, as on the 14th Nisan already dead, in order to render it for ever impossible to bring it into connection with the Jewish Passover. The spiritual elevation, indeed, the thoroughly apostolic character of the Fourth Gospel, which has made it from antiquity the Gospel beloved by the Church, the Tübingen school has no desire to dispute; it has given it very high praise, and cannot place high enough its historical significance for ecclesiastical development. How it came to pass that the author of this work, this greatest spirit of the second century, standing as he does head and shoulders above the figures which we recognise as belonging to that primitive time, has remained nameless and unknown, that he chose to father his profound remodelling of the whole older record upon one among the apostles so little mentioned in that record as John, with whose

Apocalypse he must have been in the very highest degree out of sympathy, the Tübingen school has hardly attempted, and certainly cannot, explain.

That view of history taken by the Tübingen school is, however, based on a misconception, often enough corrected, of the Pauline Epistles. They certainly give token of a severe struggle on the part of the apostle against a Jewish Christian tendency in the Church, but expressly testify regarding the first apostles, that they recognised, as being for the Gentiles, his peculiar Gospel, freed as it was from the law, and in taking his hand had made themselves one with him by the bond of a common enterprise (Gal. ii.). In order that this view may be carried through, it demands the establishing of the spuriousness of most of the Pauline Epistles, and of all the other documents issuing from the circle of the first apostles, with the exception of the Apocalypse and documents like the First Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of James, which, rightly expounded in the light of their whole historical position, carry in themselves the seal of their genuineness; it is entirely without support from the older evangelical literature, which, as we have seen and shall show in detail later on (see chap. xi.), nowhere reveals any trace of that antagonism. No doubt the Apostle John, like all the first apostles, held fast for himself personally and for the believers in Israel to the law of the Patriarchs, and down to the outbreak of the Jewish revolutionary war was labouring for the conversion of his people in order that they, as such, might participate in the Messianic blessings. This, indeed, assumes that none of the sayings of Jesus were known to him, which released Israel from the obligation, undergone along with circumcision, to fulfil the law, and which discarded the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, and invalidated the position which Israel occupied in the history of salvation. But the view that the Fourth Gospel represents an Antinomian and anti-Jewish standpoint, is in the clearest contradiction with very abundant facts. The evangelist everywhere sees in the appearance of Christ the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and refers, hardly less fully than our first evangelist, to the express explanations of Jesus, to the effect that Scripture in this connection as the distinctive law could not be broken (John

x. 34 f.); He reprimands transgression of the law, and argues on the assumption of the binding authority of circumcision (vii. 19, 22); He goes up to the feasts at Jerusalem—this is more frequently mentioned here than by the Synoptists; He cleanses the temple as being His Father's house (ii. 16, 17); and along with the requirement of prayer in spirit and truth, it is expressly stated that worship in Jerusalem is shut out for the future and not for the present (iv. 21, 23). In direct contradiction to these facts, criticism points out, as showing that He did not acknowledge their law, certain passages in which Jesus designated the law as their law in order to combat them with their own highest authority. The evangelist further designates Israel as the peculiar people of the Logos (i. 11), and the Baptist openly acknowledges Him as the Messiah for Israel (i. 31). Jesus is here represented as stating that salvation comes from the Jews (iv. 22); as leaving Samaria after a brief activity, and one which, as is expressly stated, was not directly proposed by Him, and as looking for His glorification in the heathen world first after His death (xii. 23, 24). He is about to collect under the sway of His shepherd's staff all the scattered children of God belonging to the Gentile world (x. 16; comp. xi. 52); but neither is the transference of the kingdom from the Jews to the Gentiles so expressly foretold as in the Synoptics, nor are the apostles so expressly entrusted with the mission to the Gentiles. The Gospel, then, does not represent the position of Jesus towards the law and towards His people in such a way that it could not have originated with one of the first apostles.

That John in Asia Minor still celebrated the Jewish Passover, as 1 Cor. v. 7, 8 plainly shows that Paul still did, is strongly attested and in itself probable, only, it is true, that a Christian significance came very early to underlie the celebration, which consisted essentially in a solemn participation in the Lord's Supper after a preceding fast. This is in contradiction with the Fourth Gospel only if this celebration rests on the assertion that it was on the 14th Nisan that Jesus kept His last Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper; for, according to the latter Gospel, He held the last supper with His disciples a day earlier, and died on the 14th

Nisan. But the day of celebration was undoubtedly determined by its correspondence with the Jewish festival, and the modern view of its being a memorial of the historical institution of the Lord's Supper is very far-fetched.

It is now acknowledged by several recent scholars, that the meaning of the Christian Passover was originally a celebration of the day of the death of Jesus, and it can therefore only have proceeded from a tradition such as is contained in the Fourth Gospel; for, according to the representation of the Synoptics, the 15th Nisan was the first day on which Jesus could have been crucified. That the Fourth Gospel has the tendency to represent Jesus as the true Paschal Lamb, and thus as the abrogation of the Jewish Passover, is, emphatically as it is asserted by criticism, perfectly indemonstrable. For the word of the Baptist regarding the Lamb of God which bears the sins of the world (i. 29) certainly does not point out Jesus as being the Paschal Lamb, and at the very least it cannot be certainly demonstrated whether or not the evangelist does so (xix. 36). But even if the Gospel has this tendency, it would by no means be an indication that its author was a supporter of the Western observance, but that he reconciled it perfectly with the Eastern, if the latter were intended directly as a celebration of the day of death, or if there was seen in the Lord's Supper the Christian analogue of the Jewish feast of Passover. In the last quarter of the second century we see the defenders of the Eastern observance freely employing the Fourth Gospel.

It was certainly an error for the older criticism to start from the dilemma that either the Gospel or the Apocalypse, but not both, could be referred to the Apostle John, and, from predilection in favour of the former, to ascribe the latter to another John. The Tübingen criticism was not wrong in urging against it the fact that the Apocalypse, with its glowing descriptions of the divine wrath and judgments, with its fervent longing for the second coming of the Lord, with its vivid pictures of the glory of the perfected kingdom of God, answers quite manifestly to the picture in the older evangelists of the intolerant son of thunder, who would have had fire rained from heaven upon the Samaritan village which did not receive the Lord, and who eagerly sought for

the place of honour on the right hand of the throne of Messiah. That the Apocalypse is of earlier date than the Gospel, has been directly attested by Justin, as well as by the presbyters of Irenæus, who, regarding a reading in one passage of it, were able to give him authentic information. But the conception which the Tübingen criticism has formed of the Apocalypse, as being a severely legal work, revelling in sensuous particularistic Messianic hopes, and inspired by hostility to Paul, is one thoroughly opposed to the letter and spirit of the book. The Apocalypse knows of only one Church of God, gathered out of all languages, peoples, and tongues, and which is but a typical copy of that of the Old Testament; it nowhere imposes upon it the Jewish law, but goes beyond Paul in urging on the whole Church abstinence from meat offered to idols, which Paul called for only on account of the circumstances of the weaker brethren. It still hopes for a kingdom of Christ which is to exist on earth a thousand years, but this kingdom bears no longer a national Jewish character; above it is lying the heavenly realization, the bright pictures of which only describe the eternal life in the perfected fellowship with God. It has no contest with Paul, but with a Gentile-Christian Libertinism, and uses, in regard to the Judaism which was unbelieving and hostile to Christ, much stronger language than Paul does, calling it a synagogue of Satan. The alleged fundamental antagonism between the Apocalypse and the Gospel springs not only from a one-sided misconception of the former, but also from an equally one-sided spiritualizing conception of the latter, by means of which the older criticism prepared the way for that of Tübingen. That the Gospel no longer contemplates a second coming of Christ, but substitutes for that a second coming in the Spirit; that in place of the general resurrection and judgment at the last day, it puts the raising from the dead and the judgment, which has already taken place through the ministry of Jesus; that it indicates in general an author who has loosed the last links connecting Christianity in its origin with the Old Testament Judaism,—these are assertions which contradict the letter of the Fourth Gospel as well as its spirit, especially when the Epistle, which is certainly contemporary with the Gospel, is treated as a commentary on

the latter. Along with this false view of the Gospel there disappears the most important obstacle to its being regarded as the work of the same author as the Apocalypse.

In comparing the two documents, it ought not to be forgotten how entirely they differ in respect both of form and contents. In the one are visions of the future; in the other, histories of the past: in the one, designed correspondence with the language of the Old Testament prophets, and a form which was once the current one for the delineation of such visions; in the other, an unfettered and confident resting on sacred recollections which, after a generation, formed the animating centre for the whole spiritual life of the author. The one contains, after consolation and power to overcome in the midst of overwhelming crises, an effort for himself and the Christian community; the other, in the tranquillity of age, has the sole object of making the brethren sharers in the blessedness which the evangelist enjoyed in the contemplation of the highest revelation of God. Certainly two such documents offer few points of connection or comparison, and the grounds must be very unreal by which it is sought to justify the dilemma, that only the one or the other could originate with an apostle. A straightforward critic, like the Church historian Hase, has had the candour, we might almost say the courage, to doubt the existence of this dilemma, up to this time regarded as indisputable. The second step towards the undermining of it was taken by no less a man than his opponent Baur, against whom Hase directed his famous letters on the Johannine question, in which he too declared war against this hypothesis which Baur had borrowed from his critical opponents, only turning it against the Gospels as they turned it against the Apocalypse. Baur has shown how many points of connection the two writings have in addition to a common fundamental idea. The author of the Gospel and of the Epistles is certainly not a disciple of love such as a certain modern view regards John as being; he is altogether the son of thunder, who knows no mean between love and hatred, truth and falsehood, light and darkness, between children of God and children of the devil. It is, in short, nothing else than the conflict of these irreconcilable contradictions, the contest between God and His adversary Satan,

the commencement of which he indicates in the history of Jesus, having beheld its last phases and victorious result in the Apocalypse. Baur has called the Gospel the spiritualized Apocalypse, and that is truly more accurate than the effort one of his followers is at present making to construct out of it an anti-Apocalypse. For we have seen that here are no antagonisms, although we do not wish to deny that there are great differences between the two writings, which imply a corrresponding diversity in the fundamental conceptions. But we do deny that a John could not have experienced this metamorphosis.

In the midst of the terrible lightnings accompanying the judgment of the year 70, which fell upon Jerusalem and the Jewish people, was the Apocalypse written, and between twenty and five-and-twenty years afterwards the Gospel. At that time the apostle had exchanged his home in Palestine for a residence with a Greek environment, Jewish-Christian circles for Gentile-Christian, primitive apostolic for Pauline. Could he have spent so long a period in such new surroundings without experiencing a corresponding mental transformation? In his view also the divine judgment for the obduracy of his nation was completed along with its political downfall. Wonder has often been felt that he so frequently speaks of Jews in an objective manner, when all the time he was a Jew himself. But Paul has done that, and so have the first and second evangelists, and these were all Jews. But there is a peculiarity in the way in which he speaks of the Jews when he desires to characterize the malignant opposition to Jesus; and it is perfectly comprehensible how he should do this when the historical fact was before his eyes that the Jews as a people had, through unbelief, rejected their Messiah, and were on this account rejected by God after these events had, certainly not without a severe struggle on his part, cut him off from his people. With the fall of the temple there was pronounced the judgment of God upon the continuance of the Old Testament law in its historical form; the time had arrived of which Jesus spoke within sight of the hill of Gerizim; it was no longer possible to worship at Jerusalem. John spent decades on Gentile-Christian ground, where the Christian communities were, according to Paul's doctrine, made free

from the Jewish law, and where all that belonged to Jewish customs could only be admitted in an entirely fresh Christian form. No wonder that he speaks of the Jewish purification and of the Jewish feasts with an objectivity which shows that these things had become strange to himself and his readers. He had once hoped to be allowed to sit on the right hand of his Master in the glory of the Messianic kingdom. Along with the fall of the Jewish state, there was buried for ever every thought of the establishment of the kingdom of God in the form of an Israelitish theocracy. The highest place of honour, which in the fire of his youth he longed for, he has found in his old age in the place which the love of the Master once gave him on His breast. The hoped-for blessedness of Messiah's kingdom, he has found in the faith which even now lays hold on eternal life, in the blessed sinking of self in the depths of God's revelation, which in Jesus is becoming clearer to him the longer he lives, in that religious mysticism which cannot rest till it finds repose in direct personal communion with God in Christ. Yes, indeed, the Gospel is the spiritual Apocalypse, but not because a spiritual hero of the second century imitated the writer, but because the son of thunder of the Apocalypse became, through the training of the Spirit and divine guidance, refined and matured into a mystic in whom the flames of youth had died down into the glow of a holy love.

This is the simple solution of the Johannine question, so far as it relates to the person of the apostle. But there is still another side, and that is the peculiarity of this Gospel in comparison with the older Gospels—the question regarding its historicity. In the criticism of the Gospels on the side of their trustworthiness and historicity will be found the final solution of the Johannine question.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE HISTORICITY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

WHEN one passes from the first three Gospels to the Fourth, the impression given of transplantation into a new world cannot be dispelled. Impressive sentences, full of profound meditation on the eternal and temporal being and activity of Christ, serve to introduce the work instead of the genealogies and birth-histories of the first and third Gospels. There is no word of the appearance of the Baptist and of his popular activity as described by the older Gospels; there are instead new, significant words spoken before priests and Levites, with whom formerly we have never seen him coming into contact, or before his disciples, of whom we had heard previously only once, and that incidentally. Jesus appears, but there is no notice of His baptism and His temptation in the wilderness; He assembles followers at the Jordan, He changes water into wine at the marriage-feast in Cana. We meet here with new names of persons and of places. His public ministry begins, but the setting of it, as it was at first fixed by Mark and preserved with modifications by those who took his Gospel as the basis of their work, is totally neglected. It is at a Passover in Jerusalem that Jesus for the first time attracts to Himself the attention of the people; He abides for some months in Judea near the place where the Baptist was carrying on His ministry. At last He journeys through Samaria on His way back to the province where His home was, and here we expect to see the evangelist fall into the track of the older narrative. But scarcely is a single incident of His ministry there communicated to us, when we again see Jesus journeying up to Jerusalem for the feast; and so soon as He returns to Galilee we find Him at the summit of the activity He exercised there, and the deciding die is cast. Now follows the ministry in Jerusalem; but while in

the older Gospels this embraces only the last Passover week, here it extends over half a year; it is interrupted by the visits to Perea and to the province, and is occupied with perfectly new incidents of His intercourse with the people, and with occasions of conflict and persecutions. We constantly meet with new personages, localities, situations, and incidents. Now and again there certainly do emerge reminiscences of events with which we were made acquainted by the older tradition; but they appear in another light, with new surroundings, and with modifications for the most part new. These points of contact become more numerous the nearer we approach to the history of the Passion; but the new materials and the remodelling of the old are seen all the more strikingly on the background of an identical narrative. The anointing in Bethany, the prelude in the older narratives to the history of the Passion, now precedes that last entry into Jerusalem which here becomes a ceremonious introduction. The last supper with the disciples appears no longer as a festive Passover-feast, but as a Christian love-feast; instead of the institution of the Lord's Supper, the evangelist relates the incident of the washing of feet; instead of the last prophecies regarding the fall of Judea, he introduces long farewell speeches and conversations. We find ourselves in Gethsemane, but there is no mention of the last severe conflicts of Jesus; we see Him standing before the high priests, but nothing is said of the official sentence of the Sanhedrim. The proceedings before Pilate are detailed in scenes which constantly undergo fresh changes. Even from the cross we do not hear the well-known words of Jesus; regarding the death and burial, new details are furnished, new figures present themselves; at the open grave new incidents are met with, and new appearances of the Risen One form the conclusion.

It is by no means merely the narratives of the Gospel which strike us as strange; the very speech of Jesus appears transformed. It proceeds no longer in the popular form of Eastern sententious wisdom; there are no longer those series of sayings which are connected together like a string of pearls, every pearl by itself, and only joined together by a thought common to all; there are long developed speeches full of profound intimations, and not seldom extending to abstract

discussions; there are long conversations, full, not of short, telling answers, but of obscure enigmas, the misunderstanding of which often only provokes to new paradoxes, and full of dialectical terms which tend more to make one marvel at the acumen of the disputants than hope for any advance in comprehension. There is no lack of pictures, but they are not the pithy, plastic word pictures of the older Gospels; there is a perspicuous symbolical language which always returns again to certain favourite figures. That which was most characteristic of Christ's mode of teaching—the circumstantial parable narrative—has altogether vanished; where the form of parable remains, it is extended to an allegory in an often wonderful mixture of picture and interpretation. The short, striking gnomes of the older tradition are not entirely omitted, but they stand in new sets of connections, and have a new application and significance. Certainly the varying of the situations explains much of the variation in the mode of teaching. All that great field of the activity of Jesus in Galilee as teacher of the people, which fills so large a part of the older Gospels, is here scarcely touched; attention is mainly given to contests with the people, and particularly with their leaders. But the older tradition is also cognizant of the scenes of conflict with the latter, and both contain speeches to the disciples, although in the Gospel of John these are mainly grouped round the history of the last supper. Still more striking is the difference in the contents of the speeches. The central point of the older Gospels is formed by the tidings of the kingdom of God, the discussion of its foundation and development, the conditions of participation in it. The preaching of the righteousness of the kingdom of God and its relation to the law, what it says regarding earthly dispositions and striving after the kingdom of God; the exhortations to repentance growing ever stronger, and the preaching of the forgiveness of sins, the warnings of the danger of riches, and directions as to the right use of them; the exhortations to humility and self-denial, to forgiveness and compassionate love, which bore on every relation of active life; the vivid limning of all the classes among the people, of Pharisees and Sadducees, of the prevailing practice of virtue and of the calumnies of opponents; the prophecies regarding the fate of

Jerusalem and the temple, the rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles, the signs of the last days and the end of the world,—all these form what is most striking in the speeches of these older Gospels. But in the speeches of Christ, in the Gospel of John, there is nothing of all these, or as good as nothing. This Person and the salvation which He brings, temporal as well as eternal, is their one great theme.

This wonderful individuality of the Gospel, which distinguishes it from the older Gospels, is the innermost core of the Johannine question. It is this which has ever won the hearts of believers. The new world into which it transfers us is a higher, more ideal one; the variegated details of the ministry, the popular and historical colouring of this life, seem to vanish, we gaze into new depths of the revelation of God which open up to us, we breathe the air of a higher life which rests only on the eternal and unchangeable, and even the pictures of contest and death are glorified by new victories and triumphs. The old Alexandrian Fathers called it, indeed, the spiritual Gospel; to them its individuality was only the natural supplement of the older delineation. The dogmatic age, which entirely lacked the historical sense, had no perception of that difference; it had regard to the narratives and speeches of the older Gospels and of John only in so far as they supplied it with proof texts or *dicta probantia* for doctrine; and the latter Gospel was more acceptable as it appeared to supply these in richer measure. Its harmonists had no difficulty in adjusting the synoptic materials to the Johannine, and the Johannine materials to the plan of the Synoptics; where a variation made its appearance, it was explained as being the description of quite a different event. It found no stumbling-block in any peculiarity in the speeches of Christ, for their literal accuracy had been established *à priori*, and nothing was farther from the whole school than to reflect upon the human form of the word of God spoken by Jesus. When criticism pitilessly rent the veil which this naïve method of treatment had thrown over the Johannine problem, there seemed to be nothing left, except to take up one of two sides in the suit of John *versus* the Synoptists. We have already seen how

the first attempt of Bretschneider to contest the apostolicity of the Fourth Gospel ended in a brilliant triumph of the Gospel of John. It continued to be the favourite Gospel of the school of Schleiermacher, and there was an inclination to give it at once the advantage in the contest with the Synoptists. It was clear that this ought not to be done but with great hesitation. The synoptic Gospels represent a tradition from twenty to thirty years older, their local and historical colouring speaks for their historical trustworthiness, and it was undoubted that, whether in a narrower or in a wider sense, they were connected with the tradition of eye-witnesses. The Johannine question, then, only required to be opened up afresh and investigated with more searching criticism, and the cause of the Fourth Gospel was apparently lost.

This step was taken by the Tübingen school. Baur placed in the foreground, not the question as to the author, but that as to historical credibility. Instead of starting from the highest value to be set on the spiritual, ideal, and dogmatic contents of the Fourth Gospel, he changed the question to one as to whether a document which so manifestly followed a purely didactic purpose could be a historical work, in our sense of the term, or whether, indeed, it professed to be this. He came to the conclusion that it concerns itself solely with a remodelling and reconstruction of the synoptic tradition in accordance with new dogmatic points of view, that often enough the synoptic materials are disfigured beyond recognition, that they are often enriched with materials recently drawn up in accordance with ideal standpoints, that the so-called speeches of Christ in the Gospel are really nothing else than expositions of the dogmatic system of the author. There was no call for a historical estimate of the Gospel,—of such there could henceforth be no mention,—but there was a call for an understanding of the evangelist's composition, ideas, object, and method. It must be acknowledged that in many respects Baur saw deeper into the peculiar character of the Gospel than the exegesis which had hitherto prevailed; that he went farther towards the comprehension of it than the older view, which, in the most naïve way, regarded and handled it as a simple biography, and believed that it understood the construction when portioning it off in accordance with

chronological and geographical points of sight
clear that his conception of the Gospel was affec
colourlessness of the modern philosophical constructio
the newer apologetic did not act wisely when it thoug
overcome his view by the discovery of these errors, an achiev
ment of no great difficulty. His followers have long retained his fundamental conception while modifying the first form of its expression, which certainly presented not a few weak points. It was still more unwise for apologetics to accept Baur's idea of an ideal composition, and carry it through with a still more refined artificiality, although from new standpoints, and these also more biblical than philosophical; while holding fast all the time, with indomitable credulity, to apostolic origin and literal historicity. A history, however, which in its plan and its carrying out into details is but the expression of a profound thought, is no real history, but an intellectual fancy picture, which might well be constructed by a Gentile Christian in the middle of the second century, but could not be elaborated by any apostle from the history of his Master. Indeed, the precision and clearness with which the Tübingen school put the decisive question was the only way really to solve it. If our Gospel is an ideal composition drawn up from synoptic materials and new accretions, in accordance with exclusively didactic points of view, it cannot originate with the apostle; if it is proved that its resources are formed by independent historical reminiscences by which, through it, the whole older tradition is at one time supplemented, at another corrected, it must originate with an eye-witness; and according to its own witness to itself, as well as according to the testimony of tradition, this eye-witness can only be the Apostle John.

It is evident that the author knows the older evangelical tradition which long before had gained in the Church a fixed form and universal acceptance. That he was acquainted with our written Gospels is at least highly probable, and is now admitted by the opposing schools of criticism and apologetics, although it is only with the Gospel of Mark that direct literary points of connection can be shown to exist. He assumes that the facts of the Gospel history are, as a whole, known to his readers; he does not begin by informing them of

eeds upon them, or represents Jesus as proceed-
ıem, without having to recount them; and many
ɔmarks are intelligible only when considered in rela-
to the form of the older tradition. It is certainly
ıy with full consciousness and intention that he ever deviates from it. An attempt has, with a certain justification, been made to prove that, here and there, the *motifs* of these deviations lie in actual or supposititious thoughts and tendencies of the evangelist; but all the genius of the critics has not succeeded in making even a little bit of this tolerably intelligible, even when there was provisionally granted the validity of that especially favourite category of a growth of the marvellous, which we shall have to examine in another place, and which has often been abused in a way that borders on the comic. This holds good of the new materials of the Gospel, which from their abundance, and the peculiarities which they manifest, must necessarily have remodelled the traditional form of the events or circumstances with which they were in connection. If one or another may be admitted to be an explanation in form of a thought of the evangelist, the majority offer a most stubborn opposition to any such explanation, because for them it is quite meaningless, often rather it appears to stand in contradiction with them. It is no less an authority than Renan, who has pointed out to modern German criticism, and proved not without acumen, that it is impossible to resolve all these materials into ideal formations, and construct them out of the ideas of the evangelist. Think of the parts played by Philip and Andrew in the story of the feeding of the multitude, by Mary and Judas in that of the anointing, by Peter and Malchus in the taking of Jesus prisoner. The higher and more ideal the points of view of the evangelist are thought to be, the less can it be understood where, in the circles to which he belonged, this abundance of new names, of new localities, not connected with the synoptic tradition or otherwise of any importance, this enumeration of days and accuracy as to hours can have been attained. People can say what they choose against its trustworthiness, but no wit of the critics will succeed in bringing into harmony with the ideas which dominate the Gospel, details like the whip of cords at the cleansing of the temple, the little boy with the

loaves in the history of the feeding of the people, the torches and lamps at the taking of Jesus prisoner, the coat without seam in the partition of the garments at the foot of the cross. It is not seldom the case that, in places where a "tendency" has been supposed to modify the synoptic materials, the original form of it would have been amply consistent with the design of the evangelist; and this modification is all the less comprehensible because the author, through such wilful deviations from what was known and traditional, must have brought his changes into suspicion, and thrown the Christian community out of sympathy with him.

Every isolated point, however, which does not lend itself to the view of the Tübingen school is fatal to the whole hypothesis. A narrator who is engaged on an interesting narrative can ornament his picture with new details, can enliven it by the invention of names and persons, by determinations of place and time, by vivid descriptions of various situations. But our evangelist, who is remodelling the older tradition in accordance with higher ideas, can only deviate from or enrich it with new details either when this serves his "tendency," or when the immediate recollection of the events makes these deviations necessary for him, and the introduction of these details involuntary. But here it is not a question merely as to particulars. The main thing is, that the whole picture of the life of Jesus is, in John, fashioned in quite another way than in the Synoptists. It may be conceded to criticism, although to us it has proved thoroughly impracticable, that the evangelist was interested in antedating the calling of the disciples or the conflicts of Jesus with the hierarchy. But it is impossible to explain in this way how he came to place those incidents at the Jordan before the period of His public activity,—incidents which, besides particular portions full of significance for his conception of Christ, contained also not a little which, to say the least, had nothing to do with that. It is inexplicable, too, how he came to ascribe to Jesus journeys to the feasts, which run directly counter to the critical conception of the standpoint of the author, or to preface His public activity in Galilee with a baptismal ministry of a month's duration in Judea, which, from the standpoint of his higher conception of Jesus, is very difficult to understand, and which was mainly employed by him in order

to afford opportunity for a testimony from the Baptist, while the fundamental thoughts which were essential to him had nothing to do with this opportunity. It may be said that he required new scenery for his newly-formed material, and thus transferred to Jerusalem a large part of the activity of Jesus, in which He engaged in conflicts with the people and opponents. But if it were credence for this which he hoped to gain, surely it was quite the same, or would have facilitated his intention, to enter them in the existent framework of the Galilean ministry where opponents to Jesus had not been wanting, especially as he gives no occasion for identifying with these opponents only the hierarchy in Jerusalem. In conjunction with criticism, it may be accepted that, in order to represent Jesus as the true Paschal Lamb, he was obliged to fix His death on the 14th Nisan, even although this "tendency" and its consequence cannot easily be demonstrated; also, that it occurred to him to roll the guilt of Jesus' death from Pilate on to the Jews, though this had already been distinctly done by the Synoptists. But that, in addition, he substituted for the institution of the Lord's Supper, the washing of feet; or for the condemnation by the council, the fruitless proceedings before Annas; that he invented the proceedings before Pilate, which are often scarcely intelligible; or the story of the spear-thrust,—these are suppositions the worthlessness of which is apparent. Under the general form of the life of Jesus, as of its details, we strike against the hard rock of historical recollection, which offers insuperable opposition to the disintegrating process of criticism which would resolve it into ideal formations.

It is the representation of the life of Jesus Himself which can first bring forward proof that, in almost every place where actual differences between John and the Synoptists fall to be dealt with, the representation of the first has every historical probability in its favour; that in the most striking differences, such as the chronological extent of the public activity of Jesus, the repeated visits to the feasts, the early date of the last supper, undesigned indications in the synoptic tradition itself establish the statements of John; that, finally, it is not seldom through the adjustments and the peculiar contributions of our Gospel that the events related by the

older Gospels, and their connection with each other, first become intelligible to us. It has often been objected to the representation given in our Gospel, that there is a lack of any historical development in it, that everything is from the first complete and settled, the evangelist at the end employing artificial means to bring forward the final catastrophe, that a "leaden monotony" pervades his narrative. But how little the evangelist thought of representing Jesus as proclaiming Himself directly and without reserve as the Messiah, is shown by the simple fact that He was, towards the end, urged by the Jews to make at least an open declaration regarding His Messiahship (x. 24). In truth, it is only certain false views of the inner development of Jesus and the external course of His history, formed on the basis of the synoptic Gospels or imported into them, which are excluded by the Gospel of John. On the other hand, his representation is not only not lacking in historical movement and development, but it is the first that places in our hands the means for clearly establishing the pragmatic connection of the events recorded in the Synoptics, and for comprehending the profoundest *motif* in the course of development of Jesus' public activity, especially the crisis in Galilee and the final catastrophe in Jerusalem.

This can remain unacknowledged only so long as there is believed to be among the older Gospels one directly apostolic. Even now a critic like Keim, when treating of the historical depreciation of the Fourth Gospel, is found appealing with great pathos to the fact that all the three older Gospels do here and there bear witness against it. But we know that these are not three independent witnesses; that, especially as concerns the whole historical structure of the life of Jesus, and the whole conception of its historical movement and development, the representation of the first and third Gospels is exclusively dependent on Mark, who was not an eye-witness, and whose first attempt to put together a connected full-length picture of the life of Jesus out of the isolated aphoristic reminiscences which lived in his memory, could not succeed in being free from flaws and mistakes. Only on the supposition of a miracle of inspiration in the strictest sense, would it be conceivable that the memoranda of an eye-witness could

find nothing here to supplement or correct, as our evangelist not seldom intentionally does (comp. *e.g.* iii. 24). There is also connected with the history of the older Gospels the fact that their basis is always formed by the circle of narratives and speeches which, as being especially significant for the Church, were most often repeated in the apostolic circle in Jerusalem, and so attained to a permanent form; for it was substantially this material which afterwards was fixed in writing in the oldest Gospel. We saw how very considerably this circle of tradition could be enlarged by Mark from recollections of what was imparted by Peter, how much of what was new both in contents and form Luke introduced from his sources. It would only be the decisive proof that our Gospel could not have originated with an eye-witness, if it were not able to contribute an abundance of perfectly new materials from the recollection of the author himself. In the representation of individual events, it is the narrative of the oldest source which mainly lies at the foundation of the version of the Synoptics, which is plainly so much of an outline, and often of so inaccurate a character, that it can well afford to be supplemented and corrected by means of a second eye-witness; and even the vivid narratives of Mark are only fashioned out of reminiscences of what was imparted by an eye-witness, and may thus be mistaken as to particulars. If, however, we found points of connection between the Johannine circle of tradition and Luke, on the basis of the oral or written sources peculiarly belonging to the latter, that would only be a proof that there is here no compilation by a later writer, but reminiscences which had gained currency before their fixation in our Gospel, and had become operative in the more restricted circles. All this does not preclude the possibility of the recollections of an eye-witness becoming colourless from the distance in time at which he wrote, and being influenced by the new points of view from which he treated these events. Even if the representation of the Fourth Gospel should require an amplification or correction by means of the older tradition, that would prove nothing against its originating with an eye-witness (comp. in chap. viii.).

It is otherwise in the case of the speeches of the Fourth Gospel. The assertion that the speeches of Christ in this

Gospel are only an exposition of the doctrine of the Logos held by the evangelist, is based on a perfectly arbitrary interpretation of them, and an attempt at justification has never been made by carrying it out to particulars, for it would be hopelessly shipwrecked on a thorough handling of details. Indeed, the clearness with which the evangelist states, in his Prologue, the doctrine peculiar to himself, and the certitude with which we can educe still more exactly the same doctrine from the contemporary Epistles, make it plain that he in no way introduced actual portions of this into the speeches of Christ. The attempt is never made to give to the idea of the Logos, as it is formulated in the Prologue, illustration from the words of Jesus, for the word of God or of Christ is always spoken of there in quite another sense: there is nowhere found in them any explanation of what is said in the Prologue regarding the prehistoric activity of the Eternal Word. Indeed, an adjustment with the views of the Prologue appears necessary, rather than a deduction from them, when we find the thoroughly human consciousness of Jesus made so distinctly prominent, according to which He receives everything from His Father through prayer,—His ordinary care as well as His miraculous assistance, His intimations as well as the revelation of His decrees, the success of His activity as well as the working out of His destiny,—because He loved the Father and was loved by Him, because He obeys Him and is rewarded by Him (comp. chap. xi.). The fully-developed view of the significance for salvation of the death of Christ, the specifically Johannine view of the being born of God, the doctrine of Antichrist and of the form in which he was to appear, which are given such distinct expression to in the Epistle, are not found in the speeches of Christ. On the other hand, other conceptions, such as being born of water and of the Spirit, praying in spirit and truth, the designating Christ as the Son of man, and the activity of the Spirit as Paraclete, which are found nowhere else among the views held by the apostles, and thus can only be referred to reminiscences peculiar to the author, —in short, a large part of the symbolical language which pervades the speeches of Christ, cannot be found either in the Epistle or in the Prologue. And besides, many of the sayings preserved by John bear the indubitable stamp of originality.

Much that is striking in individual turns of the speeches and conversations, apparently given without sufficient fulness, is only explicable by the dependence of the author upon definite reminiscences. His express separation between the apostolic interpretation and the actual foundation of many sayings, can only be referred to a refined practice of deception, unless there is seen in it the final striking proof that the author distinguishes the historical sayings of Christ in a most definite way from his own ideas which have developed themselves out of these, and that his speeches of Christ are not mere fictions for the better development of his dogmatic system.

The newest phase of Johannine criticism, which abandons the apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, and only holds fast its derivation from Johannine traditions, has attempted to prove that, under the veil of an unique mode of expression and teaching which has been spread over his version of the speeches of Christ, are hidden everywhere the conceptions and thoughts, the word-pictures and modes of instruction of the Christ of the Synoptists. This observation must be much further followed up. It is of course opposed to the prevailing and dogmatically-asserted view of our Gospel, which hardly considers it worth looking at. But the more that the attempt is made to present the speeches and conversations in a really historical light, the more are we compelled to distinguish between the historical groundwork and the Johannine representation, which, just because it has a purely didactic aim, must necessarily have its historical colouring so far obliterated in order to place in a clearer light what of abiding significance it possessed. When this is emphasized, the distinction between the synoptical and the Johannine speeches of Christ frequently vanishes. Indeed, when the most recent criticism, especially as represented by Weizsäcker, proceeded to point out in the Fourth Gospel redactions of whole series of sayings and speeches in the Synoptics, that was just as fatal to the historicity of the Gospel as the assertion that its version of the speeches of Christ is a dogmatic elaboration by the evangelist. If so, the Gospel could not have originated with an apostle; and further, it could no longer, as the critic himself would have it, be referred to the Johannine traditions. It is manifestly

inconceivable that the reminiscences of an eye-witness should not have gone beyond the series of addresses which, in the oldest form of the tradition current in Jerusalem, had become the favourite, and which, in consequence of the circumstances in which our older Gospels originated, remained the basis of all their tradition as to the speeches of Jesus. For a pupil of the apostle cannot have been confined essentially to the speeches contained in these Gospels, and cannot but have set himself to make additions to them. What criticism has actually proved is, in fact, nothing else than that the type of the discourses and teaching of Christ, as deduced with ample clearness from the specifically Johannine version, is in form and contents essentially that of the Synoptics.

Without some such separation of the historical groundwork from the Johannine mode of conceiving and delineating, one will not be just to the existing facts of the Fourth Gospel, and the enigmas afforded by the comparison of the speeches of Christ given there with those of the synoptic version, and in which the negative criticism is continually finding its points for attack, can never be solved. It is an incontestable fact, that in the proportion in which the Johannine speeches of Christ deviate from the synoptic, they display the type of doctrine and language found in the Prologue and the Epistle of John. The favourite expedient of declaring that John formed his doctrinal language after that of his Master, is wrecked on the fact that this very type appears imprinted on the words of the Baptist given by the Fourth Gospel, and even occasionally on isolated expressions of other persons who are introduced, and it depreciates the credibility of our very oldest and best attested tradition of the words of the Lord, which even without this bears, in form and contents, the most indubitable of all marks of historical truth. How little, for his speeches of Christ, the evangelist himself lays claim to a literal authenticity, is shown by the indisputable fact that he repeatedly points back to expressions of Jesus, which as given in the earlier document had the same purport, but were not uttered by Jesus in the form given here; that he passes directly from the speech of Jesus to an explanation of his own of its concluding words (iii. 19 f.); and that he gathers a series of the sayings of Jesus into a connected discussion of a

definite subject (xii. 44 f.), although his own representation makes it abundantly clear that in its present form this was not a speech of Jesus, but was only a carrying out of his own way of dealing with the words of Jesus (xii. 37-43). The possibility of both of these depends upon whether he was conscious that this was only a free reproduction of the speeches of Jesus, *i.e.* that they were in form and matter not without an admixture of explanation and interpretation by the evangelist himself. Unless regard be paid to this, every attempt to establish their literal authenticity would be perfectly hopeless. Apart from the fact that the evangelist wrote in Greek for Greeks, while Jesus spoke Aramaic, there would be, at this distance of time, no possibility of knowing, in regard to every isolated statement of Jesus, when, where, and in what connection He made it more than sixty years before; of reproducing a long speech in its entire connection; or of so reproducing the particular discussions recorded by our evangelist, that no word and no turn of the conversation should be lost. There is no help given here by the expedient of suggesting that John from an early period had repeated these speeches and conversations, and had heard them so often repeated by others, that even at an advanced age he recollected them with the greatest accuracy. If this were so, then much of it must have been transferred to the older tradition, unless we are to bring against it the severe reproach that it heedlessly permitted such valuable material to be lost. It can only have happened thus, that John, when he set to work to compose his Gospel, collected anew the materials of his rich reminiscences of the speeches and conversations of Jesus, and tried to reproduce them in lifelike pictures,—a course which must have involved considerable insertion and amplification from his own conjectures. Thus, doubtless, are to be explained the sharp turns which are real, and do not arise merely from inaccurate or partial exegesis, and which occur here and there in the course of these speeches and conversations. Many also of the misconceptions, ostensibly so incomprehensible, which, according to criticism, are invented only in order to elevate the wisdom of Jesus by contrast with human folly, or artificially to spin out impossible proceedings, may be explained by this, that they are only the model on

which to fashion the further development of the thoughts of Jesus, although it is notorious that none of these misconceptions is so grave as that well-known misconception of the disciples in the Synoptists (Mark viii. 16). That there is no indication of the place where omissions have occurred, where relevant portions are awanting, *e.g.* the place in the speeches of Jesus at the last supper, where the institution of the Lord's Supper should be inserted, which to this day has been vainly sought for, gives adequate proof that even in cases where certain main features or characteristic turns of the conversations and speeches were present to the evangelist, he tried to reconstruct them into a new and connected whole.

It is not only quantitative difference that we are concerned with here. Apart from the fact that the gnomic sayings of Jesus, as soon as they were brought together in any other than their original connection, must have been necessarily modified in some way in their handling and interpretation, it has never been the tendency of the evangelical tradition to fix the sayings of Jesus in their verbal expression, but to explain the thoughts contained in them, to illustrate them, and to urge them with emphasis upon the readers (see further in chap. viii.). The less that John thought of this, but only of writing down what, though not in a definite form of words, was in his memory, the more was he at liberty to give the freest scope to the play of the didactic purpose in the production of his speeches of Christ, the more free was he to go on with the interpretation and elucidation of particular sayings and word-pictures, and the allegorical filling up and application of the parables. Not unjustly has it been remarked, that the personal witness took up a position of greater freedom towards the speeches of his Master than did any one else. He was aware that he had gained from Christ whatever was best in his new spiritual life; that the ripest fruit which it bore sprang only from germs which the Lord had planted, and had not arisen in the manner of a natural development, in which it is so easy to confound what is one's own with what belongs to others, or right with wrong. For the Spirit who, according to the promise of the Lord, would bring to the remembrance of the disciples all things which He had said to them (xiv. 26), would lead them at the same time into all

truth, and teach them much which the Lord, for reasons afforded by the method of their instruction, could not yet teach them, though drawing only from stores which Jesus already possessed (xvi. 12–14). The question does not arise here as to whether these sayings of Jesus were handed down with literal precision; they express, at all events, the consciousness of the apostle as to the relation which, in accordance with the intention and will of Jesus, existed between what the Spirit had taught them and what they had obtained directly from the lips of Jesus. Having such a consciousness, the apostle would not hesitate to reproduce freely and elucidate the words of Jesus in the way in which the Spirit had taught him to understand their deepest meaning. Even when he reproduced the speeches and conversations with the greatest freedom, he could have no fear lest he should mistake the meaning of his Master; on the contrary, he could explain them to his readers with all the greater fulness, and make the impression they produced all the deeper, the more that he reproduced them in the form in which, under the guidance of the Spirit, they had become living in himself.

From this didactic purpose of the Gospel can also be explained the choice which the evangelist makes from the rich stores of his reminiscences for communication to us. He desires to establish faith in Jesus, no longer, indeed, in the original sense of His Messiahship, but in the sense in which he had learned to conceive of it as the destination of the Son of God, to be to believers the vehicle of the highest blessedness even in the present, through the beholding of the perfected revelation of God in Him (xx. 31). This explains the fact—called by some the monotony of these speeches—that they always turn on the person of Christ, on the salvation which He brings, and on faith in Him, with its fruits and consequences. It is certainly a complete underestimation of the speeches of Christ in the Synoptics, when they are imagined to be essentially sermons which preach only morality. They, too, turn essentially on the person of Jesus and on the salvation which He brings; but apart from the colouring given to these speeches by their concrete historical relations, their main theme is the salvation which,

in the form of the kingdom of God, He desires to bring to the whole people. Here, on the other hand, the special subject of concern is the salvation of the individual, which he finds immediately in faith in the person of Christ; and if it often occurs that speeches which plainly treated originally of the former are interpreted in terms of and applied to the latter, it is at the same time true that Jesus, in His historical life, had frequently occasion to speak of His person and of faith in it, of the conditions of and hindrances to the rise of this faith. If, then, in accordance with his doctrinal purpose, John has mainly reproduced speeches of this kind, it necessarily follows that the impression made, both by the contents and the form of the Johannine speeches of Christ, will be totally different from that made by the synoptic version. In His more especial addresses to the people, such as form the largely preponderating part of the contents of the older Gospels, but are awanting in John, Jesus had good grounds, as we shall see, for drawing attention away from His person, and for directing it to the subject with which He was concerned. In the speeches on occasions of conflict, recorded by the Synoptists, He deals with the sins and perversity of the dominant parties, and addresses Himself to the meeting of special attacks and calumnies; even in the speeches to the disciples, in the older tradition, there is contained mainly what of reprimand or exhortation was necessary for the practical life of the community of believers. Whenever John substantially communicates such speeches as were made in conflict with the people or the opponents of Jesus, and which turn on the question of belief or unbelief in Him; whenever he strongly prefers to bring before us those profound instructions given to the disciples through which Jesus sought to grapple His own ones ever more and more closely to His person, it lies in the nature of the case that these speeches and conversations must not only differ from those of the Synoptics in contents, but that discussions of this kind must also, in their form, bear quite another character than His addresses to the people and announcements of punishment, than His parenetic and prophetic utterances.

We have thus amply touched upon the main point dealt with here, the specific aim which stamps with its own

character the Fourth Gospel. A book beginning with a profound theological contemplation (i. 1–18), containing another at its culminating point (xii. 37–50), and at the end expressly stating that it has made a selection from a great abundance of material in order to write them down in accordance with a definite didactic purpose (xx. 30, 31),—such a book is not a biography in our sense of the word, and not one in the sense in which the three older Gospels are such, although even in these the biographical aim is subordinated to the didactic. How, then, at the end of the century, when the older Gospels, and probably others, had long been in circulation; when the evangelical tradition is, in our Gospel, expressly assumed as being known,—could the Apostle John have desired to relate the history of Jesus? It has been thought that he wished to supplement the older Gospels; but apart from the fact that the superficiality of this point of view is incompatible with the whole character of the Gospel, it has still too much in common with the older Gospels for this to be the case; it would be an unnecessary repetition, and would be far from sufficing to connect and to place in a right relation what was added as a supplement with what was known. That the Gospel affords us a real enlargement of our knowledge of the history of Jesus, does not prove that this was the intention of the evangelist; on the contrary, criticism, and by no means the most recent criticism, frequently expounds his relation to the older evangelists in such a way as to show that the evangelist has, by his silence, thrust aside everything which he does not relate, and desired to designate it as unhistorical, or as no longer compatible with his higher view of Christ. But the simple fact that nowhere in the second century does belief in the historical value of the older Gospels seem to have suffered from the acknowledgment of the Gospel of John, shows how foreign to the spirit of the age was any such purpose which never obtained accomplishment. If these ostensibly silenced portions of the older tradition include the history of the institution of the Lord's Supper, which, according to 1 Cor. xi., was repeated in the Pauline churches of Asia Minor at each celebration of the Supper, or portions such as the casting out of demons, the speeches against the Pharisees, the prophecies regarding the fate of

Jerusalem and Judea, it is clear how impossible it is that this view, which on these points plainly shows itself paradoxical, can be made use of in regard to others. It only remains now to recognise the fact that the apostle does not so much desire to relate the history of Jesus, as to place it in a new light, and that from the abundance of his reminiscences he has selected with this end such portions and points as more specially answer this purpose, without taking pains to inquire whether or not they had already been made known by the older tradition; for anything already known had to be dealt with here from a new point of view. That the eye-witness dwelt with a certain heightened interest upon such portions as had been passed over by the older tradition, or too briefly recorded, can be inferred too directly from the nature of the case for it to appear incompatible with the design of the Gospel, and makes it to us of still greater value.

The new point of view occupied by the evangelist in depicting the history of Jesus, is stated in the Prologue with indubitable clearness. It is the eternal Divine Word which is Jesus Christ become flesh; and although the world as a whole, and as represented by His peculiar people, did not recognise or receive Him, yet the company of believers beheld His glory, and received through Him the great grace of perfect knowledge of God (i. 1–18). Answering to this, the first part describes the introduction of Jesus to the world. This took place, as the Prologue has already indicated, through the testimony of His forerunner. There is no account given of the baptismal ministry of the latter, although it is occasionally assumed as known (i. 28, 31), but there are communicated two significant testimonies given by him. Then Jesus introduces Himself by revealing in word and deed His glory to the first circle of believers. Here the apostle loves to linger on the moment when he first became acquainted with Jesus, and closes with the first visit of Jesus to his native town (i. 19–ii. 12). The second part shows the progress of the faith-stirring self-revelation of Jesus in the three divisions of the country (ii. 13–iv. 54). Of the way in which, by the revelation of Himself in His words, Jesus sought to lead on to a higher faith the superficial belief in miracles, which had been awakened by His first activity at

the feast of Passover, an example is given in the conversation with Nicodemus; and how even His withdrawal to the baptismal ministry in Judea is made to subserve His glorification, is shown us by the final testimony of the Baptist (chap. iii.). In Samaria, by the revelation of Himself in His words, Jesus leads a most unimpressionable woman to belief in His being a prophet, and forward from this to faith in the Messiah; but He expressly explains that it was not His earthly task to gather into the kingdom of God the Samaritans who were prepared to believe, and henceforth this part of the country disappears from the history. Out of the whole Galilean ministry of Jesus, so rich in incident, the apostle gives us only the narrative of the nobleman's son, in order through it to show how well Jesus understood the way to elevate the current belief in miracles to faith in His word. This eclectic method of illustrating whole sections of the activity of Jesus by a single typical history, shows us very clearly that we have not to do here with a biography, but with a representation taken from a higher standpoint; but to conclude from this *spirituelle* manner of writing history, that it must have invented its own materials, and that the forms that move in it are not real persons, but ideal types, is pure wilfulness.

The third part shows us the outbreak of opposition to Jesus. In Jerusalem, on a journey to the feast, He comes to a rupture with the hierarchy, whose deep-seated unbelief leads afterwards to deadly enmity towards Him (chap. v.). But also in Galilee it must come to the crisis in which the sensuously directed belief in Jesus of the body of the people is turned to unbelief, because their wishes were not satisfied, and only a small band of disciples remains faithful to Him (chap. vi.). There is hardly anything which gives a clearer indication of the whole construction of the Gospel, than the fact that out of the whole considerable Galilean ministry, only three decisive events are treated with thoroughness. Then Galilee also vanishes from the history; for the main seat of the unbelief which was hostile to Jesus is Jerusalem, and on the contest with this turns the development of His history. After the evangelist has shown that Jesus did not invite this contest, but as far as He could, avoided it, he brings us in the fourth

part to the conflict, as yet victorious, of Jesus with His opponents (chaps. vii.–x.). There is a series of scenes in which the blows aimed at Jesus in an ever-increasing number by His enemies always miss, because His hour was not yet come. There must first come the completion of His self-revelation, which takes place in the fifth part (chaps. xi.–xvii.). The revelation of His dominion as the Prince of life in the raising from the dead, produces in the unbelieving Jews only the determination to compass His death (chap. xi.). The twelfth chapter shows the completion of His self-revelation before the people, who afterwards, as they had done before, oscillate between belief and unbelief, and can only land finally in the latter. Then Jesus withdraws Himself within the narrowest circle of His disciples, and in the last love-feast perfects the revelation of Himself to the believers. The sixth part shows the completion of unbelief in the history of the Passion (chaps. xviii., xix.), which, with all its machinations, only succeeds in enabling the word of Jesus to be fulfilled, where He pointed out by what death He was to die (xviii. 32). The seventh part follows with the completion of faith at the open grave by the appearances of the Risen One. Even the unbelief, which has still a place in the circle of the disciples, is overcome; Thomas, in conclusion, makes a profession which the Gospel desires to confirm, and Jesus points him to the faith which did not need sight (chap. xx.).

It is the Epistle of John, written at the same time as the Gospel, which first assists us to a view of the ultimate *motif* of this profound and spiritually-constructed composition. The aim of the first two Gospels is to strengthen and establish faith in the Messiah, in view of the delay in its final attestation which the first Christian generation still hoped to see, and in view of the destruction of the national hopes which the Jewish Christians connected with this. Already the third Gospel understands the vocation of Christ as being in the Pauline sense for the world. But our Gospel stands on the threshold of a new era. Here is the powerful Gnostic movement, whose precursors announce themselves in threatening manifestations. A false philosophy, which, claiming to be a perfecting of Christianity, has gone beyond the standpoint of simple faith, threatens the foundations of saving

truth. It concerns itself with undervaluing the historical manifestation of Christ. What floated before Gnosticism, with its confused dreams and mythological ideas, is a heavenly æon, Christ, which coincided occasionally with the man Jesus, but without touching upon that which characterized His human life as such—birth and death; and in its essence this is the very mistake made to-day by so many lofty spirits, who make a separation, supposed to be necessary, between the ideal Christ, or the Christ-idea, and the historical manifestation of Jesus. But the final word on the part of Christianity is the full realization of the ideal in the historical reality, as it was archetypically in the person of Christ, and so through Him there is guaranteed to all believers the perfected revelation of God in an earthly human manifestation, the incarnation of the Eternal Word. Christianity is no philosophy which thinks to redeem the world through its ideals, while it either does not know sin or looks for its being overcome by the world's natural progress; Christianity announces an act of love on the part of God, through which the world is saved in the sending of His only-begotten Son. That in the manifestation of Christ the divine act of love perfected itself, that it was the guilt of unpardonable unbelief when Jesus was not recognised as being what He was, that in Him the faithful saw the Lordship of the Eternal Word brought down to the level of the senses,—these are facts which the Gospel of John purposes to oppose as an invincible bulwark to the approaching storm of that false Gnosticism. No more injurious misconception could be formed regarding this Gospel, than when men try to resolve it into an intellectual playing with speculative ideas. It was Strauss himself who had to point out to modern criticism how difficult it is to mistake the intention of the Gospel; but when he sees in the evangelist only a Correggio, a master of lucid obscurity, on account of his restless oscillations between idea and history, the spiritual and the sensuous, when he characterizes the Gospel as mystical, sentimental, and romantic, and thrusts aside the preference which the later time had for it, he himself understands it just as little. Certainly the historical colouring of the life of Jesus has lost all significance for this evangelist, although occasional indications show that he was acquainted with it as well and even better

than the others. Only a limited circle of great, universally applicable, abiding truths is constantly mirrored in the history, viz. the revelation of the divine Lordship of Christ, the inexcusableness of unbelief, and the blessedness of faith in Him. But his history is not the mere transparent garment of this idea, self-woven out of synoptic reminiscences and original creations of the phantasy; for it deals here, not with ideas the value of which lies in the fact of their being thought, but with truths which have value only if they actually are. It is not the existence of an eternal Logos, with what concerns Him and confession of Him, which is to be proclaimed, but that this Logos has certainly and truly become flesh is to be verified from the experience of eye-witnesses, made possible through His incarnation. This gives to our evangelist his ideal elevation and his essentially spiritual form, but it requires also his historical trustworthiness. As the invention of a semi-Gnostic philosopher of the second century, it is a delusive will-o'-the-wisp—in truth, a gigantic lie.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### EYE-WITNESS AND TRADITION.

ALL historical information is primarily based upon the testimony of eye-witnesses. Even the information regarding the life of Jesus, which is transmitted to us through the Gospels, is to be extensively referred to this most reliable source of all history. True, the oldest work of an eye-witness, that of the Apostle Matthew, is not directly possessed by us, but through its employment in the composition of our three Gospels considerable portions of it are reproduced with a large degree of certainty. The contributions made by Peter have been recorded for us by his own pupil, and the fourth Gospel originates directly with an apostle.

Of late, and especially by Weizsäcker, the question has been raised whether the eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus were always in a position to grasp its events with precision and accuracy. This is based upon the disciples' participation in the enthusiasm of the people for Jesus, in consequence of which they believed that they were in a world of miracles, and were thus no longer in a position temperately and correctly to comprehend what happened in their own experience. Especially is it based upon their ideas regarding demons, which for them rendered impossible an unbiassed experiencing of an act of expulsion of demons, and made them from the beginning see them in a strange light. But it is overlooked that the severe discipline of the religio-ethical activity of Jesus formed, for the narrower circle of disciples, a permanent counterpoise to the enthusiasm of the populace, which was stirred up mainly by the sensuous impression of His achievements in healing; and the contrast between the way in which Jesus founded the kingdom of God and their hopes, and the internal struggle in which its development was from an early period involved, must

constantly have moderated them and preserved them from all crass extravagance. But if their views as to demons were actually so inverted that they changed the living present into an utterly distorted fancy picture, it is incomprehensible how this would escape the clear glance of Jesus, and why He did not, by simple instruction, take steps to secure that such an essential side of His activity should not be crassly misconceived, and regarded in an entirely erroneous light. Renan has chosen another way, assuming that even during the lifetime of Jesus there arose regarding Him, as the fruit of a great voluntary self-deception, a legend which was circulated around Him, and which, even if Jesus had wished, He could not have put a stop to. The history of religion and of the Church does, in fact, teach how fruitful the cloud which gathers around saints and great men of God, or such as pass for these, is in the engendering of the most marvellous conceptions and legends, which even in their own immediate neighbourhood find ready and unwavering acceptance. But this phenomenon is easily explained by the fact that, as humanity is now constituted, high religious enthusiasm and earnest striving after the fulfilling of a call, either really or supposititiously divine, are often in the case of the master, and still more often in that of the scholars, mingled in an unobtrusive and even an unconscious way with personal vanity, and with the pursuit of purely human interests, which that belief must flatter or serve. Not on the ground of the presuppositions of faith alone, but in the name of the writers of history, whose first duty is to adjudicate upon every phenomenon in respect of its consequences and effects, we must entirely refuse to apply this analogy to Jesus and the circle of His disciples. It is historically inconceivable that He to whom the world owes its religio-ethical regeneration should have basked in the unreal splendour lent Him by the enthusiasm of a credulous people, that His penetrating glance failed to see it, or that His endeavour, dedicated as it was to truth and the honour of God, should not have known how to prevent it, even if His scholars regarded Him through the foggy mist with which their obscured sense of truth enwrapped Him, since it flattered their vanity or served their interests to see the Master continually exalted higher.

There is, indeed, another form taken by the question as to the unconditioned trustworthiness of information gained from eye-witnesses, so often as memory is obliged to throw a bridge over the increasing intervals between the actual occurrence of the events or the time in which the continued intercourse with Jesus furnished the corrective of any inaccurate view of them, and the time when the communication of them was made. In spite of daily experience, we frequently over-estimate the certainty as well as the reach of the human memory. We have not to do here with the disappearance of individual details, in most wonderful contrast as that is with the definite determination of the position of others in the current of time, nor with the removal of similar details belonging to different events, which was doubly unavoidable in the case of a life passed in humble circumstances, in a comparatively monotonous calling. Here it is that accident has play, mocking every calculation, and beyond the reach of any scientific estimate, and connected only with that side of events that is plainly unimportant for the history, and can be left out of consideration by science. It belongs, however, to the nature of memory, especially when its activity is called out on behalf of the communication of facts, that from the beginning it gives fixity to that element of the incident which has made the greatest impression upon the eye-witness, and made the event appear to him important. The greater the distance in time separating the eye-witness from the events, and the more the power of retaining the original impression is weakened, the more is the latent plastic power strengthened which exists in every memory, and it comes to pass that the picture of the event is constantly forming itself more exclusively and distinctly towards being the expression of that which, in the view of the eye-witness, gave it its significance. In accordance with these simple psychological laws, the dimensions of past events grow on the side on which, for us, their significance lies; all which is indifferent with respect to this significance, or weakens it, vanishes from memory; and even isolated portions are put aside or remodelled in the representation of them, until it completely corresponds to the signification which we have attributed to them. There is

gradually added to this process of formation a new stage, which is the operation of the combined impression made by the whole to which the individual events belong, upon the formation or the strengthening of the signification from the standpoint of which the particular is reproduced in memory. It could, no doubt, occur in a case such as this, that in the memory of the eye-witnesses the grand impression made by the earthly activity of Jesus, when strengthened by its wondrous close, and by faith in the divine Lordship of the Risen One, threw a new light upon the details; that in this light the points of main significance in many events were more distinctly brought forward or were put aside; that the natural means employed were forgotten, the event thus assuming the express character of the miraculous. But the first condition of this process is the actual occurrence in the life of Jesus of such a sufficiency of what was grand and miraculous as to enable this to appear as what was usual and orderly, and the particulars of His life having had from the beginning a higher significance, a place in memory was assured, and a point of connection for that process of formation was afforded them.[1]

That the memories of the eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus were liberated from these conditions common to men, can only be affirmed through arbitrary dogmatic assumptions. On the contrary, it is indubitable that memory, like every side of our intellectual life, is influenced by the whole ethical development of the man. The weaker and less developed the sense of truth, the more unbridled will be the play of fancy in the remodelling of the past; the more that we are obliged to think of this sense of truth as purified and strengthened among the disciples in the school of Jesus, the more will it have exercised a wholesome discipline on the activity of their memory. The more that the disciples were trained in the

[1] But that the faith of the eye-witnesses was strong enough to form in their memory pictures of external courses of events which were solely the expression of universal truths, as Weizsäcker assumes, is contrary to all analogy. The fashioning of subjective events into objective occurrences would be in general only conceivable if it was the events in the life of Jesus or of the Baptist which were under consideration, and it must be referred to a pure misunderstanding of the facts communicated, and not to the free play of recollection.

constant communion with Jesus who had called them to be His disciples, to keep in mind an essentially correct and undimmed picture of His person and activity, the more was that formative process, which was completed in their memories, prevented from blurring the picture of the details of His life by the introduction of foreign and arbitrary points of view. There was present, in addition, the influence of the Spirit whom Jesus had promised them, and who, along with an ever deeper and clearer comprehension of Jesus, furnished, at the same time, the conditions of a more faithful recollection of all that He had said and done. Finally, we recollect how the external conditions under which the oldest contributions of eye-witnesses took shape were in a unique manner available for the reciprocal amplification and correction of the recollection of particulars (comp. p. 17), so that we have for that information a higher guarantee and certainty than belongs to the testimony—regarding details—of eye-witnesses as such. The recollections which the last apostle has recorded in the latest Gospel are in a different position from those which are contained in our oldest tradition. In the case of the former, the almost doubled distance in time, and the obvious effort to regard and represent particulars under the most universal points of view, very soon brought it about that alongside of the wonderful vivacity of the recollection of details, accustomed as it is in advanced age to reproduce the particulars of the past, displacements and confusions of recollections appear to have slipped in, and many connecting links to have been lost,—things which could not yet have occurred in the case of that oldest information derived from eye-witnesses.

What is true of the events of the life of Jesus is doubtless as a whole true also of His words and speeches. The unembarrassed confidence with which simple faith or trammelled apologetic vaunts the literal accuracy of the words of the Lord contained in the Gospels, is certainly not justified by historical criticism. Over against the often repeated appeals to the power of memory in an age still less accustomed to the use of written memoranda, or to the isolated experiences of the capacity for giving a really accurate reproduction of comprehensive speeches and sermons which through the deep

impression made by them had stamped themselves indelibly upon the memory, there stands one opposing consideration. In the case of a life, the daily calling of which was teaching, it must have been very difficult for those who were continually listening to keep separate in their memory each particular of that which, as a whole, made an impression upon them. The overwhelmingly difficult fact must be explained, that all that is contained in our tradition of the speeches of Jesus, even when it is carried back without stint to directly apostolic reminiscence, forms only a very insignificant fraction of what the ear-witnesses must have heard. Still we must not forget that the historical conditions under which our tradition arose were uncommonly favourable for the assurance of an essential authenticity. The very form of Jesus' manner of teaching, gnomic, figurative, and parabolic, was in the highest degree favourable for the fixation of details. We really owe it to the rise of our tradition in the circle of apostles in Jerusalem, that by means of the common reminiscence, not only did innumerable isolated sayings of Jesus preserve their certain, fixed, authentic form, but also that it was possible to reconstruct with essential faithfulness larger groups of sayings, and indeed whole speeches. It is true that this faithful reproduction has rather been effected by the involuntary adjustment of the recollections of individuals, than brought about consciously and of set purpose by the attempt to establish the authentic form of the sayings and speeches. From the very first the tendency was to preserve, not the form, but the contents, and therefore alongside the fixing of abiding forms there was always room and inclination for freer repetition, for new combination and employment of individual sayings in a didactic interest. There must then have been in this circle a very vivid consciousness of how little store was to be set by the reproduction of every individual expression in its original connection.

In the communications of the ear-witnesses there had been already introduced a formative process for giving shape to the original sayings of the Lord, which depended upon other conditions than those afforded by the memory of eye-witnesses for the events of His life, and which must have had a much

closer bearing upon their wider circulation. To this very day apologetics with great naïvete transfers our requirement of a literal fixation of the words of the Lord to the age in which the tradition itself was formed; but with equal certainty do facts stand in the way of this transference. The words of God in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are in no one instance cited word for word in the apostolic writings, but are interpreted in the freest possible way, are made more emphatic and accommodated to the apostolic usage. Frequently as expressions of Jesus are found in them, nowhere does there appear an effort after verbal fixity; even in the very rare cases in which they appear as proper quotations, they scarcely correspond to the original version as we possess it. The post-apostolic age, which had already long known and used our Gospels, nowhere binds itself in its quotations of the Lord's words to a fixed verbal form of them; and, as we said (p. 121), the Fourth Gospel takes the same course in its reference to earlier words of the Lord. The whole problem of our synoptic Gospels remains manifestly insoluble, if there is not assumed an ample freedom in the repetition of words of the Lord which had already been fixed in writing; for it is plainly inconceivable that Mark and Luke could venture to deviate from the phraseology of a Gospel written by an ear-witness, so long as there is ascribed to them an interest like ours in the authentic reproduction of the words of the Lord. A certain number of differences may be got rid of through a harmonizing supplementing of the one by the other, or through the unnatural hypothesis of endless repetitions of sayings, groups of sayings, and parables in a form subject to no essential modification; there always remain innumerable cases in which the alternative cannot by any possibility be escaped, that Jesus can only have used one of two recorded expressions. The common appeal to a discordant tradition is amply contradicted by the plain fact that the deviations are conditioned by literary motives. But this freedom in the literary reproduction of words of the Lord which are already fixed in writing, is only conceivable if our evangelists were familiar with these words in the oral tradition, that in their time was so much richer in contents than the written tradition, and of equal value. It

would be perfectly preposterous to refer the disagreements in the sayings of the Lord in the oral tradition entirely to the discordance in the recollections of a variety of ear-witnesses. There will certainly be no lack of these; but in our evangelical tradition the basis is formed so preponderately by the words of the Lord fixed already in accordance with recollection, in the circle of the apostles, that any deviation in this field cannot be referred to the accident of the faulty memory of individuals, but only to the free mode of dealing with words already fixed through the reproducing of them in phraseology employed in sayings of the Lord known to the apostles. It matters not whether this took place in connection with the oral tradition, or, upon occasion, in connection with the written records.[1]

A threefold and amply sufficient explanation can be given of this freedom, which, as was said above, accorded doubtless with the spirit of the age. In the first place, on account of the proximity in time and the greater familiarity with the circumstances of the life of Jesus, there was certainly awake at that period the instinctive consciousness that a verbal reproduction of the sayings and speeches of Jesus, as well as an absolute determination of the connection in which each individual word was spoken, was not to be thought of: even regarding the form of the Lord's words, which had become settled within the circle of ear-witnesses, this could hold good only to a relative degree. Besides this, the idea could no longer be entertained of a literal authenticity of the words spoken by Jesus in Aramaic, since the tradition was propagated substantially in Greek-speaking circles; and even of the oldest record of it a translation was used, which, according to the whole spirit of the time, was always relatively free. Finally and above all, the oral or

[1] We can detect this process with certainty only in the variations which the Lord's words in our written Gospels have undergone; but there is no doubt that it began even in the circle of the ear-witnesses, and established itself in the oral tradition all the more strongly, the less that the bearers of this tradition were restricted by their own recollections. Following the precedent set by them, our evangelists, who themselves were not ear-witnesses, made use of the same freedom they saw having everywhere free play in the oral tradition. The question, whether for their form of the Lord's words there was a single precedent to bias them, is quite relevant.

written repetition of the words of Jesus did not serve the purpose of authenticating what He had been or had willed, for this was universally established by the apostolic announcement of salvation, but that of edification, and to a very great degree that of hortation. The purpose of it could only be to express the thoughts of Jesus as distinctly and clearly, as impressively and pointedly, as possible. If a more striking expression were found for these than had up to this time been employed, if the word could be elucidated through an explanatory addition, enriched by a new picture or a parallel line of thought, or made more pointed by an emphatic turn, they were ever welcome. More especially did the word-pictures and parables tend irresistibly to enrich themselves by an addition, new and full of significance, by the bringing into prominence of a new point of comparison, and especially by allegorical ornament and application.[1] What holds good of the form of the words of Christ, holds good in the highest degree of their connection. As in the case of the oral tradition, the need for hortation determined its employment and fresh combinations, so in that of the Gospels it determined the points of view of their composition. Thus the series of sayings would be arranged in new and larger groups of speeches, or isolated portions were dropped out of series which had already been fixed in tradition, in order to employ them in a narrative when occasion afforded, or make them more striking by being placed in another connection. It could not but happen, however, that, through every new combination entered into, and through every new application made of them, their form must have been somewhat modified.

[1] Points of connection in the words of the Lord were eagerly sought for the communication of admonitions, warnings, and consolations fitted for the times, and which, with a slight change, prove themselves intimations of contemporary phenomena of a threatening or blameworthy kind. It is especially the words of prophecy spoken by Jesus which afford the amplest occasion for determining them more closely, in accordance with the definite form in which they were fulfilled. At one time there lay at the foundation the presupposition that the older view, in accordance with which they were handed down, could not have been correct, because it did not correspond with sufficient accuracy to the actual fulfilment; at another, the intention of making their relation more fully intelligible, through clearer reference to the events foretold; but the point of view which regarded a falsification of the words of Jesus as having thus been perpetrated was, as regards that period, plainly excluded.

On the other hand, within the range of Gospel literature there is nothing corresponding in the slightest degree to the efforts of classical authors to place in the mouths of their heroes extemporized declamations. Certainly the critical analysis of the synoptical speeches of Christ gives no support to this hypothesis.[1]

The supposition is most unlikely, that this system, even in a modified form, influenced the Fourth Gospel. But certainly the great freedom with which the words of Christ are here reproduced can, after all that has been said (comp. chap. vii.), only be understood if we pay attention to the fact that there is being dealt with here only the last steps of a formative process which they had been passing through for decades in tradition. At the foundation there lie, as we saw, an ear-witness's reminiscences of the words, speeches, and conversations of Jesus; but in the proportion in which the increasing distance in time excluded every thought of an immediate, authentic reproduction of particulars in form and connection, and in which the didactic interest influenced the record still more strongly, in the same proportion must the freedom in reproduction have been greater. It was apparent, moreover, that the eye-witness could make more unfettered use of it, the more he was without any apprehension of confounding his own with extraneous material. In other respects the categories are just the same as those under which the formation was carried on. The didactic elucidation and edifying extension of the original words of Christ are only put forward more comprehensively, and in a more unfettered way there is presented the retouching and meaning of the word-pictures, in which almost everywhere figure and meaning are inseparably commingled, and the parabolic form of the speeches has become almost completely unrecognisable through their allegorical application. There is everywhere emphasized an unfettered reference to the great truths of which the age stood in need, and the original historical relations of the speeches are so obliterated as to be almost unrecognisable. Large new groups of speeches are

[1] Even in the speeches of the angels and the songs of praise in the history of the infancy of Jesus, which might perhaps be so regarded, the case stands quite otherwise, as we shall show.

formed out of elements belonging to various periods, and having originally different relations; while the isolated sayings of the older traditions are seen combined together in new connections, where they receive new meanings. In this connection there is afforded also a sufficiently ample explanation of the form of the speeches of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, to obviate the objections to the authenticity of the Gospel which have been drawn from it (comp. chap. vii.).

Consideration of the changes undergone by the speeches as they were being handed down, has already introduced us to the distinction which is disclosed between the speeches thus affected and the information supplied by eye-witnesses, and which certainly in this connection does, in a sense, make its appearance in the Fourth Gospel. But this is most accentuated in cases where narratives of events in the life of Jesus are being dealt with which rest no longer upon the recollection of eye-witnesses, but on the ground of their communications from mouth to mouth. It is generally overlooked, however, that only to a very limited extent do our Gospels make use of a tradition which has already passed through several *media* of communication. In the Gospel of Mark we possess at first hand, through the pupil of an apostle, the communications made by an eye-witness. In the first and third Gospels there lies before us in great part a written redaction, partly of the oldest source, provided by an eye-witness, partly of the Gospel of Mark. Strictly speaking, we have not here to deal with a development of the Gospel narrative according to the laws which determine the propagation of the oral tradition.[1] It is otherwise with the portions which the two evangelists have not borrowed either from Mark or from the apostolic source. The written sources peculiar to Luke, especially his main source, are at any rate the work of those who were not eye-witnesses. But whether his narratives, like those of the Gospel of Mark, were drawn up directly at second hand or

[1] The freedom with which our evangelists remodel a type of narration already lying before them, as in the case of the words of the Lord, shows indeed that in their time the oral tradition was placed on the same level as the written, and that they had a precedent for such freedom. But if there be a possibility of many of these deviations having been determined by variations of the oral tradition, it is perfectly groundless and inconceivable to assume a precedent of this kind as necessary for each of them (comp. p. 139).

had already passed through several *media* of communication, is what we do not know; the latter is very probable, and in view of the antecedent history is, in the nature of the case, indubitable. Besides, in the case of Luke the supposition is not inadmissible, that many of the narratives peculiar to him were contributed by the oral tradition; in regard to the first evangelist, it is certain that all which goes beyond his written sources, as they are known to us, originated in this way. Now it is that we first find ourselves, in a proper sense, within the domain of oral tradition, circulated from mouth to mouth for a long period. The Fourth Gospel, also, was not exempt from a certain influence of the same kind. In the proportion in which the eye-witness who speaks there was necessitated, through the distance from the events of the time in which he wrote, to supplement the incomplete fragments of his recollections, and to build up a lifelike picture of the whole, he must alongside of this combination have followed the tradition, whether oral or already fixed in writing, which, indeed, even without that, conditioned and influenced him. Traces of such influence are perceptible in his reproduction of the words of the Baptist and of the Lord; they meet us still more clearly and indubitably in his historical narratives.

In regard to the effect on the Gospel narrative through its circulation in oral tradition, we are not called on to deal with the variations beyond the range of any scientific control, plainly unimportant for the history, and conditioned by their originating with a variety of eye-witnesses, and by the discordance between the recollection of some of these witnesses and that of others, or which in a similar way have arisen through inaccurate comprehension and reproduction of what was heard. Rather do we think exclusively of that influence of tradition which was one essentially undesigned, but which was exercised through the nature of tradition itself. No one relates verbally what he has heard; he could not do it if he desired to; and it is only in the rarest cases that he would desire to do so even if he were able. All inclination for repetition of a narrative is conditioned by the significance which the narrative has gained for some one who heard it; and all the satisfaction found in its

reproduction is conditioned by the impression which the narrative makes, in other words, by its acquiring for the hearer the same significance that it has for the narrator. It follows from this, that every one relates the matter in the way in which it lives in his imagination, preserved both through the fact that it was heard, and through the significance it has for him. He tries also to represent it in as lifelike a way and with as vivid a colouring as possible, because the impression which he intends to produce essentially depends upon this. He assumes with perfect justice that the eye-witness to whom he listened did not communicate every detail, and thus he does not hesitate to supplement, from his general conception of the course of events, the details, the description of which has escaped his memory or was lacking in the original narrative.[1] The further that the repeater of the story is removed from the sources derived from eye-witnesses, the more unfettered will he be in modifying the description given to him, on the assumption that this or that portion of it, because it does not correspond with the idea which he has of the whole course of events, cannot be accurate, or because that this or that portion which, in accordance with his conception of the history, he considers indispensable, must have been dropped out of the traditional narrative. How far the portions, introduced in this way into the course of development of the oral tradition or subjected to modification, are true in a higher sense, if not in that of historical reality, depends partly upon the correctness of the general idea gained by the narrator of the whole matter to which he listened, partly upon the correctness of his conception of the circumstances in which the course of the events in question went forward, partly, in the last place, upon the degree in which the sharpened sense of truth holds in check the tendency to a reproduction for effect of what was heard.

[1] Even the tendency, so often observed, to exaggeration in repeating a story depends solely on the wish of the narrator to strengthen the impression. Without any obscuration of the sense of truth, it may proceed from the involuntary assumption that the individual stages in the course of events, which made a definite impression upon him as a hearer, must be sufficient to convey with clearness and distinctness the significance it has for him, and on which that impression depends.

To what degree these universal human conditions, which are operative in the circulation of tradition, have actually had effect upon the Gospel narrative, can only be ascertained by us through the way in which the evangelists modify what lay in writing before them, as far as this is in our possession. The freedom with which they do this has been borrowed from the oral tradition. Actually, however, the same points of view are employed here as are furnished to us by the nature of oral tradition. The evangelist who writes at a later period tries to depict the event more vividly and in a more lifelike way. He elucidates the course of events, or tries to place the decisive moments in a more intense light; he adds the motives of the persons concerned, or represents the deeds as accompanied with suitable gestures; he amplifies presumptions which were supposed to be implied, or incidents that had an influence on the course of events; he makes statements regarding the consequences of events, or regarding the impression made upon spectators, or on those who were not spectators; he completes the narrative by portions which appeared to him to be, according to his presuppositions, self-evident, and which therefore in the case of the older representation had only dropped out. He does not shrink from expressly formulating thoughts or motives which the older narrative only hints at, and from placing suitable expressions in the mouths of the persons concerned. In the case of events recorded by tradition, he tries to determine more closely the situation; in that of speeches, the occasion.[1]

It often occurs, too, that the later writer not only amplifies the delineation of his predecessor, but tries to correct it. What lay before the evangelists in a written form were not sacred books to them, the very letters of which were binding. They proceed upon the perfectly correct assumption that no narrator claims for his representation literal and absolute accuracy; that every representation is, on this or that point, susceptible of and in need of correction. The simple narrator of our Gospel history must not in regard to this

[1] It is particularly here that the activity of the naïve narrator becomes the reflective exertion of the author; and so we often find in Luke that an aphoristic speech-portion, given by tradition, is introduced by means of a question or request, which he places in the mouth of one of the persons concerned.

work be thought of as a critical historian, who takes first a view of new and ascertained sources from which to borrow the materials for a correction of this kind. The general picture which he has gained of the course of events plainly determines for him the form which the details are to take. He tones down or heightens the description, according as the earlier writer appeared to him to have laid on the colours too strongly or not strongly enough; he endeavours to introduce into it more dramatic vigour; he does not shrink, in the case of traditionary conversations or speeches, from changing their course, because their progression in this way from one to another seems to him more natural, comprehensible, and perspicuous. He modifies the explanations given in the older narrative in accordance with the further progress of the conversation or the contents of the following speech. The purport of the question or the request must, as it appears to him, have been quite different before the answer of Jesus could be suitable.[1] By means of the oral tradition, it may happen that portions which were originally intended to be figurative are regarded as literal, and are given a place in historical actuality; that what were originally subjective occurrences are treated and represented as objective events; that the attempt is made to conceive of the inner divine revelation in a sensuous way, through the appearance of angels, through speeches by and conversations with them.

The limits, in themselves undecided, within which the older tradition is in this way enriched and remodelled, find within our Gospels their fixed bounds, in the relative proximity in time of the recorded events, in the control exercised by tradition, standing in more or less immediate connection with the information given by eye-witnesses, and in the essentially correct general view of the events with which it has to deal. There is no doubt that the choice of our three older Gospels in the first half of the second century was decided by this, that they and their view of the Gospel history corresponded with the common consciousness of the Church, as it had been formed on the basis of the still richer oral tradition.

[1] It is mainly the first evangelist whom we see employing this great freedom. Of this, as of all that is said here, there is a full treatment in the discussion of parallel passages in my Commentary on Mark.

The authors of the first two were Jewish Christians, and thus more or less at home in the neighbourhood and in the circumstances in which the life of Jesus was lived. Luke, although a Gentile Christian, was for a long time the companion of the Jewish Paul, and visited Palestine in his company. In his case it is shown very strikingly, what, besides, is proved in other ways, that in his amplifications of the older narrative he does not invent without restraint, but tries to supplement and enrich a given history by portions often plainly borrowed from other traditionary narratives. He is nowhere affected by a biographical tendency which would carefully ascertain every detail. But nowhere does the pure desire for story-telling show itself so independently as to raise suspicion of an unrestrained exercise of fancy. It is, in fine, the didactic purpose, the intention to edify, which keeps the balance, and restrains this desire within the limits of a naïve chasteness. It is the announcement of the salvation that appeared in Christ, which, as the deepest *motif*, guides the delineation. The apprehension of this, being conditioned by the illumination and guidance of the Spirit, is protected from every essentially obscure conception by the picture of the life of Jesus; and as little as it guarantees historical exactitude everywhere, equally little does it awaken the desire and afford the occasion for fantastic excrescences.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LEGEND AND MYTH.

THE newer criticism is accustomed to speak of legends and myths, or at least of legendary and mythical constituents within the evangelical tradition; the older tradition, that of Strauss, considered it possible to resolve this entirely into a tissue of myths. But much has to be supplied before clear and consistent conceptions can be brought under these categories, which are really only a way of expressing the assumption that many of the Gospel narratives are unhistorical, to say nothing of the fact that a definite explanation must be given beforehand of the conditions under which those elements could arise and make good a place in the evangelical tradition.

It is an undeniable fact that the oral tradition, the more that it severs connection with its starting-point,—the information given by eye-witnesses,—becomes gradually more and more legendary, and finally passes over into pure legend. For the development of this process, which goes on under varying conditions and with varying speed and energy, it is evident that definite limits of time cannot be fixed. The basis, however, of our evangelical tradition, so far as it relates to the brief public life of Jesus, must have been recorded some forty years posterior to the close of this life, and at a time when numerous witnesses must have been alive; it was, indeed, essentially fixed long before, to a greater or less degree, in oral tradition; and so it is clear that, in this instance, the scope for the play of such formation of legends is a very narrow one. The case is somewhat different with the traditions of the history of the childhood of Jesus or of His forerunner, which lay more than thirty years behind the commencement of their public life. But here also it must not be overlooked, that the mother, and especially the brethren

of Jesus, belonged, almost up to the time in which our oldest Gospels arose, to the Church in which that tradition took shape, and indeed played in it a prominent part. It can, then, never be asserted that the formation of legends has here free scope, untrammelled by the testimony of eye-witnesses.

It is more difficult to answer the question, what we are properly justified in designating legendary touches or pure legends. It is undoubted that in all oral tradition non-historical elements mingle from the first with the historical picture of the events. This is the case not only with regard to the accidental alterations and inaccuracies which, in consequence of faulty recollection, gain a place in ever-growing proportion in the tradition itself as it is circulated from mouth to mouth, but especially with regard to the portions which the repeater introduces from his conception of the events and their significance, in order to remove the supposed or actual incompleteness and obscurity of what was handed down, or the incongruity between it and that conception. Neither the plastic power of phantasy, which involuntarily forms new details, nor the ideal significance of these, according to which they are the expression of a definite conception of the facts of the case, characterizes what is essentially a legend; both make their appearance in every oral tradition; indeed, their beginning is already seen in the memory of the eye-witnesses. On the other hand, the legend also is connected with actual history, and is, involuntary as is its freely-creating activity, throughout unconscious of the difference between actual and ideal history. Certain as it is that the repeater only enlarges or modifies what is given him, because he is convinced that the events can only have occurred in the way in which they are represented in his conception of them, and that the representation which was handed down to him was incomplete or inaccurate, equally certain is it that even the pure legend intends, quite ingenuously, to narrate actual history, because the information of eye-witnesses has long vanished, through contrast with which alone could it recognise its fancy pictures to be such.

The dividing line between the two can only lie at the point where the conception of the events which produces the ideal history, from being historical becomes unhistorical,

either because the connection has already been completely lost which existed between it and the historical circumstances in which the events took place, or that between it and the tradition which retained a lifelike picture of it, or because the conceptions of the persons and events with which it deals have long suffered from a complete transformation under influences which have no longer anything to do with actual history. Certainly it may also happen in oral tradition that the course of events is erroneously conceived, and that the representation of details is influenced by this erroneous conception; certainly, in individual cases, an incorrect comprehension of the historical circumstances can give occasion for the arising of a non-historical addition. But as long as the general idea of the events with which it deals, and of the circumstances in which these took place, is essentially a historical one, the additions made by oral tradition are always true in a higher sense, even if they do not correspond to actuality; in other words, underneath the given circumstances of the course of events, there could actually have been such a one as has formed itself to the narrator. Even where an isolated portion of the representation cannot, on the ground of incompatible assumptions, be regarded as historical, yet the root of these assumptions always lies somehow in the historical circumstances, and always gives to the conception based upon these a certain ideal justification. We have seen the reason why the basis of our Gospel narratives, even where it most clearly shows traditionary influences, still does not go beyond the circle of the tradition possessed of such characteristics.

It is otherwise with legend. Formally considered, indeed, its creative activity is in no way different from that of oral tradition; it is the same formative process which in it, only a step in advance, is completed in accordance with the same law. The new conditions, however, under which in process of time it completes itself, do really afford a material modification of the result of this process. Legend also desires to fill up the gaps in tradition, but it lacks all really historical points of connection. From the name of a place, from the significant name of a person, it evolves with freely exercised fancy the only events capable of being connected with them in its imagination. From the most meagre fragments of

traditionary information it combines, with the free creative power of phantasy, whole series of events, and enlivens them with figures and pictures which might well enough correspond to the ideas of their own age, but not to the historical circumstances of the age of which they are giving the narrative. In legend, too, the dimensions of the events are increased. But the more that historical actuality is placed in the background, the more does this increase lack any limit as regards the consciousness which is still alive or is kept awake by tradition. The persons concerned become heroes, personal disputes grow into the wars of nations, or historical conflicts of nations of quite a prosaic description are turned into poetical tragedies, the parts in which are played by the grand figures in whom legend embodies the individuality of the people. Hence the love of legend for the marvellous overleaps all bounds of human possibility and of experience, allowing its figures to grow into what is superhuman, and lending to its narratives an ever more astounding and exciting character. Since all connection with historical reality is here loosened, there vanish from it entirely the boundaries between the human and superhuman worlds, between the historical and that of which no history can be cognizant. Hence the appearance of heavenly beings,—angels or spirits,—which, speaking and acting in a human way, enter directly upon earthly activity; hence the way in which the lifeless or irrational creation is placed in sympathy, or in a relation of mutual intercourse, with man's world, indeed has occasionally lent to it human modes of speech and action, or that in which figures belonging to one sphere of life are miraculously changed into those belonging to another.

It would be vain to resist the recognition of such legendary elements in the historical books of the Old Testament, where there was often committed to writing a tradition that had been circulating orally for centuries. The possibility is in itself not excluded, that such a formation of legends has already been introduced into the latest portions of our Gospels, and especially into the history of the childhood of Jesus. But the connection of their narratives with what is most characteristic of the world of legend is very slender. Only isolated portions, such as the meaning of the "field of blood"

(Matt. xxvii. 8), or the miraculous signs at the death of Jesus, challenge comparison; even the so-called miracles of nature nowhere show a tendency to introduce inanimate nature as a co-worker, and the appearances of angels are purely vehicles of divine revelations, whose actuality is quite unconnected with the form in which they were thought to take place; for from the nature of the case there cannot be given, in human speech and history, an accurately conceived tradition regarding the incidents of the inner religious life.[1] An attempt has been made with all the greater confidence to establish such a connection in the case of what the Gospel history has to communicate regarding miracles. But it is overlooked that the legendary character of a narrative of miracles is first evident in the place where the miracle, purely as such, receives its significance, where it is only the freely invented expression of the conception that, in the past of which the legend tells, everything was much more extraordinary and completely different from what it is in the common life of men. What is related, however, in the Gospels as to miracles stands in the very closest connection with the vocation and activity of Jesus as these are given in history; there are no miracles done by the child Jesus, no prodigies or feats for display, which only satisfy the love for the marvellous; there are everywhere deeds of compassion, of helping and saving love. In the isolated cases in which criticism is justified in marking the absence of this connection, the question as to a remodelling in the course of tradition is always relevant. In so far as can still be traced, the links connecting it with the historical reality show that we are not on the field of legend in which, in accordance with its nature, such a consciousness is entirely excluded.

Certainly the age in which the Gospel history was enacted and thrown into the form of tradition was an age which believed in miracles.[2] But the notion that miracles can

[1] It must not be overlooked that of the two individual passages in which angels appear, in a properly legendary way, as taking an active part at the pool of Bethesda and in Gethsemane, the one certainly, and the other with great probability, did not belong to the oldest text of our Gospels. The incarnate devil, and the angels in the history of the temptation, as well as the angels at the open grave, are not legendary pictures, but a purely literary clothing of occurrences which will prove themselves to us to be, in the fullest sense, historical.

[2] It is indeed asserted with too great assurance, that it entirely lacked the

take place does not yet produce of itself the notion that miracles have taken place. We saw that the tendency in the memory of eye-witnesses to consider natural events in the light of miracles was already making itself felt; but this does not support the assumption that they may have freely remodelled the facts, out of prepossession in favour of the miraculous. It has, most incomprehensibly, been stated in regard to the facts, that in the most extensive portion of the life of Jesus, which is occupied with the miraculous, events are dealt with of which the apostolic age, according to the indisputable testimony of the Pauline Epistles, had still personal experience, on the ground of the so-called miraculous gifts, — miraculous answers to prayer, cures, and castings out of demons. This fact, then, must have kept the eye-witnesses from conceiving the analogous events in the life of Jesus as other than those in which they themselves had had a personal share, or from viewing them in such a peculiar way, that from what appeared in them could be inferred the appearance of what was not related. This peculiar experience is found operating long afterwards in the circles in which the oldest tradition was formed and propagated. If there appears in it the tendency to regard in a miraculous light what is experienced or heard, the only explanation can be, that actual events had taken place, which under special dispensations of divine providence had received a special significance, in which the natural means remained hidden or were forgotten, and which suggested such an explanation. There have certainly been introduced through tradition miraculous elements into the Gospel history; but not because it lacked all power of distinguishing between natural and supernatural, the possible and the impossible; but because in the history of Jesus there

idea of what is now called the binding force of the law of nature; there is, however, no need of clear scientific theories to enable a distinction to be drawn between natural events and such as can only be referred to supernatural operation. Judgment may err in particular cases; and in the proportion in which the miraculous has a greater importance than the natural, and as the hypothesis of direct operation by God commends itself to the religious feeling, by which the history of Jesus is regarded and transmitted, in the same proportion will the Gospel tradition not have been free from the tendency to overlook the natural means and believe in miracles, properly so called.

was present from the very first so much of the miraculous, that the idea of a generally miraculous character as belonging to this history must have been formed, which could then easily find occasion for tracing or emphasizing the miraculous in particulars. This view would not in itself be unhistorical, even if the individual portion, added on grounds afforded by it, did not correspond to actual history.

It has indeed been thought possible to establish with certainty the existence in our Gospel of legendary formations, partly through the ever ampler forms in which a miracle-narrative appears, partly through the perpetually fresh variations of the same subject in similar histories. Strauss especially, in order to prove the gradual growth of the rank weeds of legend which have twined themselves round the root of the actual history of Jesus, has always postulated as the guiding *motif* of this process, the increase of belief in the miraculous and the establishment of the miracle. Now it cannot be denied that, among the additions made in tradition, there may have been some specially miraculous, in order to make an event appear more remarkable, impressive, and significant. But even apart from the fact that criticism has so frequently sought for an increase in the miraculous element, in passages which were plainly of equal value for establishing the existence of miracles, it is overlooked that this *motif* is altogether incompatible with the nature of the legend-formation. Such a formation in an age credulous of miracles starts from belief in the miracle as a plainly supernatural operation. The idea of growth in the miraculous element, as entertained by Strauss and others, proceeds from doubt of the actuality of the miraculous. According to it, that which may perhaps be explained in a natural way, and which finds a certain analogy in natural events, appears less miraculous; in other words, properly and in a strict sense, not yet miraculous. An age that is credulous of miracles knows nothing of such distinctions; it is inclined to regard as miraculous everything the natural explanation of which is hidden from it. That is to it in the fullest sense a real miracle, the miraculous element of which has no need or possibility of increase, for there is nothing more miraculous than a truly divine miracle. When it speaks of some

miracles as greater than others, it is really not the degree of the miraculous which is defined, but the significance or the consequences of the event, in accordance with which it is inclined to measure the significance or the vocation of the worker of the miracle. Still less can a formation of legends on behalf of the establishing of the miraculous be spoken of. An object of this kind presupposes a critical age not inclined to accept a miracle as such so long as every possibility of a non-miraculous explanation is not taken away, and the age in question, so credulous of miracles, was not one like this. Certainly, many of the enemies of Jesus did not believe in His miracles; but they did not on that account regard them as natural events, but as deceit or the work of the devil. But above all, any such tendency is in antagonism to the unartificial character of the legendary growths. Legend may assume that this or that must have taken place, because it is in harmony with its idea of the extraordinary character of the event; but it cannot relate that something has taken place, merely to give rise to the idea that a miracle has actually occurred, because it belongs to the nature of legend to regard with unconscious naïvete as having actually taken place, what it only imagines. Under the name of legend-formation is hidden the assumption of the conscious working of tendency.

Much less clearly than the notion of the legendary can that of the mythical be applied to the Gospel history. The myth is, strictly speaking, a narrative in which an idea is so embodied, that the imperative necessity it is under of giving itself scope is transferred involuntarily to a history in which it finds expression, and thus gives rise to belief in its actuality.[1] The myth in this sense, however, does not, strictly speaking, admit of application to the Gospel history as a whole, for this turns upon the historical person of Jesus, while it is quite essential to the myth to have to deal with a purely

[1] It is only in connection with the history of religion that there can be any mention of such myth-formation, because it is only there that ideas which not as such have their proper significance, but only on the assumption of their reality, come up with such constraining force as to require involuntary expression in a history which is regarded as actual. The so-called philosophic myth is only a consciously woven garment for thoughts which have not yet attained to the clearness of abstract ideas, but are first conceived in the pictorial forms of imagination.

ideal conception. We must therefore, with Bruno Bauer, raise the question of the historical existence of the person of Jesus, and must regard the Gospel history merely as the embodiment of the picture of the Messiah, which had taken shape in the religious consciousness of the Church, before we can explain as pure myths the narratives regarding Him.[1] A distinction is drawn, indeed, between the religious or philosophic myth and the historical, which rests upon a historical phenomenon or fact. But it is overlooked that, just because the consciousness of actual historicity clings to these historical points of connection, there is thereby completely removed the naïvete of the myth-forming consciousness for which it is essential to preserve unwarped for actual history what was gathered purely from the idea, indeed to be conscious of the idea itself only in the form of history. In the so-called historical myth it is no longer an independently conceived idea that is embodied in a history, but solely a definite conception of a historical person or fact which finds there its expression. Thus, then, there can no longer be a fundamental distinction established between the historical myth and the legend where the very same thing takes place. A history enriched by perfectly arbitrary inventions containing no central idea is not a legend; and a myth which is connected with historical persons or circumstances, and gives expression to the profoundest thoughts in a narrative suitable to them, is nothing else than a legendary formation amply furnished with ideas.

Nevertheless, in reference to the carrying out of actual into more or less ideal history, the distinction between legend and myth may be retained so far as it is actually an essential distinction, whether the carrying out of a traditionary history perfects itself only under the influence of unhistorical ideas, or whether there is connected with a historical phenomenon an entirely new, unfettered construction of history, in which an

[1] It is a mere inconsequence when Weisse, who alone has tried seriously to carry out the mythical standpoint, holds that such a myth-formation is conceivable, at least in the history of the childhood of Jesus; and the success of his attempt has entirely corresponded to this. Now we only laugh at the odd anachronism which would carry back the profound speculations of the philosopher of Leipzic to the primitive age of Christianity, and would explain by means of them the origin of our Gospel narratives.

idea finds expression purely through its own will. This difference is only apparently a merely quantitative one. Finally, both forms of the production of ideal history agree in making the same innocent confusion of what, according to the conception entertained of a period, must have taken place with what actually did take place. But the conditions under which this self-deception came to completion are essentially various. In the former case, it is agreed that something has taken place, the only question is as to the delineation which corresponds to the later ideas of what it was and how it was done; and that is the essential *motif* of all legend-formation. In the latter case, the simple idea carries out its realization in a history; because something in a great number of instances was thought, then since it was supposed to be necessarily thought, it must also have occurred. Here we have a series of steps related to the strictest form of myth-formation, only distinguishable by this, that it deals, not with a freely conceived idea, but with a conception which connects itself with a historical phenomenon. Even where the legend freely forms narratives of miracles, it does so only to give expression with the most unfettered play of fancy to its conception of the miraculous character of the history which it is relating. In the myth there is always present a special *motif* for this act of production, and this lies in an idea which carries out its realization in a narrative of this kind. When it is thought possible to treat narratives, such as those of the miraculous birth of Jesus, the temptation, transfiguration, and resurrection, not as real histories, but only as ideas, they are not considered as legends, but as myths; for it is only with serious risk to the moral elevation of Jesus that these facts could be constructed which gave occasion to legend for its formation in this shape so rich in ideas. If the Gospel tradition is once regarded as being to a large extent unhistorical, the circle of what, according to this distinction, can still be treated as legend, becomes very reduced in comparison with what must be termed mythical.

It is certain that the formation of myths fosters quite another characteristic of consciousness from that fostered by the formation of legends; the latter is mainly concerned with a formative, the former with a creative activity of fancy in its

proper sense; in the case of the latter, the conception of past events, arising from *motifs* quite other than historical, is considered as one corresponding to the facts; in that of the former, a pure product of fancy is regarded as actual history, because an idea is here expressed which is held to be true. It has with justice been asked whether the age in which Jesus lived, and the nation within which the Gospel tradition took shape, torn as it was by contending parties, keenly sensible of the difference between the ideal and the actual, wounded a thousand times in its religious feelings through the severe pressure of a political necessity, was still susceptible of such an ingenuous simplicity. It must not be forgotten that this nation, as a whole, remained in a position of unbelief towards the preaching of Jesus, so that even if that naïvete, on the supposition of its continued existence, were not necessarily destroyed by the differences of perception which existed even in the circles of eye-witnesses in regard to the contained tradition, this must have been done by the bitter opposition of the populace hostile to faith in the Messiah. When it has been thought that the religious enthusiasm or the credulousness of an age, accustomed through the crass deception of superstition to a multiplicity of gods, formed a substitute for that naïvete, it is overlooked that, by this means, the acceptance given to faith in the mythical narratives can be explained, but not the origin of these narratives. What is ever most decisive is the question whether in the faith of the primitive Church there lay the *motifs* of such a myth formation, and without a thorough investigation of this question the current readiness to have recourse to the mythical explanation of the evangelical narratives remains without scientific foundation.

The most obvious *motif* of such a myth-formation is permanently constituted by the conception of the person of Jesus, which was established in the faith of the Church. What seemed the most fruitful field for the growth of mythical products was the belief in the divine nature of Jesus, which was dominant in the Church from the beginning, and which, resting on His elevation to divine majesty, demanded a verification of this conception from the facts of His earthly life. But even the most obvious miracles which

are related as having been wrought by Jesus do not surpass what was recorded of the prophets and other men of God in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The narration of them cannot, then, be conceived as meant to prove the superhuman being of Jesus. And the Fourth Gospel, which is the first to perceive in these miracles a proof of divine Lordship, regards them very expressly as an indirect proof, while ever and anon it lays stress upon this, that these miracles were given by the Father to the Incarnate Son for the sake of His self-attestation. The miraculous birth does indeed appear, at least in the first Gospel, indirectly as a proof of the Messianic destination of Jesus, but is never, in the Gospel narrative, brought into connection with His claim to the possession of a higher nature; and if in the Fourth Gospel its place, as is sometimes said, is supplied by the conception of the incarnation of the Eternal Word, this conception appears plainly a didactic reflection of the evangelist's, and certainly not in the mythical dress of a symbolical narrative. The anointing with the Spirit at His baptism bestows on Jesus a more advanced prophetic character, and, apart from the difficulty as to the submission by Jesus to John's water baptism, is adopted by criticism itself in opposition to the idea of a higher Being in Jesus, in virtue of which He would appear to need nothing of the kind. That which in the Gospel narrative of the temptation lays itself open to attack from the attempt of criticism is much rather a partial or apparent abandonment to the Satanic power; and as these attempts are built upon purely human *motifs*, so their reference to passages of the Old Testament, which generally express religious considerations and duties, in no way appears as a conquest of the Satanic power by one directly divine. In the transfiguration Jesus only appears in conjunction with the two men of God of the old covenant; and in the resurrection He has only, in part, before the time, that which the Church looks forward to for all believers. However ingenuously dogmatic greed draws from the three older Gospels the proofs for the Godhead of Christ, for the historical treatment of the New Testament theology there long ago ceased to be any doubt on this point, that they belong to writings which do not contain an explicit conception of the eternal Godhead of Christ, and of His

original heavenly life before His incarnation; and as, in accordance with their chronological position, in the face of a Jewish Christian writing like the Apocalypse, with its unequivocal Christological statements, it cannot be assumed that their authors had no knowledge of or share in them, there is here the most conclusive proof that this conception has had no myth-forming power.

It was, in fact, an essentially different *motif* on which Strauss, in carrying out the mythical standpoint through the whole Gospel history, has based his explanation of the construction of the myths; it is essentially the conception, not of a divine elevation of Jesus, but of His Messiahship in the Old Testament sense. Thus the formation of myths is now excluded from the period during which Christianity really developed itself upon Jewish soil, which was far too narrowly limited for this. With Strauss this returns perpetually to the syllogism: this thing or that was expected of the Messiah, Jesus was the Messiah for the Church, so that what was expected of the Messiah must have happened to or through Him. It does not admit of doubt that the assumption that there was found in Jesus Him who not only fulfilled the promise of the Old Testament in general, but literally in accordance with the conceptions of His age regarding the essence of prophecy, was already efficacious in tradition, and more in the written than in the oral, for the delineation of individual events of His life.[1] But here there is clearly manifested the difference between myth-forming proper and the fabrication of such unhistorical traits which cannot, in fact, be called legendary, because in the idea which lies at the basis of them there is an important historical truth, even if incorrectly applied. In the other case an historical fact is present, with which, whether rightly or wrongly, the idea of the fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy connects itself, and which, according to that presupposition, is regarded as corresponding with it in all details. What has now to be

[1] It is specially in the first evangelist that we not infrequently observe additions or modifications made with the obvious intention of causing the fulfilment to conform more closely to the prophecy. That is no falsification of history; it is to him indubitable that the older representation must have been imperfect or incorrect, if this correspondence is not brought forward in it with sufficient clearness.

considered is the fact that something is viewed as necessarily happening, only because it was foretold or was expected on the ground of a prophecy interpreted in one way or another. It is demonstrable that, in the carrying out of his view, Strauss has inordinately over-estimated the precision of the pre-Christian expectation of the Messiah, and has regarded as the basis of such anticipations Old Testament passages which indubitably were now for the first time interpreted as Messianic *ex eventu.* A picture of the Messiah so definite, and equipped with details so firmly fixed, as he everywhere assumes, did not so much as exist in the pre-Christian period. And, above all, Jesus had left the popular expectation of Messiah unfulfilled in main points of so decisive a character, that all believers in the Messiah must have found themselves compelled to let go many traits of their picture of the Messiah. It was then impossible, in regard to this or that point, for there to be any overwhelming compulsion to consider a trait of it to be fulfilled, so that what, according to that presupposition, ought to have taken place was involuntarily considered as having really occurred. In point of fact, our Gospels, the Fourth not excepted, afford us the most palpable proof of an entirely opposite procedure. Far from its being the case that these Gospels contain narratives which plainly betray themselves to be inventions for the purpose of showing that a certain prophecy was fulfilled, there is not one whose origin criticism ventures to explain exclusively in this very simple way. Not infrequently narratives, the historicity of which is undeniable, appear to be regarded as fulfilments of Old Testament prophecies, to which they can be referred only on the strength of very dubious explanations, so that the Old Testament has often been rather explained in accordance with attachment to that presupposition, with the view of finding again in it the traditional traits of the life of Jesus; but this has not been elaborated in a naïve commingling of idea and actuality on the ground of a given interpretation.

Strauss, in point of fact, tries almost everywhere to supplement this *motif* by the introduction of another, the transference to the history of Jesus of traits from the life of Moses, David, Elias, or other men of God of the Old Testament.

There is, in itself, no objection to the co-operation of this *motif.* The New Testament sees in the Old not only verbal prophecies, but also prophetic narratives; it regards the persons and events of the ancient sacred history as types, *i.e.* as prophetic prefigurations of the Messiah and the events of the Messianic age; the occurrence of phenomena, the types of which are found in Old Testament history, was at the time of Jesus very probably an essential element in the popular form of the expectation of the Messiah. We are hardly yet in a position to prove a given instance of such expectation to be pre-Christian, and therefore the explaining of an individual narrative by the positing of an antitype of this kind is always based upon a thoroughly precarious hypothesis. The speciousness, however, nevertheless gained by a mythical explanation, the *motifs* of which are of this character, depends upon an erroneous application of the idea of a myth. It cannot be denied that when the oral tradition regarding the history of Jesus began to be embodied in a written form, the authors, who were without literary training, had before their minds as a pattern the sacred history of the Old Testament, for they had here to deal with what was a sacred history in a still higher sense of the term. If, however, the entire form and method of representation employed were borrowed from the Old Testament, it could not but be that the narratives of the latter should determine the embellishment of the Gospel history, the filling up of actual or supposed gaps in the tradition, sometimes even conceivably, on the presupposition of its being a typical parallel for the remodelling of the form of narrative given in tradition.[1] It is quite another thing when a narrative is formed on the assumption that this or that antitype must have found its type in the history of Jesus. There is no Old Testament figure which, in accordance with its whole signification or history, necessarily calls for the drawing of this typical

[1] The features thus introduced into the Gospel history may be called legendary in so far as the representation of a conception not actually afforded by the history itself is here introduced, which can always be recognised as antitypical only *ex eventu.* But the obvious connection between this phenomenon and the product of the evangelists' literary labours, the total indemonstrableness of the existence, in the oral tradition, of a determining model for it, completely excludes the application to it of the idea of the legend.

parallel; it is ever but an individual detail of the Old Testament history in which a single aspect of the significance of Jesus, or a single event of His history, finds its analogue. Thus it is that Strauss was never able to explain a narrative from the Gospels as being in every respect the antitype of one from the Old Testament, but could only learn the *motif* of its origination through the synthesis of details from histories which were often very heterogeneous. He did not, moreover, confine himself to the field of the sacred history of the Old Testament, but found it necessary to borrow from the miraculous tales of other nations, in order to reinforce the *motifs* which he felt were lacking in generative capacity. It is clear, however, that the explanation of the Gospel narratives has thus been surreptitiously transferred to a totally different field. The myth is the spontaneous product of a consciousness which is so completely dominated by the constraining necessity of an idea, that what is ideally necessary appears to it self-evidently actual. If it is granted that the possibility of it cannot be dismissed, then a given Old Testament antitype present in the Church demands with constraining necessity its fulfilment in the history of Jesus. But a collocation of the most various details from Old Testament or even from heathen miraculous stories—arbitrary as that collocation must be, because its product gains no support from the details themselves—can never demand its fulfilment in the life of Jesus with a necessity so strong as to give rise to the assumption of its historicity, and, in consequence, to a myth as the representation of it. On this particular, where it earliest appears to have certain points of contact, the mythical explanation becomes, when fully carried out, *felo de se*, and leads to the perfectly different attempt at explanation through voluntary conscious invention.

The more that one tries to gain really clear ideas regarding the nature of legend and myth, and the conditions of their origination, the more quickly does he come to the conclusion that the application of these conceptions to the domain of tradition, as embodied in the Gospels, is inadmissible, or that it is at best rather a fruitless verbal dispute as to whether the ideal portions of the popular tradition, which are actually found there, can be called legendary.

## CHAPTER X.

### FICTION AND TRUTH.

WITHIN the last few decades a remarkable revolution has taken place in the criticism of the Gospel history. However much legend and myth are still spoken about, still the attempt to explain the origin of our Gospel narratives by means of them has long been given up. What was most peculiar to this mode of explanation was its starting with the unconscious products of phantasy, the productivity in the field of religion of the consciousness of the community, with that naïve interchange of idea and actuality which holds that what is necessarily thought must necessarily have taken place. The attempt to carry this explanation through has involuntarily led to invention, creating freely and with conscious purpose, being put in the place of an unconsciousness and involuntary creative phantasy. But what till now was but an inconsequential carrying out of an hypothesis firmly held in principle, has, through the rise of the Tübingen school, become a new phase of criticism; though that had already been heralded by Bruno Bauer's polemic against the older mythical hypothesis of Strauss. The founder of the Tübingen school, Ferd. Christ. Baur, at first attempted to prove, in regard to the Fourth Gospel, that the point of view of an historical work is quite foreign to it, and that it is concerned solely with an intentional remodelling of the older tradition, and with conscious rehabilitation of it in accordance with didactic points of sight. The same explanation was given of the discrepancies between the older Gospels and between them and their hypothetical bases. It was more and more definitely asserted by his school that the materials of the tradition contained in the Gospels had not been regarded in the Church as a fixed given whole, but as a material open to any transformation, which was constantly being remodelled in accord-

ance with the necessities and views of the time, and was with a conscious tendency put forward as the expression of the current dogmatic conceptions. Finally, it was Volkmar who, retreating to the position of Bruno Bauer in his view of the order and the relation of dependence of our Gospels, stated with the utmost definiteness that our Gospels were the doctrinal writings of the true Christianity. With an unbridled play of fancy which repelled every current scientific criticism, he resolved the Gospel narratives into artificial doctrinal allegories. Strauss, too, in his *Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk*, of 1864, continually transfers the old weapons belonging to the period of his mythical explanation in the old *Leben Jesu* of 1835, and employs them as subsidiary. What we are really concerned here with is conscious invention or fiction, which always presupposes the most developed reflection and outspoken tendency, indeed, a veritable refinement in composition.[1]

It is incontestable that through this last utterance of criticism the whole question as to the historicity of our evangelical tradition has been brought face to face with a much clearer and more decisive solution. And the latest attempts, like those of Schenkel and Keim, to restore the naturalistic explanation of the old rationalism, have shown its untenableness most clearly. They assumed that the narratives of miracles in the Gospels treated of events essentially natural, the motives of which could be psychologically explained. This perpetual disputing over every isolated detail that might still be preserved as historical, concludes with a confused relying on mere possibilities or on decisions,

[1] Strauss himself was perfectly conscious of the change undergone by his standpoint. When for the tradition contained in the Gospels he adopts the name of a mythical history, he justifies it by saying that he is only concerned with the question whether it is true history or fiction; whether it be conscious or unconscious is all the same thing. If the conscious invention had found acceptance, then it might constantly be called myth, for this acceptance shows that it took shape at all events in connection with the consciousness of the time. But the problem proper was thus hidden. For we are not concerned with the historical character of the Gospel narratives which criticism has denied from the first and on *à priori* grounds, but with the explanation on this assumption of their origination. This must, however, become something perfectly different if it is to be referred to the unconscious activity of legend or of the myth-building phantasy, from what it will be if referred to conscious invention.

the arbitrariness of which cannot be concealed by all the boldness of the critic. For it is an attempt to construct and make psychologically probable a succession of events, of which our texts contain not the slightest trace, and which, in fine, is so unimportant and wanting in significance that we cannot understand how legend could ever have adopted it as the starting-point of the activity of phantasy. A feeling of inward freedom is experienced when one returns from this artificial and darkling process of disintegration to Strauss' mythical history. That possesses some tangibleness. The rise of narratives of that kind can at last be rendered conceivable if a thoroughly Christian fundamental conception be clothed in the fictional voluntarily-created garment of a narrative of Jesus. It is incontestable that many of the analyses by which he tries to render observable the rise of the Gospel miracle-narratives reveal the exercise of the power of invention, a circumstance which does no discredit to primitive Christianity. All the *motifs* may now be brought into full activity, which could not justly be employed in the explanation of legend or of myth-formation. A definite conception of the person of Christ would certainly have been in the forefront of every process of invention which chooses this as the central point of its creations. It would be very natural to represent to oneself in this way the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, where in other respects there was correspondence with the tendency of invention, or to adorn these with details from Old Testament narratives. It is just as comprehensible in the case of the freely-creating fictional phantasy as it was inconceivable in that of the myth, that there were presented to it a motley variety of *motifs* which, through the exercise of will, were brought to bear upon it.

Nevertheless, we have now reached the limits placed from the very first to the carrying out of this hypothesis. The evidence of this hypothesis depends, in particular, upon the certainty with which the analysis of a narrative sets forth its unified fundamental conceptions. The fictional dress may be woven out of very multifarious materials, the choice of which devolves upon the unrestricted play of fancy. But the fundamental thought must always shine clearly through it; for conscious invention is being dealt with,

which has its *motif* not in the desire of poetical creation as such, but in didactic tendency. The carrying out of this hypothesis is often on this point its best refutation. With more especial reference to the pretended inventions of tendency in the Fourth Gospel, but also in regard to those in the older Gospels, the differences which obtain within criticism in reference to the didactic significance of the narrative, best proves with how little clearness any significance is set forth. It is thought that the fictional character of the composition is the more certainly proved, the more that there are accumulated didactic points of view and significant relations, such as a narrative ought to contain. But it is overlooked that in the course of this kaleidoscopic process the unifying fundamental thought of the narrative vanishes, while proof cannot be brought forward that it was formed with fictional freedom through any process of this kind. It is only in the case of a doctrinal invention which unconstrainedly lets its fundamental thoughts be seen, or actually expresses them, that it is still permissible to think of a certain naïvete of conception. The more artificial the combination and the obscurer the *motifs*, the more scope is there for the play of an unbridled fancy which treats the subject merely as a pleasant pastime or a refined computation. With Strauss it takes most frequently the form of the latter, especially when he is following out the way in which the older forms of evangelical invention had shape given to them and were subjected to new combinations.[1] Certainly conscious invention can also fabricate miraculous tales, and place them in the most plausible light. But it can-

[1] One admires the acumen of the critic, but fails to understand how an age in which the life of Jesus was made the subject of free invention preferred this toilsome work of patching together this accurate redaction of what was already given, to making a new and entirely fresh creation from ample resources. The constantly recurring *motif* of these artificial metamorphoses and combinations is the increase in the miraculous element and the establishing of the same, which becomes more and more certain. We have already seen how the assumption of this *motif* is in direct contradiction to the characteristics of an age credulous of miracles (comp. p. 153 f.). As far as regards didactic invention, both *motifs* do, even apart from this, come to the ground almost simultaneously; for the so-called growth in the miraculous element can only have the object of producing the clearest evidence of the miraculous character of the course of events, while the so-called establishing of the latter aims at excluding every varying representation of it.

not have as its aim what, according to Strauss, the evangelists constantly have as theirs: by its self-created products to prove the actuality of the miracle, or to refute any doubt cast upon it. For the details or the histories invented for this purpose could only accomplish this if they had actual existence, but the evangelist is himself conscious of their being freely invented. An imaginative creation, however, which consciously attributes the significance of actual facts to freely-constructed details, is no longer a fiction, but a lying fabrication. Thus this hypothesis necessarily ends with discrediting the moral character of the evangelists.

Before, however, the carrying out of this hypothesis is considered, the question of its scientific admissibility must be dealt with. It is clear that a certain space of time must elapse before an historical phenomenon can be the subject of free invention. In epochs in which the historical consciousness has neither been fully developed nor educated, and men had no such share in contemporary events as they have now, a shorter space of time would certainly be required. But in this phenomenon we have only the last part of a process we have traced through its different stages, and which always and everywhere required a not inconsiderable space of time before it was perfectly completed. The unconsciously inventing legend assumes that the threads are loosened which connected the consciousness of the present with the living actuality of the past, as well as with the faithful tradition regarding it. But in this case a real step forward must have been taken, and the lapse of time must already have been apprehended.[1] We are at present concerned with a didactic fiction which is not called into existence by historical verity, but by the higher truth of an actual history, and which, with the consciousness of freedom, can give shape to the original historical material only because it is known that actual historical information regarding this material no longer exists, that even the alleged tradition regarding it has already been

[1] There is no question here of an artificial invention which can choose its own historical objects, although even this, if it were aware of its true interests, will only select those which, through the length of time which separates them from the present, have assumed the character of ideal types, the representation of which, delivered from the restraining details of historical actuality, can be completed in accordance with purely artificial laws.

permeated by legendary formations and mythical remodellings, and has become an object susceptible of being fashioned in any new way. Strauss knew what he was about, when, in his last *Leben Jesu*, he retained the view that our Gospels as a body arose in an age which still preserved in memory a considerable proportion of the sayings of Jesus, while of the history of His life there were known only the most shadowy outlines, because all connection with the information given by eye-witnesses and with the tradition so influenced had long ago been broken. It was only in a time like this, when men knew that nothing more accurate could be learned about the subject, that the hope could be entertained that a free imaginative treatment could win acceptance for itself, and could fill up the gaps painfully experienced by the not unnatural need of learning something regarding the object of the highest reverence.[1] Even the Tübingen school had, in the case of its more cautious supporters, brought down our Gospels so far into the second century, that, through the legendary deterioration of the oldest tradition, the historical consciousness which originally connected itself with these materials may long have been extinguished.

On this point, however, there has lately commenced a healthy reaction through the more strict literary criticism of sources. The origin of our evangelists is by no means so obscure, or their dates so uncertain, that their position in the second century can be allocated at will according to the necessities of the judgment which has been formed regarding the unhistorical character of their contents. Even Volkmar places the Gospel of Matthew, which he used to consider the latest of our three older Gospels, more than twenty years earlier than was done by the first head of the school, although the latter regarded it as the oldest; and he places the first great doctrinal fiction regarding Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Gospel of Mark, three years after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 73). Thus the hypothesis which really refers

[1] In pointed contrast with this acknowledgment stands the fact that Strauss now seeks to present *Ein Leben Jesu im geschichtlichen Umriss* as Volkmar, too, has lately done; while, if our Gospels were written on the supposition that on this subject certainty could no longer be ascertained, this possibility is, as far as we are concerned, non-existent.

our Gospel narratives to conscious invention, lands itself in an insoluble contradiction. That forty years after the death of Jesus, at a time when many witnesses of His life were still alive, this life of His should be made the subject of conscious invention, is a manifest impossibility. If we have proved that the oldest of our Gospels employed the memoranda of an eye-witness who embodied essentially the oldest Church tradition, and that this source forms the basis of the later Gospels as well, then the commingling of conscious invention with our evangelical tradition is plainly excluded.[1] It is only in the Fourth Gospel, if it actually arose far down in the second century, that the conditions were present for the commingling of conscious invention; but we have seen that this is contradicted by the character of the Gospels, as well as by what we can with certainty ascertain regarding its origin. Those have not been wanting who, even on the assumption of its apostolicity, have tried to find in it completely free inventions; but the chief defender of this view, Wittichen, has himself recognised its internal contradiction, and Weizsäcker has not ventured to formulate in a clear and definite statement the intimations which point in this direction.

We are in the happy position of still possessing in the so-called apocryphal Gospels, monuments from which we can discern what could be produced by free invention cut loose from all tradition of eye-witnesses. Some of these doubtless date from the first half of the second century, and thus belong to the period to which Strauss and the other leaders of the Tübingen school relegate the rise of the Gospel literature which is preserved to us, and it comes of itself into comparison with the latter. In this case we see it to be the fact that only such materials from the past were employed as the subject of free conscious invention as were not embraced in any historical record. This can be the only explanation of why these Gospels do not venture to deal with the history of the public activity of Jesus, regarding which there still

[1] Only when these facts, which are substantially established in the newer criticism, are simply ignored, is it possible to treat the evangelical narratives directly as conscious fictions. This is essentially done by those who still speak of legend and myth. But their employment of the legend- and myth-formation point of view really substitutes for it one totally dissimilar (comp. pp. 154, 163).

remained a trustworthy tradition, partly oral and partly written, and why they confine themselves particularly to those portions in which tradition has left a great gap.[1] In this domain, of which nothing was or could be known, it was natural that inventive phantasy should have unlimited scope for exercise, for it does not admit of doubt that we have here to do with pure conscious invention. One does these products of phantasy far too much honour by speaking of legendary pictures. Certainly the possibility is not set aside, that isolated legendary pictures may have found their way into them, as the latter afforded very serviceable material to the fancy of the narrator; but the general character of their narratives lies far beyond the successive steps of the formation of a myth. The obtrusive way in which the narrative makes a display of its prevailing tendency thoroughly proves its conscious purpose, and only confirms our assertion that the clearness with which the tendency of the narrative is manifested is in proportion to the certainty with which it is recognised as conscious invention.

This instance shows the consequences of the deprivation of all historical records and of all knowledge of the historical circumstances. In our Gospels even the contested narratives are connected with definite localities, and not infrequently are linked with others by detailed indications of the chronology, and the events recorded always take place on the field of familiar historical circumstances. All natural "setting" in respect of time or place is awanting to the fancy creations of the apocryphal Gospels. They hang completely in the air; they are never connected with actual circumstances; neither do they, for the most part, necessarily assume as self-evident

[1] Thus the Protevangelium of Jacobi deals mainly with the life of Mary, regarding which nothing was historically known; and the Gospel of Thomas treats of the childhood of Jesus as far as the narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, a period which the Gospels pass over in profound silence. The so-called Acts of Pilate, which we hardly possess in the original form, are certainly connected with the history of the Passion, but they offer merely a harmony of our Gospels with isolated decorative additions and with information regarding the ultimate fate of some of the personages introduced there, regarding whom not unnaturally nothing more definite was known. In their present form they appear along with the Gospel of Nicodemus, which originally was nothing more than a fictional representation of Jesus' so-called descent into Hades, and thus dealt with a subject lying beyond the sweep of all historical record.

circumstances the most impossible, and the most contradictory of historical fact. The temple is treated as a kind of monastical educational institute, in which Mary was brought up as a virgin; and the widows of the capital are called together in order to select from among them a guardian for her. In place of the actual world comes a fabulous miraculous world, amply furnished with angels and devils, in which every description of magic is appended to the ordinary events, as when a mountain opens, and the Roman standards bow before Jesus. It is natural that their main aim should be the glorification of the personages mentioned in the sacred history, but this is only sought for in isolated actions. It is sufficient to observe that in them everything is different from what it is in the case of ordinary men, *e.g.* that Mary, although but six months old, can already take seven steps. The highest moral idea to which the narrative rises is the unspotted virginity of Mary; and it never tires of freshly demonstrating and confirming this, though often in a manner bereft of all healthy feeling. The narrative has no inkling of the moral elevation which belonged historically at least to the person of whom it tells; the child Jesus, whom it wishes to glorify, is boastful, irascible, and vindictive. Care is taken to extol the poetic beauty of the passage in which the sacred night is celebrated by a pause in the course of all nature; but at the last, even this method of glorification experiences the want of any deeper idea, and shows that the transgression of laws, just because that is more striking, is to the narrator the main element.

Of course the chief interest of these Gospels centres in the miraculous. Here, however, there is clearly shown the elimination of all historical consciousness of the circumstances of Jesus' life. In the Gospels the miracles as a rule belong to the accomplishment of Jesus' calling; the proper theme of these narratives is the miracles belonging to the period of His childhood. Simple pranks like that of forming out of clay sparrows which the child Jesus bid fly, or His conjuring trick of bringing home water in His clothes when He broke the pitcher, partly correspond to this shifting of the point of view, and partly serve for the satisfaction of the vindictiveness of the child Jesus, and in the best cases for the resusci-

tation of those who were injured, transformed, or killed by Him. This is no human child; it is the permanent manifestation of a God transmogrified into the shape of a child, to whom unconditioned omnipotence belongs. But this pretended divine omnipotence is itself only the art of making every impossible thing possible, an art which is applied without any purpose but that of setting itself forth as what it is. The narrative prefers to linger on the vain attempts which were made to provide a human teacher for a child who, as a child, could learn and, as God, knew all things which human teachers could not know. And still it is no lofty divine knowledge which comes into the foreground, but only a paltry secret peddling intelligence which has neither sense nor manly understanding.

There is no more patent apology for the historicity of our canonical Gospels than the contrasted picture given in the apocryphals. It has, indeed, been said that in so far as it is unnatural and exaggerated, it is merely the degenerated remnants of the Christian legends; but even when our Gospel narratives are considered products of legend, it is impossible to mistake the specifically different character of these tasteless and often silly fictions. Even if we do not fix attention on the paradox involved in placing these in the same period in which, according to Strauss, our Gospels originated, it remains perfectly undiscoverable what could have given rise in the second century to such a deterioration of the legends. The historical consciousness, as concerned with the life of Jesus, had long before been so completely extinguished, that unlimited formation of legends and free invention could lay hold of this theme, and the first-fruits of this process might bear as perfectly heterogeneous a character as the very latest. The glaring contrast between the two is only made clear by the fact that they had by no means a common origin; that in the circles in which the apocryphal Gospels arose, conceptions had already been formed of the person and work of Jesus which had not grown up out of the trustworthy tradition regarding Jesus, and had withdrawn from every determining influence of this tradition. That this was the case with the circles which were smaller and more separated from the Church as a whole, is clear from the fact that when the latter,

shortly after the middle of the second century, gave our four Gospels a position of exclusive acceptance, these unhealthy fanciful productions were never taken into consideration. This can only be explained through the fact that the common consciousness of the Church, assimilated to our Gospels and supported by a tradition which was always retained in a relatively pure state, preserved an historical picture of the life of Jesus still essentially unblurred, and hence with sure tact rejects this product of a gift of invention which is in opposition to the facts of history. Even in the third century there are borrowed from them only isolated genealogical notices certainly of very dubious value; and it was a much later age, one calling everything handed down by tradition sacred, that first lost the gift of discriminating, which was more amply approved by the ancient Church than by modern criticism.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE "TENDENZ-KRITIK."

BY means of the criticism of the Tübingen school, the suspicion has been aroused that in our Gospels the material given by tradition was freely shaped in accordance with the didactic points of view of their time and author, that they are not historical documents, but dogmatic party-writings which serve at one time the interests of polemic, at another those of conciliation. Rather than for acquaintance with the history of Jesus and His age, they were thought to be significant for the history of the antagonisms, from the reconciling of which, according to the fundamental view of Baur, the Catholic Church of the second century proceeded. One may be fully convinced that the significance of Jesus and of His manifestation does not lie in a new doctrine which He has brought, and the correct handing down of which is to us the condition of its comprehension, and yet he must confess that under the presuppositions of this "Tendenz-Kritik" all the historical value of the Gospels has for us disappeared. It is true that knowledge of the salvation brought by Christ, as it is communicated to us by the apostolic preaching of salvation, is not dependent upon the greater or less reliability of the Gospels. That, however, which we look for in them, the historical form in which the salvation manifested in the person of Jesus was originally brought to realization, must necessarily, so far as we are concerned, become completely unrecognisable as soon as the probability presents itself that a later age and party here carried their independent views regarding Christianity back to the time of its origination, and have given expression to them in the representation of the life of Jesus.

This apprehension is not exclusively dependent upon the above-mentioned assumption of the Tübingen school, that our

Gospels as a rule deal with conscious fiction or poetry. We have seen that in tradition, and even in the memory of eye-witnesses, the historical fact-basis is always modified in some way by the narrator's conceptions of the person or the events with which he deals. If our Gospels support party tendencies and aims, which are really one-sided, the author's general view of Christ and His work cannot fail to be essentially one-sided and erroneous, and in a greater or less degree will stamp itself upon the representations given by him. Further, the oral tradition, which was exposed most immediately to such influences, operated largely, both directly and indirectly, on our three older Gospels; and the Fourth, even if regarded as Johannine, was committed to writing at such a distance of time from the events, that the representation was necessarily influenced by the conceptions which had been formed in the interval. Thus it happens that all our Gospels, and the Fourth most of all, are by no means mere biographies. They are really didactic writings, in which it is the dominant interest to make as clear as possible, and bring to actual expression, the view of their authors as to the nature of Christianity. If, then, our evangelists were partisans, our Gospels and their sources really originated in the midst of severe party struggles round the question as to the nature of Christianity, and thus we have certainly no prospect of obtaining from them a historical picture of its origin.[1]

The question, however, whether our Gospels issued from one-sided parties, has really been answered in the negative by the Tübingen school itself. It starts from the universally accepted fact that our first Gospel is Jewish-Christian, and our third Gentile-Christian; but it cannot and does not

[1] The significance of the question raised by the Tübingen school does not depend upon whether the plan, in accordance with which the history of primitive Christianity is constructed, is the correct one, or whether there is being dealt with an original fundamental antagonism between the primitive apostles and Paul, between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, law and gospel, faith and works, particularism and universalism, and with the gradual reconciliation of these. Although the view is gaining ground that this was not the case throughout, or else that under these historical presuppositions of the school there existed only a strictly limited and modified element of truth, still the question cannot be evaded, whether, with reference to the questions which agitated primitive Christianity, one-sided tendencies gained a hold in our Gospels, which can have blurred or altered the original historical picture.

assume that in them that antagonism obtains pure expression which in the apostolic age became the subject of controversy. In our first Gospel the Judaizing particularistic basis has, through an universalistic redaction, already lost its specific character, and the Pauline author of the third Gospel has, through an irenical tendency, already adopted manifestly Judaizing elements. The second Gospel, however, must have been redacted in view of the other two, in order to neutralize the contradictions which are still existent. Thus it has been established that no one-sided tendency is found in any of our three Gospels. The statement that the commingling which exists in them can only be explained in the case of the first Gospel through the separation of an older basis from its later redaction; in that of the third, through the irenical tendencies of the author; in that of the second, through the mediating object of the whole construction of the Gospel, rests upon hypotheses which are extremely doubtful, and do in part directly contradict the results we have arrived at regarding the origin of the synoptic Gospels. It is an historical fact that, on the question of the law and the relation of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian Church, a variety of views from the very first gained acceptance; and a truly historical view will probably but discover that in the life and in the words of Jesus there did occur that which afforded points of connection for one and another of these views, that it corresponds only to historical actuality, and does not rest upon any party positions whatever, or on artificial arrangements. On this point the actual construction of the Gospels can only testify to the fact that they have reproduced the picture of the life of Jesus, not in a one-sided light, but, as a whole, in a trustworthy manner. This does not exclude the possibility of an isolated saying or fact in one or other evangelist being represented in accordance with the peculiar view taken by him.

In fact, in the case of the first Gospel, a one-sided tendency cannot be entertained. In the first great speech it permits Jesus to express the fullest recognition of the Jewish law, and energetically to further its acceptance (Matt. v. 17–19), but expressly in accordance with a view of it and a meaning of it which contradicted contemporary conceptions, and must have led to the doing away with the law in that

form of it which was literal and accommodated to the necessities of the life of the Israelitish people (v. 20 f.). It permits Jesus, when about to depart, to instruct His disciples to admonish those who desired baptism to keep His commands, and not those of the Mosaic law (xxviii. 20). This Gospel, therefore, cannot have designed to support the party which desired to maintain the Mosaic law as being binding on the Church.[1] When the Gospel positively proves the fulfilment of prophecy in the history of Jesus, and, corresponding to this, repeatedly brings forward expressly the destination of Jesus and His first disciples for the people of Israel, and then at the end speaks of Jesus as sending these very disciples to all peoples (xxviii. 19), it cannot support a party in the interests of a tendency which wished to exclude the Gentiles from salvation, or obstruct in some way or other their participation in it. On the contrary, we saw that the whole representation of the Gospel aims at reconciling this apparent contradiction, and explaining how it happens that He, who came as the fulfiller of the law and the prophets, does at last realize the kingdom in a form so contradictory to prophecy (comp. p. 63 f.). It is incontestable that this point of view is not the prominent one in history,—that would have been to make the representation unhistorical,—but it is made apparent by the course of Jesus' history. That course is first properly understood through the carrying out of this view.

In reference to the third Gospel, the Tübingen school maintains that it is relatively in contradiction to the first.[2] It is a fact, however, that even this Gospel, in a connection which excluded all misconception, introduces the axiom as to the

[1] Thus it happens that His view, as given in xv. 11–20, involves a certain antithesis as against the laws regarding eating; and the course of action, in accordance with which Christ on His return is to judge, is, taken in its connection, plainly the proof given to His disciples of His self-denial and self-offering (xvi. 24 f.).

[2] It starts from the view, which we have seen to be perfectly untenable, that the third evangelist knew and employed our first Gospel (comp. p. 74), and overlooks the fact that when he passes over sayings and even histories with which he must have been familiar through the older tradition, this does not by any means necessarily imply an intention to contest these or explain them as unhistorical, but is adequately explained by this, that, in the absence of fuller elucidation, they were liable to be misunderstood, and actually had been misinterpreted (comp. p. 85).

inviolable validity of the law (Luke xvi. 17), to the commands of which Jesus here repeatedly refers (x. 25 f., xviii. 20), and also sayings which give expression to the original destination for Israel (xxii. 30) of salvation and of the twelve apostles (xiii. 16, xix. 9; comp. ii. 10). The early history dwells with manifest delight on pictures of the Jewish legal life and the highly wrought expression of national expectation of the Messiah. We have certainly seen that the Gospel desires to establish the Pauline doctrine; but it is only the general Christian fundamental truths of the Pauline system which can be established in the Gospel by means of sayings and histories, the historicity of which is in part indubitable (comp. 85 f.). It is only by means of artificial allegorizing elucidations of histories, and especially of parables, that criticism has been able to arouse suspicion that these latter were formed for the purpose of giving expression to the contradiction existing between the Pauline conceptions and doctrines of another kind. In combination with the intentional bringing forward of faith as the condition of salvation, there runs through the whole Gospel the most express enforcement of the duty of benevolence, and it shows that it is not from this that party watchwords are derived. Neither in the case of the oldest source, which undoubtedly contained the axiom and the parables of the calling of the heathen, nor yet in that of our first Gospel, which intentionally explains and justifies the transference of salvation from Jews to Gentiles, was there any occasion for providing, in the life of Jesus, a type or a confirmation of the Pauline mission to the heathen. Nevertheless, the whole composition of the Gospel is, according to Baur, directed to the end of accomplishing this. Because the first miracle which is related as performed by Jesus is the exorcism of demons in the synagogue at Capernaum, Jesus must from the beginning appear as the vanquisher of demons, *i.e.* of the power of heathendom. But apart from the fact that here, as everywhere, Jesus appears first with the announcement of the kingdom of God (iv. 15, 21), and that that single exorcism of demons which he has, in addition to what is contained in the first Gospel, is undoubtedly related simply as it is in Mark, the demoniacs who invoked Jesus as the Christ and Son of God (iv. 41,

viii. 28) cannot be regarded as representatives of heathendom. The whole of the second main section of the Gospel is made to afford, in the ministry of Jesus on the soil of Samaria, a type of the richly blessed mission of Paul among the Gentiles, as opposed to his fruitless mission on the soil of Israel. But apart from the incident in a Samaritan village, where Jesus finds as little acceptance as He did in His own city, this section contains only one narrative which deals with what took place within the boundaries of Samaria (xvii. 11); on the other hand, it contains many bearing on what can only have taken place on Jewish soil.[1] Finally, with the twelve apostles of Israel there is made to correspond the seventy disciples who appear as the agents of a ministry rich in blessings outside of Israel, and thus as the type of the Pauline mission to the heathen, in the very proportion in which the Twelve are in contrast to them regarded. It has already been often enough shown how artificially Baur has sought to carry out this idea. It is enough to say here, that a Gospel which places the calling of Peter in so prominent a light as is done by the older Mark-document (v. 1–11), and admits his great profession without the humiliating addition found in Mark (ix. 20), which promises to the Twelve to sit on twelve thrones (xxii. 30), and entrusts them with the mission to the heathen (xxiv. 47), which does not, like the first evangelist (Matt. xxvi. 35, 56), relate that all the disciples spoke as rashly as Peter and yet fled at the apprehension of Jesus, cannot possibly be in the service of a tendency to depreciate the primitive apostles.

The Gospel of Mark does, in its truly epical manner, in its simple delight in narratives and pictures, in spite of its didactic purpose, which in this case is directed only towards the truths which undoubtedly lie in the history itself (comp. p. 51), show nothing whatever so little as it does the tendency to reconcile contradictions and evade burning questions.[2] In general, however, the synoptic Gospels, through the way in

[1] If the introduction of Herod into the history of the Passion was made in order to transfer the blame of the murder of Jesus from the Gentiles to the Jews, yet even he finds no fault in Jesus (xxiii. 15); and, indeed, the scene in which Pilate washes his hands in innocence, and the people take upon themselves the whole guilt of the blood (Matt. xxvii. 24 f.), is awanting in the Gospel of Luke.

[2] The naïve way in which vii. 27 guards against misconception the expression

which the sayings and groups of sayings given by tradition reappear in various redactions, afford ample points of vantage for separating, through a simple critical process, what is original from what the individual evangelists have, in accordance with their characteristics, introduced or modified, so that the unnoticed introduction of an alteration made from one-sided standpoints is not possible. Criticism is continually verifying the great fidelity of the first evangelist in minutely reproducing the speeches of his apostolic source, notwithstanding the freedom of his composition as a whole. The more distinctive his own idiosyncrasy of speech, the clearer is the distinction between the original groundwork and the little which he added from the language of his own time, but which had no connection with the proper doctrinal contents. The speech-portions which can be constructed from them afford a standard for the determination of the peculiarities belonging respectively to Mark and Luke.

The picture of Christ presented to us in the first three Gospels is acknowledged to be essentially one; we have seen already how in them the higher representations of the eternally divine existence of Christ are nowhere mythically or didactically expressed (comp. p. 160). It is indeed Luke, the latest of the evangelists, who, like no other, brings forward the truly human progress of the boy Jesus (ii. 40–52), and who assumes frequent temptations of Jesus by the devil even after the days in the wilderness (iv. 13, 22, 28). In Mark, who, according to the Tübingen school, is of latest date, occurs that utterance which, according to a not unnatural misconstruction, appears to exclude the sinlessness of Jesus (Mark x. 18),—according to him, Jesus expressly refuses to claim divine omniscience (xiii. 32); neither the change undergone by this utterance at the hands of the first evangelist (Matt. xix. 17), nor a highly doubtful reading (Matt. xxiv. 36), in which it has been thought possible to trace such an intention, really modifies in any way the fundamental

of Jesus regarding His destination for Israel, and in which the intimation of Jesus in Matt. x. 18 is turned into a prophecy of the mission to the heathen (Mark xiii. 10; comp. xiv. 9), are perhaps the only occasions on which a reference can be traced to the questions which agitated the apostolic age. The reproduction is throughout a very free one, but it is manifestly directed to the interpretation and emphatic accentuation of the words of Jesus.

thought of these declarations.[1] The fact that the evangelists who narrate the miraculous birth of Jesus never once make the slightest allusion to it in the further course of their history, is the best proof of how little their representation has been influenced by advanced views as to Jesus' origin, whether these are held to be unhistorical or no. It is precisely the criticism which finds in the idea of Jesus' anointing by the Spirit in baptism an earlier stage of the notion of the divinely-wrought conception of Mary, or sees in the stress laid upon the Davidic descent of Jesus a contradiction with the later evangelists, which should perceive even in the naïve juxtaposition of these stages the most striking proof of how far it was from our evangelist's purpose to compose the picture of Jesus' life according to Christological dogmas.

In the Fourth Gospel the case appears certainly different; there the Prologue expressly lays down a complete doctrine of the origin and essence of Christ's person as regulating the history related of Him. It seems almost unavoidable that from this point of view the picture of Jesus' life would have a strange new light cast upon it; and it is the continual endeavour of the newer criticism to demonstrate to what degree this has taken place. But this ostensible fact absolutely disappears so soon as actual proofs are demanded. Not once is it a God in human form which the narrative of this Gospel presents to us, but the Logos in the fullest sense become flesh. His birth and earthly home, His mother and brethren, are spoken of without constraint. He is tired and hungry, He thirsts beside Jacob's well as on the cross; He knows and feels human joys, and tears are drawn from Him by His pain at the grief of friends. Most certainly it was not the task of a writing to depict the story of the temptation, or of the agony in Gethsemane, when its aim was to show from selected portions of Jesus' life how the eye-witnesses of it had

[1] The attempts of Baur to vindicate for Luke's Gospel a higher Christology which leaned towards the standpoint of the Logos Gospel, rest upon passages which, if not elaborated, are simple reproductions of the statements so exactly preserved by the first evangelist out of the apostolic source (x. 22, xxi. 33, comp. with Matt. xi. 27, xxiv. 35). The ostensible omission of the so-called father of Jesus in Mark vi. 3 must be considered as a higher conception of the person of Christ, whose miraculous birth, however, is candidly narrated by the others.

beheld the glory of the Eternal Logos; but repeated mention is made of His being severely agitated and shaken in spirit. To Him the fulfilment of the divine will consists in the obedient repression of His own; the victory over selfishness and ambition is a moral task, one which is completely accomplished, and is by God's love richly rewarded. He looks to the Father as to the one true God (v. 44, xvii. 3), as to His God (xx. 17), whom He honours and adores, whose goodwill, protection, and aid He requires for Himself, and all that is His, and always obtains. The Father is greater than He (xiv. 28), and not until after His resurrection does He accept the divine appellation (xx. 28). In order to qualify Him for the work of His calling, the Spirit descends and rests upon Him, only more permanently than in the case of the prophets of the old covenant (i. 32 f.). In this picture the traces of human development are certainly awanting; but the history of boyhood is not related by the evangelist, and the process of development is highly questionable, which it has been thought possible to discover in the course of His short public ministry as given by the older Gospels. It is not, indeed, historically improbable that Jesus entered on His vocation a mature man.[1]

By reason of this it has been the more insisted on that divine omnipotence and omniscience in the widest sense are here attributed to Jesus. But were that the case, all that is there affirmed would be, that the evangelist has involved himself in an incomprehensible contradiction. Most unequivocally he represents Jesus, on His departure from earth, as supplicating back the divine glory which had been His from the first (xvii. 5), which therefore He cannot have possessed here; and the evangelist himself speaks repeatedly of Jesus' approaching elevation to divine glory (vii. 39, xii. 16). Jesus certainly seems equipped with superhuman penetration which scrutinizes the hearts of men; but this is a trait which constantly recurs in all our older sources. More than

[1] It is not worth while to speak of the pitiful attempts made to prove that the evangelist is making an attack from the side of Docetism; it is sufficient that both the principal passages to which Baur appeals (vi. 19, viii. 59) narrate nothing but what the Synoptists have told already (Mark vi. 48 f.; Luke iv. 30), and that the expression used in vii. 10, 15, affords no ground for this misconstruction.

once He speaks words which presuppose a plainly supernatural knowledge, even in regard to outward things; but apart from the consideration that the older evangelists indubitably credited Him with such (Matt. xvii. 27; Luke v. 4, xix. 32), that is no sign of a metaphysical essential property in Him who had received the Spirit without measure (iii. 34), and was under His continual influence. The passages from which criticism, as naïvely as dogmatizing exegesis, deduces an essentially divine omnipotence, say exactly the same thing as an acknowledged passage from the older Gospels (Matt. xi. 27), which can be misconstrued only when the understanding of its object and connection is completely renounced. Appeal is constantly being made to the unique creative miracle of our Gospel. But the change of water into wine at Cana, contained by it only, is easier to understand than the miracle of the loaves, which it shares with the Synoptics. And the fact, that of the miracles of healing only certain specially striking ones are brought forward, corresponds to the eclectic character of the Gospel, which by no means excludes the fact attested by the Synoptists, that Jesus' ministry of healing was His constantly pursued professional work.[1] How little the evangelist intended by these narratives to demonstrate that Jesus was the almighty Logos, is shown by the simple fact that in the cure of the blind, here, more than in any one of the older Gospels, Jesus' employment of outward means in the process of healing is made very prominent (ix. 6 f.); and in the case of the raising of Lazarus it is designedly emphasized how this was solicited from and granted by God (xi. 41 f.). Down through the whole Gospel

[1] The *motif* we have repeatedly discussed, that of growth in the miraculous, is often employed to explain the evangelist's remodelling. But can a growth of the miraculous be really seen in the enlarging on the distance between Jesus and the nobleman's son who recovered health without His personal presence? or in the mentioning of the lame man's years of infirmity, who at a simple word of Jesus arose and carried away his bed? When Jesus heals a man born blind, or raises one from the dead who had lain in the grave four days, these are undeniably absolute miracles. But an increase as against the synoptic miracles is involved in these narratives only when it is granted that those presented in the Synoptics as healed were not born blind in reality, but only suffered from some eye complaint easily and naturally removed, and that Jairus' daughter and the widow's son were in truth only apparently dead, which is equally contrary to the sense and purport of the older narrative.

it is urged again and again that Jesus can do nothing by Himself, that God is the source of all His actions and successes, that it is God Himself who through Him performs the actions. And above all these miraculous tales stands, as inscription, that saying about the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man in order to convey to Him divine help (i. 51).

That the picture of Jesus has here been distorted so as to favour some dogmatic theory, has not and cannot be proved. That, besides, the life of Jesus in its fundamental features was not drawn up in accordance with dogmatic tendencies, we have in another place fully demonstrated (chap. vii.). It is certainly indisputable that in a Gospel which is so devoted to its didactic and edifying aims, apart from a wealth of singly unmistakeable recollections and invaluable historical motives, the concrete, richly-coloured traits of historical actuality have frequently disappeared, or have retired from immediate observation. We have seen that this is so, especially as regards its longer addresses and conversations.[1] But when it has been attempted to find ground for the misgiving, that on these points at least every historical substantiation had been made impossible by the didactic tendency, the ample means have been overlooked which we have at command for distinguishing between the original fact-basis and the Johannine investiture. The recognition of what was added by him is made very easy to us by the freedom with which the author formulates from the first his didactic points of view, and by the directness with which the contemporary Epistle of the same writer enables us to regard his mind and the whole character of his religious life. The rich remainder of the original utterances of Christ, which we possess in the synoptic tradition, gives us a fixed standard for distinguishing from it what was original in a material and formal respect.

[1] We have proved from undoubted facts that these are not, as has been supposed, simple statements of Johannine theology, or that, by the introduction of the conceptions of a later time, the original form and historical relations of Jesus' speeches were rendered unrecognisable. But it is certain that the endeavour to find in Jesus' own words points of connection for his more advanced knowledge of Christ's person, and apprehension of the salvation which he had found in them, caused the evangelist frequently to render these with meanings and elucidations which far surpassed their original scope.

There can be no doubt that always where the fundamental ideas of the Prologue are presented in a severely dogmatic form, there the evangelist is speaking, and not Jesus Himself. A little consideration shows us that before an audience to whom, whether it was irenically or friendly disposed, such things were quite incomprehensible, Jesus could not have spoken of His eternal existence with the Father, of what in immediate contemplation of Him He had there seen and heard, of His descending from and ascending to heaven, as if they were things perfectly intelligible. When there is here such a well-defined boundary which these expressions never transgress, and when there remain statements of the Prologue which have not been affected, it follows that on this point the evangelist by no means indiscriminately blended his conceptions with what belonged to Jesus' speeches. Thus the sentences which were put in His mouth must have had their points of connection with the addresses of Jesus; only they would be detached intimations in which now and then He gave expression almost involuntarily to that deepest secret of His self-consciousness. That, indeed, we still find such, which very comprehensibly had not passed into the popular tradition of the older evangelists, gives us new ground for the separation of the really historical foundation from the Johannine continuation.

The Prologue represents the whole history of Jesus as a struggle of the light which appeared in Him with the darkness of this world, and thus we have here the apprehension of the evangelist who, the first Christian Gnostic, in the intuitive recognition of the revelation of God which appeared in Christ, found what was the very highest which Christ desired to communicate to the world. When, then, this calling of Christ to be the Light of the world and to testify the truth to it is again and again expressed in the strange doctrinal forms of the Prologue or the Epistle, the objection is started that the evangelist and not Jesus is here speaking. And yet it is not difficult to point out in form and material points of connection in the synoptic tradition even for such declarations, and by this means to recognise original utterances of Christ under the disguise of the Johannine presentation. The result of Christ's fulfilment of His vocation is most clearly summed

up by the evangelist in his conception of eternal life. The beholding of God face to face, which is the chief thing that the believer looks for in the heavenly life with God, has for him begun already here; for in the Son he beholds the Father as clearly as He can be seen. Because of this, the believer possesses that eternal life already, and the communicating of this to him was the object of Christ's being sent. But alongside the statements as to the eternal life which commences here, there often run inseparable declarations as to the eternal life beyond, which according to the Synoptists had been made possible by Jesus. The pictures of hungering and thirsting, of bread and water, of death and resurrection, which are so applied, do even in their bearing on the spiritual life accord with the Synoptics also, and prove themselves not to be foreign to Jesus' method of teaching. The constantly recurring expression of the holy gratification which faith finds immediately in the acknowledgment of Christ and in the beholding in Him the revelation of God, which delivers the believer from the judgment, because his fate is already decided by his actual participation in salvation, neither excludes an allusion to the last consummation promised by Jesus at the resurrection and the judgment day or at His own return, nor to the importance which Christ's death had for the realization of salvation. It is our evangelist particularly who places allusions to His death and resurrection in early word-pictures of Jesus, but nowhere is there introduced into His utterances a formulated conception of the way in which salvation was made possible through the death of Christ.

What is most peculiar in the Johannine doctrinal view is its mysticism. Along with the possession of eternal life in Christ there is presented a sinking of self in Him as in the one source of life, a continual resting in Him, and, as a consequence of this, the existence and continuance of Christ in the believer. This personal relation to Him, which is only comparable to the perfect communion of two persons united by the bond of an indissoluble love, becomes further the means of attaining fellowship with God, since Christ is one with the Father as the believer is with Him; and thus bringing about his existence in God, and God's in him. Where this Johannine mysticism is clearly expressed,

it is the evangelist who is speaking, and not Jesus. In spite of this, we find even here pictorial addresses of Jesus, which, allegorically interpreted after the manner of the time, offer convenient points of connection for the development of this mysticism; and it can still be shown how little this latter has had any effect in altering the original character of Christ's addresses. According to that mystical idea, the Christian life is a process which completes itself through internal necessity, and needs no particular norm. He who has acknowledged God in Christ, who through Christ abides in Him, in him God Himself dwells and acts through Christ, he is born of God, has become a child of God, of like nature to Him; he cannot sin, he must be righteous, and love righteousness like God Himself. But not only are essential elements of this specifically Johannine group of ideas totally awanting in the speeches of Christ (comp. p. 119), but their whole parenetic tone is no other than that in the Synoptics. Jesus' words and commands are still necessary even for believers, their conduct and behaviour form the test of His discipleship; humility and love are the duties impressed upon them.

As regards these chief points, it is easily shown how surely the Johannine colouring of Christ's addresses is still distinguishable, and how little it has rendered the original form unrecognisable or incomprehensible. But they must assuredly be analysed with methodical criticism, if they are to be employed in a historical representation of the life of Jesus. The Prologue begins by presenting the destination of Christianity for the world. The Johannine Christ speaks constantly of what He had come to bring the world, but so also does the first evangelist (Matt. v. 14). This is certainly not the historical Jesus who came only to His own people, as is occasionally uncontradicted, even by our Gospel (comp. p. 102), and who did not turn His glance to the nations beyond till His own had rejected Him; and this, not because He had ever desired to withhold His salvation from the world, but because it was purposed in the counsels of God that Israel should be the light to the heathen. At the time when John wrote, it had long been apparent that through Israel's guilt the result differed from what God had designed for His people, that the universal vocation of Christianity would be realized, but not

by means of Israel as a nation. From the commencement Jesus is to him only the Light of the world, its Life and its Saviour. The Prologue certainly makes prominent also that the world, as a whole, did not recognise the Light which appeared (i. 10); and in the speeches of the Gospels allusions to this fact of experience are not awanting, but the world frequently appears as those who remained unbelieving as opposed to believers. But it is therefore particularly manifested here how the introduction of the Johannine knowledge and experiences into the speeches of Jesus corresponds with their deepest meaning and ultimate aim, even if dissociated from his communication of what was necessarily historical. In the speeches of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, the didactic intention of the evangelist has not made a voluntary caricature of the original; he has only been the interpreter of the same, pointing out the whole in the part, the enduring in the changing, the end in the beginning, and the eternal in the temporal.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.

A DOGMATIZING view of the Gospels, as in form and contents these originated with the Holy Ghost, can yield no historical representation of Jesus' life; it is nothing more than reasonable to rest content with this representation given us by the highest authority. There only remains the task of welding our four Gospels together by such artistic combination of their detached portions that no word shall be lost, nothing be changed, and from beginning to end all that is related to us of the life of Jesus shall be in progressive order. The ancient harmonies exhausted themselves, and it is very unfair to mock what was artificial and arbitrary in them, so long as the same standpoint is essentially retained as that which these necessarily demanded. This standpoint is only broken with when it is recognised that the historical information of the life of Jesus cannot be an object of faith like the announcement of His person and work; and that the essential credibility of our evangelical tradition was not assured by a special miracle, by means of which our Gospels arose, but by the historical conditions of their origination as well as through the working of the Divine Spirit in the Church, from which they proceeded, and by which they were acknowledged as reliable records. Now only can a representation of the life of Jesus be spoken of which may possibly be formed from these sources.

But as the essential credibility of the Gospels cannot possibly answer for the historical exactitude of every detail, historical criticism, which is the fundamental presupposition of each scientific representation, must have free and unlimited exercise even in respect to the evangelical source-documents. It will certainly not be so exercised, that at each deviation of the evangelists from one another, the computation will have

to be begun over again as to the greater or less degree of the credibility belonging to them.[1] The results of the inquiry into the origin, the aim, and the composition of our four Gospels can first make certain the value of any one Gospel as a source, and its importance in deciding each separate question. It is involved in the peculiarity of the material and of the sources from which they are formed, that the scientific representation cannot regard that previous investigation as final, and for a reconstruction of the history of Jesus can employ the acknowledged material which has been so adequately guaranteed, along with a revision of all that remains. The Christian Church, which regards our four Gospels as credible records of Jesus' life, has a right to require that even in details our representation should invariably correspond with the representations contained in the Gospels; and that the discrepancy between their version of events and ours should, in every essential respect, be made perceptible as being historically discernible through the conditions of their origin. There is thus no possibility of the portrayer of the life of Jesus presenting his attained results in the convenient form of a continuous narrative; he must, by means of a critical analysis of the evangelical reports, present these results to the eyes of his readers; he must always conjoin with the history of Jesus' life a history of the tradition regarding it. It pertains to this that the fundamental correspondence assumed among our predecessors, at least in their chief schools and representatives, between the various views of the sources, as well as the information contained in them, penetrates at one time in a polemical way, at another in an apologetic, the representation of an individual Gospel, and colours it accordingly. What it thus loses in unity of character and in plastic completeness, it may probably gain in clearness through its exclusion of antagonisms, and in scientific power of conviction.

[1] In Neander's representation of the life of Jesus, which in many other respects was the first of its kind, this method was dominant, which only shows that at that time the indispensable conditions for a proper literary criticism of sources were awanting. And even the latest history of Jesus—that of Keim's—which appeared with so self-conscious a criticism, by no means offers to the advanced literary criticism of sources a sufficient firmness to exclude at the discussion of details a wavering generally uncertain and often very difficult to reconcile with its fundamental structure.

But the historical delineation of the life of Jesus does not presuppose merely the literary criticism of sources. The attained results warrant, in addition, that here should constantly be exercised that which is demanded by the nature of every scientific representation, a historical criticism in the higher sense, *i.e.* the examination whether what is handed down is in itself credible. This involves not only the question whether, in accordance with the historical relations in which our history was enacted, with the psychological laws of all human life and action, or the presuppositions which have been ascertained in the course of the inquiry, this or that incident is probable, but it treats also of the fundamental character of the history of Jesus as given in tradition, which criticism frequently regards as incredible. Here it is that insurmountable difficulties seem to be in the way of a scientific representation of Jesus' life. The difficulty is not that entire freedom from presupposition is necessary for a scientific portraiture of the history of Jesus, and that it is impossible without presuppositions to proceed with the history of Jesus. Even by Strauss that requirement has long been recognised as equally warranted and unattainable. The nature of the case yields presumptions from which historical criticism neither can nor dare free itself. It is then supposed that the first assumption for every historical representation is, that that only is credible which corresponds to constant experience, because only in accordance with the laws under which every event takes place can the credibility of every history be adjudicated upon. To this it is objected that the life of Jesus treats of a history, one which does not throughout immediately resemble all human histories, in order that it may present the history of the rise of the Christian religion. To demand that this history be treated only according to the rules observed in the examination of the history of other religions, is unjustifiable because unpracticable. According as the Christian religion is regarded as one religion among many, or as the true, the perfect one; according as one has found in it full satisfaction for his religious needs, or takes up towards it a sceptical or antagonistic attitude, must another standard necessarily be applied to the history of its origin. It is impossible for the Christian to recede from the assumption that the history through which

the completion of true religion in humanity is introduced, is in its nature plainly unique. As certainly as the faith which was aroused and established by the apostolic announcement of Christ cannot be accepted as a standard for the historicity of the recorded events from the life of Jesus, so definitively must it be denied that, in judging the fundmental character of this history, this faith is not to be regarded. The Gentile and Jew, or he who has broken with the Christian religion, could as little write a history of Jesus, which in its deepest essence shall be a just one, as a blind man could write a history of painting, or a deaf man a history of music. A scientific standpoint which should occupy a place above both these contradictions is an empty illusion.

But even so the possibility seems to be shut out of treating this subject with scientific objectivity. And yet what must first be done is from the beginning to treat the life of Jesus from the standpoints which are pressed upon us as standards by the historical results of the life which are now manifest. From the appearance of Christ there has assuredly issued a religio-ethical resuscitation and renovation of the world.[1] Judgment of the fundamental character of a historical manifestation according to its effects, appertains to the indispensable rules of every historical representation that would go beyond the barren confirmation and registration of detached facts. The internal fundamental law of all human history is applicable here, that like can only produce like, that the cause cannot be radically different from its effect.[2] We ask nothing but the admission that the criticism of the events of

[1] There is one standpoint from which this fact may be contested; but it can as little prevent the science of the life of Jesus from starting from this as a presupposition, as the scientific representation of the history of Greek and Roman culture would allow itself to be led astray by a pietistic, contracted view, which beheld in it only a heathenish abomination and a loathsome work of the devil.

[2] The writer of the Wolfenbüttel fragments saw in Jesus only a Judaic revolutionist, who on the cross expiated his overthrown political schemes. His disciples, by the deceitful pretence of his resurrection and speedy return, roused a belief in him, by means of which they desired to implant sound moral doctrines, fear of God, and love to humanity. It is not in name of an assumption of faith, but of a fundamental law of all history, that we protest against the possibility of a religious renovation having come to the world by such means. Renan depicts Jesus as an amiable visionary, who came forward at first with

Jesus' life handed down by tradition must avoid everything which throws suspicion on the moral character of Jesus. But as the result which followed His appearance was to a very great extent produced by means of the announcement of Him, and particularly by the evangelical tradition as to His life, we must add, besides, that in passing judgment everything must be disregarded which would raise a suspicion of voluntary deception on the part of the originator. From purely historical standpoints we dare not go so far as to infer from the exceptional effects an unique eminence of the person of Jesus, for each may have been conditioned by the combination of different circumstances. In addition, we unavoidably form for ourselves a distinct picture of that in which lies the uniqueness of this person. This, whether it be fashioned by the faith generated through the apostolic preaching or by a self-formed dogmatic theory, brings to bear on the criticism of the evangelical tradition presuppositions which had from the first been lying prepared, rendering impossible an unbiassed historico-critical method. Even from the standpoint of perfect faith in Christ in the ecclesiastical sense this method must be rejected. For though to this faith the pre-existent divine glory of the Son of God is established, it admits His thorough assumption of humanity, His deepest humiliation. Dogmatic presuppositions neither can nor dare decide regarding any given point as to the form this may have given His earthly life.[1]

It is certainly an unscientific method to introduce into the history of Jesus a uniqueness of His person constructed in

innocent moral aphorisms, but gradually took upon himself the *rôle* of the Messiah, with all the phantastic excrescences of the Judaic eschatological hopes, the *rôle* of a miracle-worker, and indeed that of a divine being. He died at the right moment for himself, while in tragical conflict with the deep moral darkness of his own nature, a darkness which Renan very flippantly considers. We join issue once more, and say that a renovation of the world in this direction cannot have proceeded from a personality who, in a religio-ethical relation, was so unreliable.

[1] How obstructive a dogmatic theory is to the historical view, is seen nowhere more clearly than in Schleiermacher's *Leben Jesu*. A perfectly complete picture of Christ is placed alongside the sources, not drawn from them. They are explained and critically remodelled according to this, so that an actual history and a lifelike form are never obtained; but throughout his representation we see the abstract Christological scheme of the dogmatist.

some way *à priori.* But it is equally unscientific to cast aside as unhistorical the picture of Jesus which is contained in the critically tested and methodically attested sources because it presents to us a unique relation of this man to God, and an equally singular moral existence. Of this fault Strauss has been guilty. We are far from desiring either to infer at once His sinlessness in a dogmatic sense from the postulate advanced above, which excluded any moral discrediting of Jesus' character, or a unique connection with God as His Father from the absolutely religious character of His life and action. It is from the sources that we can first gather whether, and in what sense, both formed a constituent part of His self-consciousness, and how His history proves it. If, however, both are found in the sources, it is then dogmatic arbitrariness to propound the proposition that the idea cares not to pour all its fulness upon one individual. A man in whom the archetype of humanity was realized on its religio-ethical side in absolute perfection was no longer a historical phenomenon, for in history we know only of merely approximate realizations of this ideal of humanity. Proceeding upon this supposition to pronounce unhistorical all those portions of the evangelical tradition where this ideal is shown to be realized, is really to exercise criticism on the historical sources in accordance with *à priori* suppositions. Such a criticism is anything but scientific. That ideal figure will, and indeed must, remain unique in our experience. It is not a philosophical presupposition, but history itself, that must decide whether or not there has been a highest point in the history of humanity when its ideal became reality. But is the world-conquering movement which started with the history of Jesus, and the final goal of which is the full realization of the religio-ethical ideal of humanity, really what is most exceptional in that history? If so, it is only natural, *i.e.* in correspondence with all historical experience, that the cause contained what appears in the effect, and that it is only the perfected realization of this ideal which can have given impetus to a movement which promises and gives security to mankind for the attainment of this goal.

Strauss is perfectly right in regard to one thing. The actual appearance of that ideal of humanity is, and must

continue to be, an absolute miracle—that is, it cannot be completely explained and deduced from the course of the development of humanity and the factors regulative of experience which determine this course. It is incontestable that the perfect cannot be derived from the imperfect, nor the unique from that which regulates everyday experience. But Jesus' history does not therefore cease to be actual history, and capable of scientific representation, because it is obliged to admit that one historical appearance is incomprehensible if only the natural factors of every event are taken into account, and must be referred to the operation of a higher causality in human history. The operation of this higher power in all human history is disclosed to him who searches more deeply, or who looks from the single event to the significant connection of events. Perfectly as the explanation of each separate event may be given by its natural factors and motives, yet the history does not consist in the sum of such isolated events. It originated first in their combination, in their concurrence and co-operation, such as could have been planned by no human wisdom and brought about by no human power. The profane mind is not hindered from calling this chance, and an external treatment of history may count it sufficient to register the unavoidable results of this co-operation. But the higher task of historical investigation is still to follow the course of historical development in its meaning and aim, alike in its pauses and in its progress. And the religious treatment cannot allow its right to be contested of referring it back to the divine guidance of human history towards a definite goal. In this view everything is full of miracles of Divine Providence, and this is so even where isolated events only are dealt with, which, each one by itself, are perfectly comprehensible through natural causes, because the interweaving of these events, according to their idea and purpose, by means of which definite aims are reached and important developments hindered or promoted, cannot be derived from blind and aimless chance, but presupposes the operation of a higher power lying beyond the physical and psychological causalities to which we may refer isolated appearances.

Whether and how far it is really an essentially different

phenomenon when a supernatural causality makes itself apparent, not only when articulated with events which singly are referable to natural causes, but does itself operate in the place of natural causes,—this is a question belonging to the dogmatic treatment. As a fact, it is the last phenomenon which offends criticism the most, and which, in the strictest sense, must be designated miraculous. The objection is specially raised against it, that the miraculous in this sense can never be historically confirmed, because our knowledge of the natural causes is not without defects, and it is therefore always possible that where the religious view believes it can recognise supernatural interference, natural causes may actually have been at work which are unknown to, or are incapable of being recognised by us. On the side of apologetics, attempts have never been awanting to reduce the so-called wonder to this—that at one point in history forces unknown to us, belonging to a higher order which might still be a natural one, actually appeared. But these reflections find no application in the present question. Does Jesus' appearance prove itself unique? is the religio-ethical ideal of humanity realized in Him, so as directly to exclude the experiential view of human history?—then the question of the miraculous is raised in the most definite way. The mystery of this phenomenon does not arise from the absence of knowledge as to the natural causes which give rise to it, but from the fact that it could not be what it really is if it were the outcome of natural causes. It is contradictory to struggle against the miraculous in the strictest sense if the uniqueness of Jesus' appearance is still maintained; and it is logically consistent when, from the standpoint of the denial of the miraculous, the representation of our sources which forces upon us the recognition of that uniqueness is from the first declared to be unhistorical.

In recognising the miraculous element in the appearance of Jesus, it is self-evident that we do not desire to establish the postulate of His miraculous conception, or of a higher nature belonging originally to Him. In what way the divine operation was performed in consequence of which there was introduced into the history of humanity a new departure containing the germs of its development and completion, can

neither be determined from the first, nor does it permit one to say that from necessity it must receive historical confirmation. This remark applies also to the point in the concurrence of the natural causes where a supernatural one must have interfered in order to make a development possible, which could not be carried out by the forces and laws inherent in humanity. All we ask is, that a tradition shall not be pronounced unhistorical and incredible, because the facts established by it render unavoidable the assumption of such an interference, and thus demand a miracle in the strictest sense. It is said, indeed, that the contradiction of this demand is involved in the fact that the treatment of history starts from our general view of things, and that this always presupposes a natural connection between cause and effect, on the ground of the enduring laws of nature in the physical domain as in that of the spiritual life, even where it cannot yet, in every instance, be completely demonstrated; and, finally, that the assumption of such an intervention of supernatural causes abrogates even those natural laws. This last objection may conceivably coincide with certain conceptions of the nature of miracle, according to which a suspension and re-establishment of the laws of nature are actually assumed. It by no means suits the character of miracle as a plainly supernatural result of divine action.[1] We are not concerned with whether natural causes act in opposition to one of the laws which are at work in them, or whether natural effects have been produced in ways contrary to all experience. The question here is, whether an effect, inexplicable by natural causes, may have been brought about by a supernatural agency. Of course it is impossible that this can be accepted by a pantheistic or materialistic philosophy; for such refuse to assume a causation which transcends the world. From the theistic standpoint, however, this possibility cannot be denied nor its historical verification disputed, and this just because it does away with our concatenated theory of the universe. The natural con-

[1] The laws of nature known to us can only testify that certain natural causes necessarily produce certain effects. The contrary supposition, that certain effects can be produced only by certain causes, oversteps the bounds of all experience. For our knowledge of the range of natural causes is perpetually increasing and advancing towards completion.

nection of cause and effect, as regulated by natural laws, is perfectly unaffected by the appearance at various points in the history of humanity of the operation of a supernatural power, *i.e.* of one which is outside of the natural course of the world, and which necessarily produces supernatural effects. Let it only be presupposed that the existence and character of a supernatural power are not to be defined in a way contradictory of our philosophy, which could in that case no longer occupy a theistic standpoint.

From the religious standpoint it has been attempted to find grounds for the objection, that it would be a depreciation of God's creation, and therefore of the Creator, if from the earliest beginning the universe could not perfect its development by its inherent forces, but constantly, or at least at this one point, required the intervention of the great Master workman. This objection would be quite relevant if our history were treating of a phase in the ordinary development of the world. Not only, however, the apostolical announcement of Christ, but also every page of our evangelical tradition, proclaims the aim of Jesus' appearance to have been the bringing of salvation to a lost world. It is here presupposed that the development of humanity had taken an abnormal direction, that it had turned away from the appointed goal instead of approaching it, and that by itself it could neither return to where it was, find the right track, nor reach the goal. But it is presupposed also, that in the attainment of this aim there is no concern with a high ideal, whose realization can in an emergency be dispensed with, but rather that the temporal and eternal salvation or ruin of mankind depends on it.[1] It is when observation of history and the experience gained from one's own life appear to warrant the apportioning of those presuppositions,

[1] These presuppositions may be contested, they may be regarded as the product of a pessimist philosophy, and of a one-sided religious conception of life. But it must also be admitted that from this standpoint the first conditions are awanting for comprehending and representing our history in accordance to its own proper character. For undoubtedly the history of Jesus, which starts from these presuppositions, cannot indicate the point at which a renovating and furthering influence was brought to bear on the history of human development on its religio-ethical side. It is itself only a phase in the great history of disease in the religious life, which, like every other disease in an organism, can be overcome and brought to a salutary crisis, but it is of very doubtful value for the history of human development.

which the history of Jesus requires for its apprehension, that the standpoint is first attained from which that postulate of its uniqueness from which we believed that it was necessary to start can really be verified. In one word, it is the fact of sin which alone offers the key to its perfect comprehension. If the religio-ethical development of humanity had actually taken an abnormal direction, if this was a sinful direction and one leading to destruction, or if in its own strength humanity was unable to quit this course, or cure the sickness which had penetrated its life's-blood, that moment must indeed have been unique which saw the commencement of the curing of this sickness, and the entrance into the history of the development of humanity of forces which make a return possible. It is then easy to understand why He who brought on this crisis must stand forth unique in the history of humanity, the healthy one among the sick, the normal man among those ruined through the sin of an abnormal development, whom He would convert and guide to their goal, which can only be the realization of the religio-ethical ideal of humanity. It is very evident that in the course of its abnormal development, diseased humanity could never produce of itself this one healthy man, and the powers of healing wrapped up in Him. From a ruined world doomed to destruction the Saviour and the means of salvation could never come; and if there was a divine guidance in history, at this point a fresh intervention by God in the development of the world must have taken place. Thus, then, the miracle of this divine intervention is no chance act of volition, but a necessary practical proof of the Divine Providence which would lead humanity to its appointed goal in spite of the retrograde development it had entered on in virtue of the freedom conferred on it. This would only be necessary if the scheme of Divine Providence is regarded as one of love's eternal decrees, and its ultimate realization, in spite of all that makes humanity unworthy of it, as an act of divine grace. Thus the miracle forms no moment in the history of natural human development, but does so in the history of salvation, which is thereby perfected, rectifying the abnormal development, healing the sick, saving the lost. But, according to the presuppositions of our history, this story of salvation by no means begins with the appearance of Jesus. The

historical preparation for it was in the history of Israel, in the general history of divine revelation.[1]

If, then, the miracle of Jesus' appearance is not represented as anything isolated, but only as the highest point in a series of divine revelations developed according to their own laws and incorporated into a history, it is certainly not improbable that in this history the miraculous will find a place. This was what Schleiermacher wished to avert, and what is even yet resisted resolutely by a school connected with him. Jesus' appearance is indeed to be regarded as unique; but since the entrance of this new factor into history, its operations have been developed entirely according to the known laws of all occurrences. This does not exclude the possibility of these operations being to a large extent without parallel; but yet it is only in so far as they proceed from a unique central force and correspond to its character. In this there is plainly a contradiction. The effects which proceed from a unique phenomenon, that is, from one transcending all experience, are really miraculous events, which may indeed attach themselves to the presuppositions of natural life, but can never be measured according to its laws. No preconceived theory, but only the credible tradition regarding these operations, can decide whether they only extended over the spiritual life or over the natural as well, or whether the latter may not have been partly owing to the connection existing between the psychical and the physical. But if Jesus' entire appearance is comprehensible only through a divine intervention in the course of human development, plainly it is arbitrary to assert that in His history events may not also have occurred, which can only be referred to a like divine intervention, *i.e.* to a miracle in the strictest sense of the term,

[1] In this domain the miraculous is nothing new or unprecedented. For the same conditions which made it requisite at the appearance of Jesus, required it during the historical preparation for His salvation. Only through new divine manifestations lying beyond the limits of the divine revelation both in nature and history, which had failed to guide humanity to a normal religio-ethical development, could this humanity be prepared for the great crisis connected with the appearance of Jesus. It mattered not whether these manifestations were presented as external operations within nature's domain, or as inward influences acting upon the human spiritual life, *i.e.* as miracle or as revelation in the narrower sense.

as what made the former comprehensible will also explain the latter. Indeed, whoever regards as attested a miraculous history of revelation preparative to the appearance of Jesus, will think it only natural that this possibility also should be realized. Whether this was so or not, can be decided, not by the dogmatic view, but by the consideration of the tradition, the credibility of which was put to the test.

Our evangelical tradition, however, is full of the marvellous, and no criticism of sources is in a position to remove this element from it. The oldest apostolic source, the memorabilia of Peter, the Gospel of John, all contain so much of what is strictly miraculous, that to approach them with the assumption of the miraculous being impossible, is plainly to deny their credibility. The older rationalism proceeded upon the assumption of the credibility and partial apostolicity of our Gospels, and yet discarded the miraculous unceremoniously. But it was obliged to reckon with the miracle narratives, by seeking to prove by means of exegetical artifices and by the amplification of the intermediate members of a narrative, which it alleged to have been omitted, that in truth no miracle was here narrated; where the narrator saw something which suggested this, it was nothing but a purely natural event, the original features of which were still perfectly distinguishable, even if they seemed wrapped in a legendary veil. The pitiless criticism of Strauss pronounced well-merited judgment on this naturalistic explanation, alike notorious for its arbitrariness and want of taste, possessing, as it did in Dr. Paulus of Heidelberg, its classical representative. But his attempt to explain the collective evangelical tradition as a tissue of mythical fictions would only succeed if our Gospels were relegated to a period in which trustworthy tradition asserts that they did not arise, and in which, according to the testimony of their character and their relations to one another, they could not have originated. The more recent investigation into the sources has recognised this more and more clearly, and has proved it indubitably. But just on this account, that criticism which shares in the assumption of the impossibility of the miraculous finds itself in a strange predicament. It may abandon John's Gospel; but the miraculous is not contained in it to any greater degree than in the

older Gospels. As much of these as ever it chooses may be credited to later redactions which have introduced miraculous conceptions into natural occurrences; but even the sources upon which it relies still retain quite enough of the miraculous, related in their narratives or assumed in their addresses. And it is not able, nor does it desire, to deny the close connection between these sources and the tradition of eye-witnesses. There is, then, nothing left for this criticism but to return to the naturalistic explanation given by the old rationalism, which under the leadership of Schenkel and Keim is again exercised with amazing naïvete. It is, however, clear that as the methods of Dr. Paulus of Heidelberg can always be traced to the Wolfenbüttel fragmentist, so those of his modern successors are referable to Renan. It is impossible to carry through the naturalistic explanation without casting doubt on the moral character of Jesus or of the first witnesses. If Jesus did not prevent the simplest events from being looked at in a totally strange light, it can only have been through incomprehensible shortsightedness that He failed to notice it, or perhaps from impure motives He did not wish to do so; but if He did His part to remove the slightest appearance of the unearthly, suspicion only passes from Him to His followers.

It is evident that not every miracle narrative of the Gospels can be at once proved credible by these considerations. We have analysed sufficiently the character and the history of the reports of eye-witnesses, and the oral as well as the written tradition, to be convinced how easily actual and ideal history might be combined here at every stage and in an increasing degree, also how natural events, too, might appear in a miraculous light, and with what facility the difference would to the ordinary religious mind disappear between the miracles of Divine Providence, as well as the apparent miracles in which, though unknown to us, natural causes are at work, and miracles in the narrowest and strictest sense. But if we are not to fall into the errors of the old as well as of the new naturalistic explanation, we must distinctly assert that this process is only conceivable if the eye-witnesses of the actually miraculous experienced and related so much, that the conception thus arising of the miraculous character of this history exhibited as a miracle what had not been one in the strictest sense of the

term. We cannot get quit of the miraculous in this way. We find it but confirmed afresh, that to regard it as a standing rule for criticism, that the occurrence in our tradition of what is miraculous proves it to be unhistorical, is an assumption which is quite irrelevant, and indeed contradicts the express character of this history. We have not put forward these considerations in order to avert all criticism, but that we may be unbiassed in the exercise of it. It frequently occurs that when criticism has been too severe in regard to the miraculous, it suddenly becomes naïvely credulous where the question of miracles is not concerned. Whether or not every separate narrative contains a miraculous element, must be decided according to the character of the sources and its relation to the reports of the eye-witnesses, as well as according to the universal rules for determining what is or is not probable in view of the historical circumstances and the connection of events. This fact can of itself tell neither for nor against the credibility of what tradition has handed down.

The most careful critical fixation of every detail taken from the sources does not of itself result in any historical representation. Least of all does it do this in the case of our evangelical sources; for in the circumstances of their origin, as well as in their literary points of view, the fact is involved that a connected description of Jesus' life is not attempted in one of them. The historical sequence of the events cannot certainly be established from our Gospels.[1] But the more carefully the constitution of each Gospel is apprehended, the greater is the possibility of amplifying the incomplete intimations of the one by the hints given in the others. By far the most important guides to the understanding of the situation are yielded by the traditional speeches and series of addresses, so soon as their original form is established by

[1] The attempts of Ebrard to restore the sure sequence of the narratives by means of minute observation of the pretended data afforded by the grammatical construction, and to attain at last, by arranging these, to an orderly sequence of all the isolated events and speeches, rest upon a total misconception of the character of our Gospels. Their supposed result appears as the outcome of the rarest chance. Wieseler's effort to settle the chronology of all the chief events, and so at last to discover their sequence, rests on the most daring combinatious, involves itself in palpable impossibilities, and collapses, like a house of cards, as soon as these combinations are demonstrated to be untenable on one point.

means of critical analysis, and they are looked at in their historical relations instead of from the dominant purely dogmatic exegesis. Like our evangelists, we must often remain satisfied with a topical uniting of what is related when the attempt to establish the chronology of the individual portions proves futile. But when looked at as a whole, the sequence of the chief events, and even their chronological fixation, appears so assured, that, proceeding upon them, one may often attain to the understanding of what can in detail no longer be determined.

A sequence of events, which may possibly be accurate, by no means results in a historical representation. The exciting *motifs* of the events must be disclosed, as well as their internal pragmatical connection and the occasioning causes of the occurrences. A description must be given of the dramatic movement in the development. This is the proper task of the historian. A dry enumeration of detached events may form, indeed, a chronicle, but never a history. Through his loving absorption in the incident, the historian will gain a lifelike picture of the events; and while picture is succeeding picture, that inner connecting link will be disclosed to him. Without a vivid intuition, which can realize in all its amplitude the form of past events, or without the faculty of historical combination, which understands how to connect, in a spiritedly lifelike way, events internally related, there can be no historical representation. A pictorial activity of the imagination is demanded, which has some relationship with that which governs poetical productions; only here a free independent creation, according to given rules, is treated of; there, it is a vivid reproduction of the past from the elements, which must ever be fragmentary, acknowledged to be credible. Here lies the highest task of the historian, but also his greatest danger. Renan's *Life of Jesus* is not a history, but a romance. And this is so, not because with his rare endowments he essayed to solve this problem; but as our sources in their actual form were in many respects out of sympathy with, indeed almost incomprehensible to him, he could not escape the danger of rearranging them according to his own taste, or in a merely eclectic way. A faithful,

even if critical, employment of these sources, and a sympathetic understanding of them, protects from this danger, and leads to the solution of the problem.

Renan has asserted that to our four Gospels a fifth must be added, and that this first occurred to him as he journeyed in the Holy Land. I fear that this source may prove very deceitful. In spite of all appeals to the stability of Oriental circumstances, the Palestine of to-day assuredly presents a scene very different from the Holy Land of the time of Jesus, and not only in ethnographical, but also in geographical respects. Besides, people delude themselves as to the importance which the local and temporal background had for the history there enacted. It has now become almost fashionable, in representing the life of Jesus, to lay very great emphasis on the description of the natural surroundings and historical circumstances. Josephus and the Talmud appear to be, second to our four Gospels, competent sources for that representation; geographical and historical investigations occupy as large a space as if all comprehension of Jesus' history depended on them. Yet in many important points no absolutely assured result is arrived at. If this could be attained, perhaps something might here and there be gained for the outward form and course of this life, but it would yield nothing for its deeper comprehension. This history would not be so unique as it is, if the apprehension of its peculiar character depended on the currents of the time in which it was passed. For the comprehension of its historical movement, the powers with which Jesus had to combat, and the causes which conditioned alike its development and its catastrophe, the clearest and most certain source is found in our Gospels themselves. What of geographical and historical presuppositions remain to be added to its own explanation, is in our narrative easily inserted in the appropriate place. We can even surmise circumstantial Prolegomena, which depict the region where it commences. The introductory history, as contained in our Gospels, presents the opportunity for vividly transporting ourselves into the circle of religious conceptions, national needs, and Messianic hopes, among which Jesus grew up.

The history itself remains of the last importance, for it

only receives its meaning from the existence and operation of Him of whom it relates. It is a history which, like any biography, starts with the birth of a child, but it closes with the exercise of power by One who was exalted to God, and who still possesses might and consolation for all Christendom. This history could therefore not be related as if it were a history of what is altogether in the past. A life pulsates in it, the heart-beats of which can even now be felt, and which, consciously or unconsciously, nourishes all that is Christian. Here is the central point of human history, in so far as it rests on an eternal decree of God's love. In its effects it reaches as far as the goal of that perfection which we await; but its first beginnings were hidden in the depths of eternity. It is a history which, in every part of it, must be considered in the light of Him who transcends all history.

# SECOND BOOK.

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## THE PREPARATION

# CHAPTER I.

## HOME AND FATHER'S HOUSE.

IN one of the deep valleys which lead down from the hills of Lower Galilee to the plain of Jezreel, lies the little town of Nazareth. The Gospel narrative (Luke iv. 29) assumes that the town was built in the form of terraces, on one of the rocky hills enclosing the valley-basin, and was overtopped by their precipitous summits, precisely as its position is now described by travellers. The horizon of the town is limited; but from the summit of the hill there is a splendid view. The eye sweeps southwards across the wide, fruitful plain; westward rise the wooded heights of Carmel; to the north tower, higher and higher, the mountains of Upper Galilee, the crest of Hermon with its everlasting snow; and close beside the shapely cone of Tabor there opens, towards the east, a view of the Jordan valley, stretching away to the basin of the Lake of Gennezareth and to the tableland of Perea on the other side of the lake. The town, which now contains six thousand inhabitants, may have at that time been more populous. We learn from the Gospels that it had its own synagogue; but it was only one of the insignificant towns of the thickly-peopled province. It is not mentioned in all the Old Testament, nor by the contemporary author Josephus. We learn from John that the place was, at least in its own immediate neighbourhood, in no great repute (John i. 47), although we can no longer indicate the source of the popular prejudice which affirmed that out of Nazareth nothing good could come. The nearest town of considerable size was at a distance of three hours' journey, the large and rich Sepphoris; the residence of the prince of the country, beside the Lake of Tiberias, could be reached in eight hours, while Jerusalem was at a distance of three days' journey.

In this secluded corner of the northern province Jesus

spent His youth; Nazareth was always regarded as His native town (Mark vi. 1; Luke iv. 16); the people knew Him as the Nazarene or the Galilean, and His followers were long called Nazarenes after Him (comp. Acts xxiv. 5).[1] The family to which He belonged was, long after the pursuit of His calling had made Him a stranger to His home, still well known in His father's town (Mark vi. 3), but in the eyes of the neighbours it did not possess anything which made it more distinguished than the others. That it was a family in very humble circumstances is shown by the fact that the parents, when presenting Jesus in the temple, brought the offering of the poor (Luke ii. 24); and Jesus was, at a later period, dependent upon support given by strangers. Among the people He passed as the son of Joseph, in whose house He grew up (John i. 46, vi. 42; comp. Luke iii. 23). That this Joseph was a carpenter, appears in the first Gospel (Matt. xiii. 55) to be only an inference drawn from Jesus Himself having in His youth wrought at the trade of a carpenter (Mark vi. 3); but the hypothesis has every probability in its favour. It would seem as if Joseph died at an early period, as he is never spoken of in the Gospels after the public appearance of Jesus. Jesus' mother, Mary, is referred to later on as belonging to the innermost circle of His followers (Acts i. 14).

However modest might be the circumstances of this family, it had one possession of the greatest possible importance for the later manifestation of Jesus: it traced its origin back to the ancient and kingly house of David. The whole people was possessed with the conviction that, according to the Scriptures, the Messiah must arise from the seed of David (John vii. 42), and Jesus could never have hoped to find acceptance for His claim to be the Messiah if He were without

[1] The names applied to the town vary in our documents, but in the Gospel of Mark it is originally designated Nazareth; while, according to the joint testimony of the best attested reading in Matt. iv. 13 and Luke iv. 16, it was called, in the oldest sources, Nazara,—a form which occurs in the early ages of the Church (in Jul. Afric. and Orig.), and easily explains the formation of the name which denoted Jesus' origin. Mark calls Him the Nazarene; in Luke occurs the expression Jesus of Nazareth (xviii. 37), and this is the usual form employed by Matthew, John, and in the Acts. Jesus is called the Galilean in Matt. xxvi. 69.

this most popular of all tokens. Thus it was a part of the course of divine arrangement which prepared the way for Him through the circumstances of His birth, that He was a member of the house of David. It has been explained as "a remarkable result of chance," that, in regard to a point which is by no means essential for the eternal significance of the work of Jesus, what did actually occur coincided with the popular expectation. Certainly He did not require this coincidence on behalf of His own person, or in order to reach the consciousness of His divine vocation, because this was by no means bound up with Davidic origin as such. But in the case of His nation, the want of this would have been an almost insurmountable hindrance to His being acknowledged as Messiah. The conclusion does appear justified, that at a very early period the disciples of Jesus, when they had been won to the conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus, assumed that to Him this token could not have been awanting. This explains the existence in our evangelical tradition as a self-evident fact of what was merely an assumption, given rise to by the views of that age.[1]

This assumption, however, is opposed by insurmountable facts. It is incontestable that Jesus was during His lifetime among the people regarded as one of David's posterity. In the oldest source He is at an early period addressed as the Son of David (Matt. ix. 27); at the very height of His activity the Canaanite woman, from the land of the Gentiles, has no other thought than that He passes among His people by the name of the Son of David (Matt. xv. 22); and in Mark, too, this cry is heard when He is going up for the last time to Jerusalem (x. 47 f.). It is vain to try to regard this as a mere title of honour, with which the Promised One was greeted as being the successor of the great king who once was the channel of the blessings of God to his people, just as these in richest abundance were looked for from Jesus. That would certainly have been understood if He had fulfilled the hopes of the people, and had ascended the kingly throne;

[1] This conclusion, though supported by Strauss and Weisse, and, following them, by Renan and Schenkel, is opposed by Hase and Keim, who on other grounds hold the existent traditions in our Gospels of the story of the nativity to be unhistorical, and to have originated in analogous inferences.

but not at a time when the faith of the people in His Messiahship was constantly struggling with the doubts which were raised by the omission of the decisive step, and when that designation could only be an appeal to the expectation, based on His origin, that He would fulfil all the hopes placed on the promised great Son of David. Indeed, it appears as if nothing was known about His Davidic origin. On the occasion of one of His visits to the feast in Jerusalem, those who would not believe in His Messiahship asserted that He lacked the scriptural token of Davidic origin (John vii. 42). But the utter feebleness and futility of these detached attempts to discredit His claim show how firmly the certainty of His Davidic origin was established among the people, and how this was no mere assumption which could be maintained so long as no one contradicted it, but that it held on its way without wavering, even through the midst of opposing doubt. What an entirely different use would have been made of this point by Jesus' opponents, whose main object was to lead the people into error in their belief in Him, if they might thereby have furnished proof that He was without the presupposition most indispensable to His claim, although they had little chance of success in throwing doubt on the Davidic origin of the family from which He sprang! Still, we never hear of an attempt being made, through any considerations of this kind, to discredit Him with the people, not even on an occasion which gave ample opportunity for the urging of this objection (comp. Matt. xii. 23 f.).

But, above all, Jesus' behaviour in view of this supposition current among the people is incomprehensible, if, from the knowledge which He must have had of the origin of the family, He was not absolutely certain of His Davidic descent. When He perceived that owing to this supposition the people rested their hopes on His person, He would surely for truth's sake decline a title which was not His by right. This He did not do, but accepted without protest the appellation Son of David. And yet He had every reason for declining, for on this assumption rested the popular expectation in regard to His way of achieving salvation, which presented the greatest obstacle to His religio-ethical activity, and at last led to the tragic close of His life. On this account search has

been made for a trace of Jesus' having controverted the assumption of His Davidic descent; but only one such has been discovered, and that only by a palpable misinterpretation of a statement of Jesus (Mark xii. 35 f.; comp. further, Book VI. 7).

The apostles began with Jesus' Davidic lineage when they proclaimed His Messiahship before the very eyes of the Sanhedrim that had condemned Him to death (Acts ii. 30); and there is no indication of their opponents having dared to contest this assumption, though that would have been to destroy any lingering popular credence. From his whole conception of Christ and His work, there was no call for Paul to authenticate Jesus' title to the throne of Israel, whose re-establishment he no longer hoped for, and yet he had not a doubt that Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom. i. 3; comp. 2 Tim. ii. 8). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose conception of Christ as the high-priestly Mediator of the new covenant would rather have suggested a descent from the house of Aaron, declares that Jesus came out of Judah (vii. 14), not more distinctly than is done by the beholder of the Revelation (v. 5; comp. xxii. 16). Strangely enough, the author of the Fourth Gospel has had ascribed to him the wish to allay the rising scruple among the people in order not to become himself one who contested Jesus' Davidic descent, while in reality he presupposes all the older tradition, which nowhere admits the slightest doubt on the subject. Even in the middle of the second century, relatives of Jesus drew down on themselves the suspicion of the Roman governor through their being scions of David's royal line.[1]

It has often been considered inconceivable, that at the time of Jesus families could still prove their connection with the

[1] In his *Church History* (iii. 19, 20), Eusebius presents us with a circumstantial account by the Palestinian Hegesippus, relating how grandsons of the Judas who was known as a brother of Jesus were brought under suspicion by reason of their being descendants of King David, and were cited before the Emperor Domitian. He was reassured by their statements regarding the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and still more by their poverty-stricken look. The passage is interesting, on account of the fact that the last members of the family of Jesus with whom we become acquainted appear as needy, horny-handed rustics, and thus confirm the statement that the family was without possessions.

old kingly house which had been for centuries sunk in poverty and obscurity. But this is to overlook the care with which in Israel the traditional genealogical trees were preserved, and the value which was placed upon connection with the ancient families. Paul knew, and was able to prove indubitably, that he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 5); Josephus was able, from public genealogical tables, to prove his descent; and, from Talmudic sources, we learn of Hillel, the contemporary of Jesus, that he sprang from a side branch of David's house. The malicious rumour of the burning of the genealogical registers by Herod presupposes the existence of such in public documents and private copies; and the expectation cherished by the people of a great member of the Davidic line as Messiah would be perfectly inconceivable unless there were in existence families whose origin could be traced to David.[1] It is evidently not asserted that all these genealogical documents and traditions, public and private, were of equal fulness and trustworthiness; indeed, in the genealogical registers of the Old Testament Chronicles there are to be found many insoluble contradictions and confusions. Zerubbabel, for example, who finds a place in the genealogies of Jesus, appears, in Matthew as well as in Luke, as a son of Salathiel's; while in Chronicles (I. iii. 19) he is called a son of Pedaiah, who was Salathiel's brother. We happen, however, to know that the statement of the Gospels was by no means an arbitrary change, but that it was founded upon a different tradition contained in the Book of Ezra (iii. 2, v. 2). Thus it can occasion no surprise when neither Abiud, who in Matthew (i. 13), nor Rhesa, who in Luke (iii. 27), is called a son of Zerubbabel's, appear among the sons of the latter enumerated in Chronicles (I. iii. 19, 20).

[1] The story of Julius Africanus, told by Eusebius (*Ch. Hist.* i. 6), according to which the Idumæan Herod, in order to conceal his humble origin and prevent any one from proving himself to be of more distinguished descent, caused the Jewish genealogical register to be burnt, is extremely improbable, although Africanus asserted that it originated with the blood relations of the Lord. It contradicts the express assertion of Josephus (*Vit.* i.), referred to above, and looks only too like a Jewish satire on the hated upstart. In order, however, to agree with Schenkel in regarding this statement as thoroughly credible throughout, one must receive as historical the information which is closely bound up with it, viz. that the genealogies of the Gospels were formed from copies of the old genealogical register which were preserved in the family of Jesus.

It is quite clear that the tables of Jesus' genealogy which we possess are independent of each other on this point; for, according to Matthew, Zerubbabel, the son of Salathiel, was, through Salomo, descended from the kingly line (i. 7–12), while Luke represents him as springing from an allied branch connected, through Nathan, with David (iii. 27–31). No attempt of apologetics or of criticism to resolve or explain this difference can meet with much success. All we can ascertain is, that a discrepant genealogical tradition has been employed here, the circumstances of whose origin we are no longer in a position to indicate with certainty.[1]

After what has been said, it would be a hypercritically despotic act to pronounce the attempts of our Gospels to demonstrate the descent from David of Jesus' family either absolutely untrustworthy or pure inventions, which string together names, whether self-invented or taken at will from the Old Testament. It conflicts with the fact, indicated above, that the Old Testament sources were in no case so thoroughly explored as not still to yield representatives of the family; and that Matthew, in the case of Salathiel, quits the genealogical source followed up to that point, in order to introduce a divergent tradition, which we can nevertheless still complete from the Old Testament. It is generally very

[1] Apologetics has long attempted to explain this by the hypothesis of a levirate marriage. Deut. xxv. 5–10 requires the dead man's brother to marry the widow, in order to perpetuate his name; her first-born son was thus the actual child of one brother, but the lawful child of the other. This sufficed in some degree to explain how Zerubbabel at one time appears as the son of Salathiel, at another as the son of his brother Pedaiah. But if a different ancestry is presupposed, we must regard the two as having been half-brothers. The hypothesis of adoption is caught at by some, or they suppose that an heiress (Num. xxvii. 8) having married within her father's tribe (Num. xxxvi. 8), her first-born was judicially the heir of her father's line. Those who regard the genealogy given by Luke as Joseph's (comp. p. 220), are hampered by the difficulty of acknowledging a repetition of the occurrence in this pedigree also; yet this must be done in order to explain why, in Matthew, Joseph should appear as the son of Jacob, in Luke as the son of Eli, both of whom traced their descent from Zerubbabel through distinct lines. No better was the surmise of criticism, according to which the Gentile-Christian Luke, although he mentions expressly the promise to Jesus of the throne of His father David (i. 32), yet, in order to put an end to the hopes of the Jewish Christians, represents Jesus as by no means descending from David's royal line, or he may have replaced this sin-stained royal line by a "purer" branch (?); but the fact is palpable, that the first and third Gospels drew up their tables independently of each other.

apparent how carefully the first ancestral pedigree (Matt. i. 3–6) was taken either from the Book of Ruth (iv. 18–22) or from Chronicles (1 Chron. ii. 4–15), although probably shortened by the omission of certain names. The list of kings in Matt. i. 6–11 was also copied from Chronicles (1 Chron. iii. 10–16). Even now we can prove from the text of the Greek translation how the much discussed omission of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah before Ozias (Matt. i. 8) is caused by the resemblance between the Greek form Ahaziah and the name Ozias. But the skilfully planned pedigree shows itself to be the work of the first evangelist, who will prove the claim of Jesus to the throne of Israel by designating it the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. i. 1), and by calling David king, after he had traced the race from Abraham to David (i. 6). Moreover, he divides the genealogy into three periods, the first of which closes with David, who was the first to ascend the royal throne, and to obtain recognition of the right belonging to his house; the second extends to the captivity in Babylon, when the Davidic line was deprived of the crown (i. 17).[1] He finds significance in the occurrence in each of those two divisions of precisely fourteen generations, *i.e.* 2 × 7, while from the exile to the birth of Christ are again fourteen generations. Quite in the spirit of the age, the evangelist beholds in this even number a token of the divine guidance exercised in the history of this house. Fourteen generations had succeeded one another since the time of Abraham, when the Abrahamic David received the kingdom of Israel. And

[1] This explains also why, in i. 11, Jechonias is called son of Josias, although really his grandson. For the generation which directly followed Josias witnessed the downfall in the reign of his son Zedekiah, who was carried to Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 7), while his elder brother Jehoiakim, the representative of the main line, was not sent into exile; his son Jehoiachin was only carried into captivity in the first great deportation (2 Kings xxiv. 14 f.). Thus it is that Jechonias appears (through Jehoiakim) as the direct descendant of Josias, it being indicated that the other sons of Josias, actually his uncles, were regarded as his brothers, in default of brethren proper. In the third part (i. 17) Jechonias is taken account of a second time, by reason of his being the representative of the generation directly succeeding Josias (comp. ver. 11), which should have been derived from the early deceased Jehoiakim, the brother of Zedekiah; in ver. 12 he represents the second generation after Josias subsequent to the carrying captive into Babylon.

once more fourteen generations passed before the exile put an end to the rule of the Davidic house. The evangelist sees an indication in the fourteenth generation after the exile of the time having come when the last heir of David's line should re-establish the kingdom in Israel, or an indication of Jesus, who formed the close of the genealogy, being the Messiah in whom all the promises would be fulfilled, in accordance with the divine plan which determined the history of this house.

Still other touches reveal to us the attention paid by this reflective author to the divine control in the history of the Davidic line. By the prominence given to the fact that Jacob's son Judah was the father, by Tamar, of Phares and Zara (i. 3), he would bring to mind the strange divine dispensation by which, though contrary to human expectation, the twin brother who was to be the ancestor of the Messiah attained the rights of the first-born (Gen. xxxviii. 27–30). But to him it is still more significant how the mother of the two sons became, in such an unusual way, the ancestress of the Messiah (Gen. xxxviii. 14–18). Deviating from the common genealogical method, three women are afterwards named (i. 5, 6) who had this in common with Tamar, that they became ancestresses of the Messiah in unusual ways. The stain attaching to the past of Rahab and Ruth, to the motherhood of Tamar and Bathsheba, does not disconcert him, for the thought runs through Holy Writ that the divine control accomplishes its ends even through the frailties of humanity. But these possessed a significance for him, from their appearing as a prelude to the miraculous dispensation through which Mary became the mother of the Messiah. For the closing of the pedigree without the usual formula, that Joseph begat Jesus, but with the designation of Joseph as the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born (i. 16), only affirms that all the rights of a legitimate descendant of David passed to Jesus, but indicates, at the same time, that, through a divine dispensation, a secret was connected with the birth of this Jesus, which the evangelist would divulge in the subsequent narrative.

Though this carefully prepared conclusion does not, as has so often been conjectured, show that the evangelist corrected the original conclusion of a genealogy introduced from somewhere else, yet it is manifest that Luke took from another

source the genealogy which is added to his narrative (iii. 23–38). For it appears to have escaped him that it also is artistically planned, and is divided into four parts. From Adam to Abraham are 3 × 7 persons, from Isaac to David 2 × 7, from Nathan to Salathiel, *i.e.* down to the exile, 3 × 7, and from Zerubbabel to Jesus there are as many names again —in all, 11 × 7.[1] But this genealogy is so planned as not, like Matthew, to start with the progenitor of the race, but to represent Jesus as the son, *i.e.* the descendant of all these men whose names stand parallel to each other, not being intended to represent each one as the son of the following (comp. Gen. xxxvi. 2, 39). This undoubtedly explains why at the close of the genealogy of Jesus—who through all these individuals was a son of Adam—He is still further designated Son of God (iii. 38). But the statement at the commencement, that Joseph was the son of Heli, cannot be understood literally, for previously Joseph is expressly designated the reputed father of Jesus. It would have been meaningless to give the pedigree of a man of whom it had just been stated that Jesus only passed as his son among the people. It follows from this that Heli is considered to be Jesus' grandfather on His mother's side, and that the purpose of the genealogy is to show how through Mary also He was descended from David. His possession through His adopted father of the rights of a legitimate descendant of David's was authenticated by Matthew.[2] We learn also from this that Mary was descended from David's

[1] The first division is given according to 1 Chron. i. 1–4, 24–27, only that ver. 36, following the LXX., which retained a name between Arphaxad and Sala, omitted in our Hebrew text, supplies the word by interpolating Canaan; the second division agrees with Ruth iv. 18–22, except that, according to the revised text, two names—Admin and Arni—stand in place of Aram. The even number of the two last divisions is, as frequently occurs in genealogies, produced by the omission of single names. There is no such manifestation as in Matt. i. 17 of their being given accurately.

[2] The criticism which insists upon the incompatibility of the two tables strenuously resists the acceptance of this view. Still, looked at exegetically, it is the only one possible, for, according to the biblical conception, there is no sense in which Adam can be called son of God, as is done in iii. 38. As little as the final possessive is subordinated to the preceding, can the others be regarded thus; they must rather be understood as referring, in a parallel fashion, to Jesus' human forefathers. But even in iii. 23 the omission of the article before Joseph indicates clearly that he does not belong to the ancestors here enumerated, that in place of this merely reputed father it is through Mary that Jesus traces His

line, a fact which was evidently assumed in the source from which Luke borrowed this pedigree (i. 32–69); indeed, it is perhaps expressly stated (i. 27), and is confirmed in many ways by later tradition.[1]

Our conviction of Jesus' Davidic descent does not indeed rest on these tables, the reliability of which we are not in a position to test, for even a general view encounters lingering difficulties, which in the hands of criticism become insoluble contradictions, and are rendered despicable by the efforts of an ill-advised apologetic. But apart from them, it is historically certain that the family in which Jesus grew up traced its descent from David.[2]

descent from Heli and his forefathers. As to the aids used by apologetics in explaining the divergencies between this genealogy, if it is regarded as Joseph's, and that in Matthew, see remarks on p. 217.

[1] In Luke i. 32 it is said of the child who was to be miraculously given to Mary, but not through Joseph, that God would give unto Him the throne of His father David, and in i. 69 that God had raised up the Messiah in the house of His servant David, and thus it is made manifest that Mary is regarded as a descendant of David's. In spite of the ample expression given to this, i. 27 and ii. 4 seem to show that the same could be said of Joseph, but that the bringing forward of his descent was of no pragmatic importance, while that of Mary was important for the understanding of i. 32. On the question of Mary's descent from David, see Justin (*Dial. c. Tryph.* xlv. 100), Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.* iii. 21. 5), Julius Africanus (in Euseb. *Ch. Hist.* i. 7), and other Fathers. She is regarded as such in the apocryphal Gospels, and is called in the Talmud a daughter of Heli, which, according to the correct view of Luke iii. 23, she actually was.

[2] It was assuredly not this fact which roused Jesus to consciousness of His Messianic calling, but it made possible the establishment among the people of His claim to the Messiahship.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

A SECRET was hidden in that house where Jesus grew up, which, even more unequivocally than the dispensation that provided the necessary conditions for the recognition of His Messiahship, would manifest the action of God in the birth of Him who conveyed to His people the salvation so long promised. No pious Israelite doubted that only Jehovah could devise this salvation. To this end the person of Him who brought salvation was not to be a scion of the human race like the children of Adam, but should be presented as a gift of God, first to His father's house, and thereafter to the whole nation. He must, indeed, be born of a human mother, in order to be a truly human child; but that she bare Him was the consequence of a miraculous operation by God, in virtue of which the virgin conceived the Child of Promise.

In Luke's introductory history, which more than once refers expressly to recollections of Mary's (ii. 19, 51), there is a description of the moment when, through divine revelation, the betrothed of Joseph was made aware that she was favoured by God to be the mother of the Messiah; and when her pure maidenly consciousness started at the idea, it was indicated to her that this was to take place through the power of God's creating Spirit (i. 26–38). It is impossible to appreciate thoroughly the chaste beauty of this delineation, if it is regarded merely as a dry report of the conversation between Mary and the angel. If a wonder, such as is here alluded to, is to befall her, the virgin must certainly be made aware of the divine decree, and must come to a determination to give a willing consent. But the inward experience of such an hour, when God manifested Himself to her soul, and revealed to her, in a way that cannot be described, the secret of His most wondrous dispensation, could not be literally

repeated at the distance of nearly a generation. If it is considered to be an actual fact that Mary received a divine revelation of the miracle which was to be wrought upon her, it must at the same time be acknowledged that the representation belongs to the narrator.[1] But if anything in it can, in the highest sense, lay claim to historical truth, it is the lowly submissiveness with which Mary submits herself to the disclosed decree of God (i. 38). For it must not be disregarded, that on her was imposed the heaviest burden a human heart can carry. The fulfilment of the promise would expose the spotless virgin to the darkest suspicion of her neighbours, and of the man to whom she was to belong. With unusual aberration, criticism reckons it among the most apparent contradictions of the Gospels in the history of this birth, that, according to Matthew, it is Joseph, according to Luke, Mary, who receives a divine revelation as to this miraculous conception, while visibly the one is rendered unnecessary by the other. The strange expedients resorted to by apologetics to explain this difficulty exposed that science to just ridicule, and afforded apparently a justification of criticism. If the ordinary conditions of human social life cannot be modified by the intervention at one point in a creature's existence of the divine miraculous power, then it must be admitted that the condition of her who had hitherto been a virgin could be interpreted as nothing else than a grave moral error; and all appeals to appearances of angels, or to other divine revelations, would not prevent her being regarded as a traitress, or, at the best,

[1] When the words of the narrative are relied on for support, the question presents itself how Luke, or rather how that version of the source from which he took the early history, knew that the angel which appeared to her was the angel Gabriel (i. 26), for in the following conversation he never names himself. Whence, too, comes the evident similarity of the angel's greeting with Judg. vi. 12, or of the angel's word with Gen. xviii. 14? Why did God's messenger clothe his announcement in a form (i. 32 f.) which, while connected with 2 Sam. vii. 13 f., met the national expectations as really as the subsequent fulfilment failed to realize them? On the other hand, if we regard the whole thing as a literary attempt to delineate vividly the experience of that moment, it is self-evident that the author, who was thoroughly familiar with the histories of the Old Testament, borrowed from it the colouring of his narrative, and represented the hopes roused in the virgin in the only form they could assume in a pious Israelite imbued with the expectations of her people. Comp. the following observation.

as one miserably deceived. But when the fact is apparent that in spite of this Joseph took her in marriage, it is inexplicable, unless by means of a direct divine revelation, such as the first evangelist tells us of, he also was made aware of the secret of the divine decree which was accomplished on her.

If the early histories of our Gospels are to be regarded as chronicle-like reports of the events preceding and following the birth of Jesus, it is astonishing how both should have taken a separate side of this miraculous history. But when we consider that from the storehouse of traditions surrounding those events each one selected only what was suitable for the purpose of his narrative, we find it perfectly comprehensible why Luke's source begins with the annunciation of the birth of Jesus and of His forerunner, in order that they may be artistically combined in Mary's visit to Elizabeth, and the narrative may proceed to relate the birth of both. The first evangelist pursues a totally different interest. He starts from Jesus' genealogical tree, through which His right to the kingdom in Israel is to be demonstrated; but this does not determine that Jesus was the son of the heir of David's royal line, but that He was born of Mary, who was espoused to this heir. He therefore passes on to show how Joseph, who had natural misgivings about bringing home his betrothed, by a divine revelation as to the state of the case, was induced to marry her, not indeed to live with her, but in order that her Son should be born in his house, and should become the legitimate heir of the promises resting on his line (i. 18–25).[1] That a historical tradition of this fact forms the basis of both our evangelical narratives, is manifested not only by their coinciding accurately in the principal points (comp. Matt. i. 20 with Luke i. 35), although they were drawn up from totally different points of view, but by their reporting from different

[1] What is said above as to Luke's representation of the annunciation is relevant to the details of the delineation of this revelation by God. It may possibly have been given by means of a vision, in which an angel appears to the wakeful or sleeping one, who hears utterances which contain the divine revelation. But it is highly probable that this form of the revelation is left to the will of the narrator. For with the first evangelist these revelations are communicated by an angel of Jehovah's, who appears to the virgin in a dream (i. 20, ii. 13, 19; comp. ii. 12, 22), while in Luke the two chief promises are brought to the

sides the accomplishment of these presuppositions without which the miraculous conception could not be thought of.

Such a fact as the miraculous conception, with a revelation from God concerning it, is manifestly inconceivable from the standpoint of the denial of the miraculous, and the historicity of these traditions can never be spoken of; but, therefore, all the objections urged against it from that quarter testify to the existence of a dogmatic prepossession. Even theologians who do not regard miracle and revelation in the stricter sense as inconceivable, have doubted whether, from the connection in which they appeared, these traditions possess the guarantee of historicity, or have supposed that they contradicted evident historical facts. Their almost artificial reproduction in Luke's source, and their representation in the first Gospel in a manner influenced by the didactic aim of the author, is explicable from the nature of the subject and from the late date of the record. Both these not only permitted, but required a free literary remodelling of material; but this in no way prejudices the historicity of the traditions so redacted. More express emphasis is therefore laid on the absolute silence of the remainder of the New Testament regarding this most important fact. Neither Jesus, even when taunted with His lowly origin, nor the apostles, while presenting everything by which to move their nation to recognition of the Messiahship of Jesus, ever refer to the miracle of His birth. Paul mentions His being born of woman (Gal. iv. 4) without alluding to the strange circumstances, which, indeed, he appears to exclude by the stress he lays upon Jesus' descent from David (Rom. i. 3); this holds good also of Peter's address (Acts iii. 20). Among our evangelists even, Mark, the oldest of them, and the Apostle John, the single eye-witness of Jesus' life, are without a history of His birth, and the latter is even silent about Jesus being designated the son of Joseph. But even the first and third evangelists, who introduce this

watcher by the angel Gabriel, who designates himself as one of the seven angels round the throne (Dan. viii. 16, ix. 21). In Matt. i. 21, an explanation of the name Jesus is given, quite comprehensible from the evangelist's standpoint, while it must have been incomprehensible by Joseph. In i. 22, 23, is a reference to a fulfilment of prophecy, corresponding so exactly to those exhibited throughout the whole Gospel, that there can be no doubt of the formulating of God's message by the evangelists.

tradition into their introductory history, include, besides, genealogical tables ostensibly formed on the presupposition of Jesus' actual descent from David. Luke presents narratives which discourse naturally about Jesus' parents (ii. 27, 41, 43), about His father and mother (ii. 33, 48); and neither of them protests against the people calling Him the son of Joseph; while in all four, Jesus' nearest relatives, perhaps even Mary, appear as those who could not yet believe in the very elevated position of Jesus, although it would seem as if the miracle of His birth must have removed every doubt.

These objections, however, proceed from a perfectly false assumption. Although from the nature of the case both announcements connect in thought the miraculous conception with the Messianic vocation of the child Jesus, yet there is no direct intimation (even Matt. i. 22 f.) that any manner of proof was or could be forthcoming. It is a most extraordinary demand to require Jesus to point out the miracle of His birth to the masses of the people who remained unbelieving in spite of the miracles wrought among them daily, or to require the apostles to do so, who proclaimed the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. This miracle could at the very most only prove that God had special intentions with regard to this man, and no proof could be adduced other than the declarations of His mother. It is perfectly comprehensible how Jesus' brothers remained unbelieving (John vii. 5) in spite of what they had heard of the divine revelations and miracles at His birth, for to them especially the whole appearance of Jesus offered the most offensive contrast to their highly wrought expectations. That even the mother was not placed beyond the reach of temptation to doubt by the revelations she herself received, we learn from the history of him whom Jesus called the greatest of the prophets. But that she was ever in doubt regarding her Son, is suggested only through a misapprehension of a passage in one of the Gospels (Mark iii. 21) (comp. further Book IV. 7). It is equally a mistake to assume that if the miraculous conception of Jesus was a fact, it must have been generally admitted during His lifetime. It is overlooked, too, that Jesus' family and all who knew about it had a high and holy interest in guarding this secret of the house. If there was never a doubt among the people of Jesus' being

the actual son of the man in whose house he grew up, and if the reproach of illegitimate birth was not employed by Jesus' enemies till a much later date, and obviously is based upon our evangelical narrative, are not these proofs that the honour of the house was not exposed through offering each unbeliever a pretext for designating Jesus as one born in sin and shame? This explains why it was so late, perhaps not until after Mary's death, that information of the miraculous circumstances attending the birth of Jesus was disseminated. We know not whether any part of these traditions was communicated either to Mark by Peter, to whom he owed his reminiscences, or to Paul, whose letters show what little stress he laid on the details of Jesus' life. The former was prevented by the plan of his Gospel from inquiring into the history of the nativity, and the latter has nowhere considered the question, whether Jesus was begotten naturally or supernaturally. That such an inquiry is excluded by the prominence given to Jesus' descent from David, is contradicted by both these evangelists, who by no means laboriously rearrange according to their own conceptions genealogical tables which were produced by a totally different view of the origin of Jesus; but from these one draws up the genealogy of His foster-father, the other His natural descent from the lineage of David, *i.e.* has shown by means of Mary's pedigree that the race descended from him. John, who from his relation to Mary possessed certain knowledge on this subject, had from the whole scope of his Gospel no inducement to investigate the history of the nativity, and did not even embrace the occasion (comp. p. 215) to oppose emphatically the popular opinion (vi. 42). From his demonstrable acquaintance with the older Gospels, and therefore with their accounts of the nativity, it follows that his silence is either a confirmation of them or is damaging to his regard for truth. But even the Gospels which report the supernatural conception pay so little attention to it in the further course of their narrative, that they employ and give currency to popular terms that seem to exclude it. This is surely a proof that they recapitulated a tradition well known in the Church, but did not desire to introduce a new conception of the origin of Jesus, or procure the adoption of such by the Church.

It is usually overlooked that the manner in which this

tradition appears in the New Testament, as well as its isolation, makes the explanation of its rise peculiarly difficult, if it has no historical foundation. According to the mythical view, the presupposition, however it may have arisen, that Jesus was not born in an ordinary human way, was in the delineation involuntarily transformed into His being supernaturally begotten. But in accordance with all analogy, this idea must have found expression in a series of myths which revolved round this fact, and whose aim really was its illustration or glorification. If all the narratives in the introductory history in our Gospels are regarded as fragments of such a circle of myths, it still appears evident that this view played no further part, that it is clearly expressed in two passages only (Matt. i. 20; Luke i. 35), and no notice is taken of it in the other narratives, while it occasionally seems to be denied by Luke. Further, his almost poetical treatment of the early history might agree with such a collection of myths, while Matthew's prosaic reflections on how Joseph was induced to secure the legitimacy of the expected child and His claim to the throne of His fathers, are utterly opposed to the methods of such mythical productions.[1]

Just because the apostolic writings never bring forward Jesus' supernatural generation for didactic purposes, is such difficulty experienced in elucidating the presuppositions from which this myth must have arisen. From its actual appearance in Jewish-Christian sources, its origin must first be sought for in Jewish-Christian conceptions. By appealing to Matthew (i. 22 f.), the rise of the idea of a child born of a virgin is referred to Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. vii. 14), which required fulfilment. But it cannot be proved that in the pre-Christian period this passage was ever supposed to refer to the Messiah, or indeed that the Jews regarded it as pointing to a virgin mother. There was no foundation for this in the Hebrew phrase, which by no means exclusively indicated an unmarried person.[2] It must be considered

[1] In any case, the fact-basis laid hold of by that myth-forming epoch must in his time have been looked upon as dry history, and this is evidently quite incompatible with the circumstances of the rise of the First Gospel. And yet this form of the tradition is by Strauss and Keim defended as the original, as against Weisse and Volkmar, who regard Luke's as the older.

[2] The reference to Ps. ii. 7 assumes such a radical misconception of an

that the idea of impurity attaching to the marriage relationship, or the notion of the superior purity of the virgin condition, led to the miraculous conception being thought of. These contemplations of later ascetic schools certainly gained currency in Christendom, but they are admittedly opposed to the view of Judaism, which regarded marriage as a divine institution, and children as a blessing of God. How far the conceptions of our Gospels are from agreeing with such an opinion of the virgin condition, is manifested by the ingenuousness with which it is assumed that Mary's marriage with Joseph did not continue to be one in appearance only (Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7), and by the fact that they always present Mary in company with the brothers of Jesus, who must then have been her own sons (Matt. xii. 46; Luke viii. 19). Against each attempt to derive this idea from Jewish-Christian views, there may be adduced the fact that it was specially in such circles that opposition was presented, in the subsequent rejection by the Ebionites of the supernatural conception of Jesus.

The origin of this myth must then be looked for on Gentile-Christian ground, although it was most improbable that anything from that quarter would find ready acceptance in Jewish-Christian circles. The mythological conception of sons of the gods and of heroes seemed to offer an analogy in accordance with which the greatness of Jesus might be made manifest through a reference to His more exalted origin. But the shameless glorifying of sensual desire in these myths could only arouse the deepest abhorrence in the primitive Christian consciousness, and every attempt to apply any such idea to Jesus must have appeared nothing less than a profanation of what was most holy, by dragging it through the mire of sensuality. When later apologists amused themselves by seeing in those myths prototypes and forebodings or demoniac imitations of what actually took place in the case of Christ, even they proceeded upon the conception of Jesus' supernatural origin recorded in the Gospels, while here the concep-

Old Testament figure of speech as no Jewish Christian could be credited with. Moreover, we have seen already that our Gospels nowhere base the Messiahship of Jesus on His having been supernaturally begotten. In Matthew this happens only indirectly (i. 22 f.).

tion of this idea is what is in question. It is supposed that the designation, in the evangelical proclamation, of Jesus as the Son of God would in its original Old Testament meaning be incomprehensible to the Gentile Christians who construed it to signify a supernatural generation. But we perceive from the New Testament Epistles that the acquaintance of the Gentile-Christian congregations with the Old Testament was so comprehensive, that it was impossible for fundamental conceptions, so current as these, to remain unknown and misunderstood.[1]

If the origin of this notion can be understood neither from an intermingling of Judaic nor of Gentile conceptions, we are driven to seek its connecting points in the more developed Christian doctrinal view. It is very usual to consider the freedom of Jesus from the innate sinfulness of empirical human nature as established by the fact that, in consequence of His divinely accomplished conception, He does not appear as a product of the human species, and therefore as not subject to its universal corruption. But the only apostle who, from its commencement to its most far-reaching root, has pursued in a reflective spirit the subject of this universal sinful depravity which was inherited by the whole race at the time of Adam's fall (Rom. v. 12), never felt it necessary to explain the sinlessness of Christ by His not being descended by ordinary generation from the fathers. This deprives us of the last connecting point for the hypothesis that the primitive Christian consciousness advanced from the postulate of a sinless Redeemer to the assumption of His supernatural conception. In the New Testament, the sinlessness of Jesus is nowhere placed in relation to the manner of generation. Even in Luke (i. 35) the predicate of sanctity, which is also attributed in Matthew (i. 20) to the creative Spirit of God operative at the conception of Jesus, does not

[1] The Gentile-Christian Luke (i. 35, perhaps also iii. 38) may, in using the name Son of God, point to that unique operation of God which occasioned the birth of Jesus, but in this he stands completely alone in the whole New Testament. It was Hofmann who first attempted to force it upon the New Testament language, which was so closely linked with that of the Old. If Luke did so, his source furnished him with the connecting point in the fact contained therein of the supernatural conception, and it is more likely that we have here to do with a not unmeaning play on words, since Luke himself frequently employs the term Son of God in its genuine Old Testament sense.

thoroughly coincide with the notion of purity that, following the Apostle Paul, we are accustomed to connect with it. The hypothesis was more probable, that belief in a supernatural being of Christ had expression given to it in the conception of His supernatural origin. This view is still only too current, as if belief in Jesus' metaphysical divine Sonship stands or falls with the hypothesis of the miraculous conception. But apart from the misconstruction of the term Son of God, which is involved, this view rests upon an extremely crass mingling of the notion of the divinely effected origin of the man Jesus with the metaphysical idea of an eternal generation of the Son by the Father, which is totally foreign to the doctrine of the New Testament, and was first given shape to in the ecclesiastical development of doctrine in order to establish the eternally divine nature of Christ. In the development in the New Testament of the Christological conceptions, under the direction of the Spirit, the announcement of Christ's higher nature and of His heavenly origin is rather connected with the idea of His exaltation to divine Lordship. With Paul, it leads to the doctrine of the sending of the Eternal Son of God in flesh; with John, to the doctrine of the incarnation of the originally divine Logos. It was a perversion to regard these doctrines as in contradiction with the doctrine of the direct divine generation of the man Jesus, for that plainly asserts nothing regarding the commencement of Christ's life in the flesh. Still it is evident that, within the doctrinal development of the New Testament, these doctrines did not lead to the postulate of a supernatural generation. We may not be able without the hypothesis of a supernatural generation to complete the conceptions here offered, but it is a fact that nowhere did the apostles remark upon this necessary connection. On the contrary, our Gospels are without the slightest indication that the miracle of the nativity is regarded as a proof of a metaphysical form of existence or a higher nature of Jesus. The hypothesis cannot be drawn from our sources, that the notion of the miraculous conception was only a step in the development of the dogmatic process, by which the primitive Christian Church endeavoured to apprehend more fully the higher nature of Christ, and attain to a knowledge of His origin.

The silence of the New Testament, then, which has so often proved a stumbling-block to reflective criticism, becomes a proof that the opinions of the apostolic age do not yield the presuppositions necessary to explain the mythical commencement of the narratives of the miraculous conception. If, then, they are not historical, nothing is left but to interpret them as legendary, *i.e.* to look upon them as an idealistic apprehension of a historical matter of fact. This matter of fact can, however, be no other than what Judaistic calumny postulated in plain terms, when it declared Jesus to be an illegitimately born bastard.[1] The older rationalism found no difficulty in believing that the pure virgin along with a young deceiver, or along with one blinded by his religious fanaticism, may have wished to give birth to the longed-for Messiah. But a more mature ethical and religious philosophic view will never again attempt to refer the religio-ethical renovation of the world to one born in sin and shame.

Would we regard as inexplicable the enigma of the origin of these narratives, and rest content with the fact of their gradual formation in the Church, yet the circumstances of the rise of our Gospels compel us to face the question, how they remained uncontradicted at a time and in a circle where many still lived, who had never heard of these things from the persons participating most closely in them. For the source of Luke at least refers assuredly to Palestine. We have seen, besides, that members of the family of Jesus were living in the time of Domitian, who would not have allowed it to pass uncontradicted if histories hitherto unheard of were spread abroad, which among all unbelievers exposed the memory of Jesus' mother to the most shameful calumnies; and yet our sources know nothing of such a contradiction.[2] Looked at in an unbiassed way, historical reasons compel us to regard these

[1] Comp. Eisenmenger's *entdecktes Judenthum*, i. p. 105 f.; Philo, *ad Cod. Apocr.* i. p. 526 f.

[2] The rejection of the virgin motherhood in Ebionitish circles must not be regarded as an echo of such a protest. For here the dogmatic view was plainly influential, that on the paternal and maternal side, the Messiah must actually descend from David's line. On the other hand, Gnostic views were early advanced, which regarded as the real performer of the duties of Messiah, the higher Being united with the man Jesus, and therefore put no value on His human origination.

narratives as historical also. Even the latest biography of Jesus confesses that we are not just to His greatness when we do not take up the position that the creative action of God in regard to the origination of Jesus' person was unique and specific.[1] What form was taken by this creative action of God's, whether it consisted in a unique influence exercised on the child Jesus' spiritual life from the very first, or whether it was also operative at the generation of His natural life, we may not determine from self-constituted assumptions. These hypotheses never assert more than a difference in degree of that divine operation which is to be assumed in the case of other men, and, according to the testimony of that critic, are insufficient to account for the facts of Jesus' life, and more especially they never reach to a creative action of God in the biblical sense. This is testified to by the information of our sources, whose rise and diffusion is inexplicable without the assumption of a foundation-fact. We have therefore good grounds for our position, that in Jesus' home was actually hidden that secret which has become a guarantee to Christianity that the salvation brought by Jesus was in its ultimate beginning a gift from above. From the hour when the maiden betrothed to Joseph knew she was a mother, she knew also that the child she bore was not that of the man of her choice, but that God Himself had chosen and qualified her to give birth to Him who was to fulfil her people's hopes.

[1] Comp. Keim's *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara*, Zürich 1867, i. p. 359.

# CHAPTER III.

## THE SIGN IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDEA.

IN the hill country of Judea, which covered almost the whole of the interior of the southern province of Palestine, there lived in one of the cities of the priests, which were scattered there, the priest Sachariah, called by us Zacharias, after the Greek form of his name.[1] He belonged to the course of Abijah, the eighth of the twenty-four courses which David instituted (1 Chron. xxiv. 3 ff.), and which were still distinguished even in the post-exilian period, Ezra having again divided into twenty-four classes the four priestly families that returned. His wife Eliseheba, or, as pronounced in Greek, Elisabeth, also belonged to the old priestly nobility, tracing back her pedigree to the house of Aaron. Both were highly extolled on account of their legal piety, but they were childless; and since they were already advanced in years, they had long since given up all hope of being blessed with children (Luke i. 5-7), when Elisabeth found herself with child (i. 24). Some have found in this a fabulous element, modelled upon the history of such men of God of Old Testament times as Isaac, Samson, and Samuel; and, in fact, the idea that the long-denied blessing of children was a specially rich one, or that the special grace of God, which still blessed the aged parents, presignified the special lot of the child, might have lain at the basis of this portion of the narra-

[1] In the thirteen cities which were assigned to the family of Aaron in the time of Joshua, there still dwelt priests even after the exile (Neh. vii. 73), although many had settled in the capital. Luke i. 39 is commonly interpreted as if the name of the city of Judah, in which Zacharias lived, is not named. Yet there is probably more to be said in favour of the view that Juttah, one of the cities of the priests mentioned in Josh. xxi. 16, is meant; according to xv. 55, it also lay in the hill country of Judea, and its name was only somewhat corrupted in the popular Greek manner of pronunciation. The assumption that Hebron is meant, is altogether improbable.

tive.[1] But our simple narrative, which points back in the most ingenuous manner to the traditions which were still current in later times in the hill country of Judea regarding these events (i. 65), does not furnish the slightest occasion for such an assumption. There it was still remembered how the mother had withdrawn herself for five months into the quietude of the house, in order, as she said, to give herself up to pious meditation and thankfulness to God, who had taken away from her the reproach of her childlessness (i. 24 f.). Above all, however, the historical character of the statement is guaranteed by the circumstance that, on the occasion of the circumcision of her child, and before she had yet heard of the promise of a higher destiny which rested upon him, the mother, notwithstanding the objections of her relatives and friends to a name which was uncommon in the family, insisted upon it that he should be called John (i. 59–61). For this name, the Greek form of Jehochanan or Jochanan, plainly alluded in her mind to the grace of God, which she had experienced in the gift of this son.

In the sixth month of her pregnancy, however, she discovered a new reason for praising God, when her young kinswoman from Nazareth appeared in the priestly house (i. 26, 39).[2] According to our narrative, the angel had announced to Mary the blessing bestowed upon the aged Elisabeth as a sign, which should become a pledge of the divine miracle which was promised to herself, and Mary now hastened to the hill country of Judea, in order to become certain of this sign (i. 36, 39). But since we saw ourselves compelled to regard the conversation with the angel as a literary composition of the narrator, there can lie at the basis of this representation only the fact, that the revelation made to Mary induced her to seek out her kinswoman, and that

[1] It is true we must not refer to the circumstance that according to the later legend Mary also was presented to her parents in their old age, for this is plainly an imitation of our history; but for those who regard the essential elements of the history of the nativity in Luke as fabulous or mythical, there is at least no reason whatever for excluding such an element as this from that history.

[2] It need not at all surprise us that, although Mary was a descendant of David, she is called a kinswoman of Elisabeth (i. 36); for the Levites were not compelled to marry within their own tribe, and therefore the daughter of Aaron could very easily be related on the mother's side to the daughter of David.

what she saw and experienced there became a confirmation to her of the hopes awakened in her by that revelation. It is a guarantee only for the historical character of the traditions which lie at the basis of that account, that that revelation could of itself actually induce Mary to visit her kinswoman, and that her visit must have brought her such a confirmation. For it is self-evident that a journey from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea would not have been undertaken by that lonely maiden without very weighty reasons, and that a stay there for three months (i. 56) could not have been meant as a friendly greeting, or have merely served the purpose of making herself certain of the information which she had received. Now nothing, however, is more natural than that Mary, who, according to what had been announced to her as her destiny, had to expect within this time that which would make her appear a sinner in the eyes of men, hid herself in the pious priestly house, in order at least to do for her part what was humanly possible, so that, in consequence of its testimony to her behaviour, she might receive credit, when she revealed the true and yet so incredible ground of her hopes as a mother, In that case, however, she must also have been a witness of the events which, on the occasion of the circumcision of the son of her elderly relatives, revealed his high destiny; while this destiny must at least have been a token to her that the time of salvation, which the son promised to her was to bring about, was near at hand. For at the end of these three months Elisabeth expected her confinement; and it is at least a very natural assumption that Mary also took part in the feast that was given at his circumcision.[1]

At that feast, which was, according to the custom of the Jews, also the feast at which its name was given to the

[1] This assumption is by no means opposed by Luke i. 56, where her return to Nazareth is mentioned before (ver. 57) the birth of John is related. For it is quite natural that the series of narratives, which deals with the annunciations, should be concluded by the mention of that former fact, before the new series, which passes over to the stories of the births (cf. p. 224), commences. In exactly the same manner, the history of the birth of the Baptist is concluded in i. 80, although ii. 1 refers to a time much anterior to it; and the narrative of his ministry is concluded in iii. 18–20, although what follows in iii. 21 falls in its very midst.

child, it happened that the relatives and friends of the family proposed that the child should be called Zacharias, after the name of his father; while Elisabeth insisted on giving him the significant name, into which, in keeping with the imaginative manner of the Jews, she imported the recollection of that which had been bestowed upon her in the present of this child. Then it happened that the aged priest, who had up to this time been a silent witness of this scene, opened his mouth, and, to the astonishment of all, with inflexible decision seconded the wish of the mother. He did so, it is true, in a still far higher sense. For now he told how a revelation had been once made to him in the temple at Jerusalem, which promised him this child of his old age, and at the same time assigned to that child the destiny of becoming the forerunner of the Messiah. Now he charged even himself with unbelief; he had not dared to give absolute credence to this revelation, and therefore until to-day he had kept silent regarding that which stirred his heart so deeply. But step by step the fulfilment of the promise given to him had made him deeply ashamed of his unbelief. His wife had become pregnant, she had given birth to a son; and in the circumstance that she would to-day have him called John, he could see only a confirmation of the destiny assigned to this son, who was henceforth to be named John, *i.e.* the grace of God, after the grace of God which appeared to the waiting people in the person of the forerunner of the Messiah.

Nothing else than this can actually be the historical basis of the traditions which are reported in the representation of this circumcision scene (i. 57–64), with an express reference to the reminiscences which were still so current in the hill country of Judea at a later period (i. 65 f.), and which furnished the source of the evangelist with the material for the account of the revelation made to Zacharias (i. 8–22),—an account which is one of the most beautiful portions of this early history. The conversation of the priest with the angel we can regard only as the literary form in which the narrator clothed that revelation;[1] and it is, moreover, out of keeping with all

[1] Here also, just as in the case of the annunciation to Mary (cf. p. 223), it is the angel Gabriel who brings the message; here, too, there are certain features, such as i. 15, 18, undoubtedly borrowed from the old sacred history (cf. Judg.

analogy that the recollection of that circumcision festival, handed down as it was from mouth to mouth for many a year, should have remained altogether pure. The confusion, however, consists simply in this, that the silence of Zacharias, which he himself regarded as the consequence of his unbelief, is conceived of in the tradition as having been brought about by a divine miracle of punishment, and as having been first broken that day in an equally miraculous manner. From this there naturally follows everything which in the account of the circumcision scene goes beyond that historical matter of fact, and which is related in the scene of the annunciation over and above the simple revelation regarding the birth and destiny of the son.[1] As for the rest, the account of that annunciation still points back in all its concrete vivid details to the communications which the old priest had made regarding the revelation given to him. Along with the other members of his course, he was staying at Jerusalem; and as the priestly functions were in accordance with custom assigned by lot, the lot fell upon him to offer the incense in the morning in the sanctuary, while the people prayed in the fore-courts of the temple. The simple narrative passes on without evidencing any perception of the wonderful poetry of Divine Providence, that here in the sanctuary of the old covenant the first morning greeting announces the day of the new covenant, and thereby only shows how far it was from inventing this scenery. In the sweet odour of the incense, which the priest pours upon the glowing coals of the

xiii. 14; Gen. xv. 8), and the promise referring to the destiny of the son (i. 17) is attached to prophetical words found in the Old Testament (cf. Mal. iv. 5 f.). And although, in accordance with this, the angel did not foreordain the name of the son (i. 13), it nevertheless remains a Divine Providence that the inner experiences of the father and mother coincided in the choice of this significant name.

[1] Strauss has striven in vain to obtain from Old Testament and New Testament analogies a point of departure for the mythical origin of the tradition regarding this miraculously produced silence. For it does not require to be proven that neither the momentary dumbness of Daniel after a vision (Dan. x. 15 f.), nor the three days' blindness of Paul when he was on his way to Damascus (Acts ix. 8), furnishes such a point of departure. On the contrary, it is always characteristic of oral tradition that it conceives of that which is of subjective origin as being brought about by something external, and endeavours to represent the spiritual in that which falls under the observation of the senses.

altar, the prayer of the people rises up to God,—that prayer the central point of which was always the salvation promised in the Messiah. It was then that he received the divine revelation that the prayer of the people was heard, and that the son, who was to be born to him, would prepare the way for Jehovah, who was drawing near in the person of His Messiah. That it was an hour of the deepest absorption in meditation and prayer, the inner experiences of which awakened in him this hope, however much it still had to struggle with the doubts again and again stirred within him by the continuance of his wife's barrenness unto her old age, and by the long fruitless waiting of the people for the fulfilment of its promises,—that it was such an hour is shown most clearly by his long tarrying in the temple, which caused the people to marvel; for the brief conversation with the angel, in which the narrator has clothed this revelation, would evidently not have demanded such a long stay in the sanctuary. But when he came out of the temple, and every one pressed round about him with inquiries as to the cause of his delay, he made signs to the people that they should be silent. We know why it was that he kept silence.

No doubt he who does not acknowledge any divine revelation whatever in the narrower sense, but at the most only such revelations as are brought about psychologically by the spiritual activity of man, an activity which is always divinely stimulated, cannot look upon a narrative as historical, according to which the hope of such a fact as the birth of this son of the altar, or of such a destiny as this, which in so incalculable a manner connects the highest expectations of the people with a human life which is still to be looked for, is owing to divine revelation. But the ultimate ground of doubt in the actuality of this revelation lies far deeper. Whoever judges of the appearing of Jesus only in accordance with the criteria of other historical personages, will also regard it as a free spiritual act on His part, that He connected Himself with the activity of the prophet on the Jordan, and declared him to be His forerunner. Such an one will, accordingly, find in this narrative only a mythical expression of the circumstance, that a historical relation was regarded in the Church as one that had been divinely willed

and foreordained.[1] If, however, we have good reason to hold by the historical kernel of these traditions, we must assume that it was the divine decree, already foretold in the prophets, that appointed such a forerunner to the Messiah, and that John had been called from his birth to be this forerunner. That being the case, however, it can easily be comprehended how the promise given to his parents should and could contribute to the child's being prepared from its earliest years with a view to this calling, and being brought up for it.[2]

Undoubtedly the purpose of such revelations as were given to Zacharias as well as to the parents of Jesus, should by no means be regarded so narrowly. It was now necessary to revive, primarily in the small circles of the pious in Israel, the long sunk Messianic hopes of the people; and it is very natural to suppose that in the traditions relating to this early period there was still current many a word in which the parties concerned had once, filled with the Spirit, given expression to the new hopes which were awakened by those revelations. In this way we can best explain the circumstance, that in the accounts given of the annunciations these hopes have found an expression which could not possibly have been chosen at the time when these narratives were committed to writing; for then the fulfilment had long since followed a path which deviated essentially from the letter of the promise and the expectations which were founded upon that letter, and the old language could not possibly have been poetically reproduced without a very artificial transposing of

[1] Such an explanation would, at least, be far more intelligible than that which sees in the narrative only an imitation of the Old Testament histories of Samson and Samuel, or, more strictly, only a poetical pendant to the annunciation of the birth of Jesus Himself.

[2] It is true the direct instruction which the angel gives to Zacharias in this respect (Luke i. 15) is certainly only one of the elements which the narrator has borrowed from Old Testament history and interwoven into his free literary representation; for neither the notice contained in i. 80, nor any other historical vestige, leads us to conclude that, like Samson and Samuel, John had been consecrated to lifelong Nazaritism. But that a youth which was spent amidst constant allusions to such hopes, and with the anticipation of such tasks, could well contribute to mature a man who should be competent for his divine vocation, this sufficiently explains the purpose of such revelations, so far as we may venture to inquire with reference to divine purposes.

oneself back into the situation and views of a remote past. This becomes very evident when we compare the explanation of the name Jesus (Matt. i. 21),—an explanation which certainly originates with the first evangelist himself, and already shows the doctrinal view of the apostolic age, with the strain of the words in which the vocation of Jesus and His forerunner is characterized by Luke (i. 32 f. and i. 16 f.). Here it is still the old prophetical expectation of a son of David, who ascends the throne of his fathers and sets up an everlasting kingdom over the house of Jacob (cf. 2 Sam. vii. 13); here it is Jehovah Himself that comes in the Messianic time, and before whom the forerunner of the Messiah brings the nation as one that is thoroughly prepared by the completion of its moral reformation, effected in the spirit and power of Elias (cf. Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5 f.).[1] Where, however, the soil was once prepared by means of such hopes, the spirit of prophecy could again be poured out, as in days of old. For four hundred years the voice of prophecy had been silent, a dead and deadening method of explaining Scripture had taken the place of the life-giving energy of the Spirit of God. That the spirit of prophecy was again revived, was the surest sign of the dawning day of salvation, of the new era, in which, according to the old prophecy, the spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh (Joel ii. 28). Not only was Zacharias filled with this spirit (Luke i. 67); in the circles of the pious in the land, who waited for the consolation of Israel in the midst of the loud tumults of the capital, we see the spirit descending also upon the aged Simeon (ii. 25). Yea, as if that prophecy was now to be literally fulfilled, it already descends upon all flesh; Israel's sons and daughters begin to prophesy. In Jerusalem we hear of the prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel (ii. 36), and Elisabeth herself is filled with the Holy Ghost (i. 41).

But is not this merely an element in the glorifying ornamentation of this history of the nativity? This sus-

[1] Yet neither of these events had actually taken place; neither had John effected a moral reformation, so that the Messiah found a prepared people, nor had the latter ascended the throne of His fathers. This being the case, however, such an expectation could not, from the Christian standpoint, have been put into the mouth of the angel as a divine promise, unless some support or other had been found for it in traditional prophecies.

picion, however, must give way when we look more narrowly at the memorial of this new prophecy—a memorial which reaches the highest flight of Old Testament prophecy—which tradition has preserved for us (Luke i. 67-79).[1] It is true also of this hymn of Zacharias, that it still exhibits the form of the Messianic hopes of the Jews in an originality and purity which it could no longer preserve in the early Christian age, and which could only have been reproduced by means of a skill in composition which was altogether foreign to that age. It blesses Jehovah, the God of Israel, who hath wrought a redemption for His people, and, in order to bring it, hath raised up a horn of salvation, *i.e.* a power which can bring redemption to the people, in the house of His servant David, the Messiah, viz., of whom all the prophets have spoken since the world began. But this redemption is still conceived of simply as a salvation from the enemies of the people, as an emancipation from the power of the Gentiles who hate them. It is not the deeply sunken generation of the present day for whom this divine deed is primarily meant; it is the pious fathers, who have hoped in the blessing of their seed, and mourn over the misery of their offspring. God shows mercy towards them, by remembering His inviolable covenant, which He has concluded with them, the oath which He has once sworn unto the patriarch Abraham. But however certainly external wellbeing is involved in it, that cannot be the ultimate goal to which this redemption is to lead. Delivered out of the hand of its enemies, the nation is henceforth to serve its God in holiness and righteousness. The restoration and completion of the true theocracy is the final goal; but political emancipation

[1] No doubt it is commonly assumed that this hymn is put into the mouth of Zacharias by the narrator, in order to give a poetical adornment to the circumcision scene. But even when looked at formally this is far from being the case. For it is a purely arbitrary assumption that this was the hymn into which Zacharias broke forth when his tongue was again loosed (i. 64). From the circumstance that this hymn is not interwoven into the narrative, but is reported after the narrative is finished (i. 66), it is evident that we have to do here, not with an invention of the writer, but with the communication of a memorial out of the time of that reawakening prophecy which had maintained its place in tradition; although in saying this we naturally do not exclude the possibility that the first recorder of it, and the evangelist, who has in many ways worked up his sources, have also their share in giving it its present form.

and national completion are still conceived of as its indispensable prerequisite. The second portion of his hymn turns to the child who has been born to him. As a prophet of the Most High, he is yet to go before Jehovah, who is drawing near in the time of salvation, in order to make ready His ways, according to the promise (Isa. xl. 3). The whole nation shall know that salvation is at hand; for it is he that proclaims forgiveness of sins to the people led by him to repentance, and thus removes the greatest obstacle, the people's guilt, which stands in the way of its redemption. There is still no presentiment of the circumstance that it is by means of the Messiah that this forgiveness can be first brought or secured; it is the forerunner who, according to the prophetic promise (Jer. xxxiii. 8; Zech. iii. 9), cleanses the nation from its sin, as well as from its guilt. The final goal is the sunrise of the Messianic time, which the tender mercy of God has resolved upon, in order that He may cause the light of salvation to shine upon them that sit in the deepest darkness of misery, so that they may find the way which leads to peace.

Such voices of prophecy Mary has heard in the hill country of Judea; but long ere these could resound ever louder and clearer after the birth of the child of the priest, she is said to have received there a sign, which gave her the fullest confirmation of the hope that was awakened in her breast. Tradition at least related that, as soon as she entered the house of the priest, and on the occasion of her first meeting with Elisabeth, the latter, filled with the Holy Ghost, greeted her as the mother of the Messiah (i. 40–45). It is true that when the narrative contained in our Gospel connects this miraculous enlightenment with a movement on the part of the child, which she carried under her heart, and which movement the Spirit taught her to recognise as an expression of triumphant joy, which she could explain only as joy at the arrival of the mother of the Messiah, it contradicts its own presuppositions, according to which Elisabeth could as yet know nothing regarding the Messianic destiny of the child, for which she was hoping.[1] But if, after she had learned the

[1] The unmistakeable allusion to the unbelief of Zacharias (cf. the expression in Luke i. 45, which, moreover, strongly reminds us of Acts xxvii. 25), with

destiny of her child, Elisabeth had late recalled that moment to mind, she could easily speak of such a movement on the part of the child, the meaning of which she now learned to know in a new light; and tradition could have already carried this back into the narrative relating to that meeting of the two mothers. Yet it cannot be denied that on this explanation that sudden enlightenment of Elisabeth loses its real point of departure. The possibility is not on that account excluded, that it was in tradition that the confirmation of her hope, which Mary found in the priest's house, and the prophetic words of Elisabeth, which later announced to her her high destiny, were first thrown into the form of this salutation scene.[1] We must not overlook the fact that one of the essential reasons, at least, why this scene is described, is that there might be connected with it a second memorial of that time of reawakening prophecy which, like the prophecy of the Old Testament, has also found its highly poetical expression in a psalm. That this outburst of prophecy is full of reminiscences of the Psalms of the Old Testament, in which

which she pronounces Mary, in contrast to him, blessed because of her faith, can only belong to the author, for the presupposition of a written communication of Zacharias referring to his unbelief is contrary to the meaning and purpose of the narrative regarding the miracle which inflicted upon him the punishment of speechlessness.

[1] At any rate, the deeply conceived narrative, though it seems somewhat strange to our manner of thought, does not deserve the gross misinterpretations with which apologetics as well as critics have disfigured it. For there is no need that the movement of the child in the womb, quite a natural physiological phenomenon in the sixth month of pregnancy, should be accounted for psychologically by the excitement of Elisabeth's mind on the occasion of the visit of her kinswoman, or be regarded as a special divine miracle, because the mother explains it so finely. On the other hand, the critics have sought to find in this the fulfilment of the promise in Luke i. 15. It is true that in its hyperbolical language this latter passage, in keeping with the poetical strain of the promise, goes beyond what is brought out in the Gospel itself as to its fulfilment in the prophetical activity of John, just as with its demand that he should be a Nazarite it goes beyond what is said regarding his ascetic life in the wilderness during his youth and manhood (cf. p. 239). But after explaining it, contrary to the language as well as to the sense, as meaning that the child should be filled with the Holy Ghost even when in its mother's womb, some have found here the homage which, after it prophetically recognised the mother of the Messiah, it paid to the embryo of its great successor while slumbering in Mary's womb,—a combination which is at once insipid and highly artificial, and which was certainly very alien to the creative activity of the phantasy when engaged in the forming of myths.

all pious Israelites lived, and in particular has many points of contact with the hymn of the mother of Samuel which was spoken on a similar occasion, is naturally no evidence that we have before us here an imitation of the latter with a tendency (1 Sam. ii. 1–10). The sketch of the picture of hope that fills the soul of the singer, a sketch which is hinted at rather than drawn, bears testimony to the originality of this poetical effusion. Naturally we are no longer able to discover whether Mary was really its author, or whether it was first put into her mouth (possibly by the insertion of i. 48) by a narrator of these histories, or by him to whom we owe the circumstance that they were committed to writing. At any rate, the account given of that salutation scene is only meant to point out the historical occasion on which we may conceive the Magnificat to have originated (Luke i. 46–55).

In strains of unmixed triumph the hymn of praise rises up to God, who is preparing a great redemption for the people with the coming of the time of salvation, and tarries with simple joy over the fame which the promotion of the humble maid to the highest destiny leads her to anticipate. It magnifies the miracle which the Almighty has wrought upon her; but it does so because of the verification which His holiness and His mercy have thereby found in the case of all them that fear the Lord, for here also it is still exclusively for these that the prospect of the Messianic salvation is opened up. It looks back upon the manifestations of this holiness and mercy, which God has shown again and again with mighty arm; and here also the delineation of the types of that which Jehovah is now about to do, shows that the salvation expected is the redemption of the people from their haughty enemies, whose headlong overthrow promises them salvation, and that God will exalt the lowly, and will satisfy those who are pining away in misery with the fulness of all earthly blessings. At last it reaches its climax in the allusion to the great saving deed of God, whereby He has already commenced to help His servant Israel; and here too it is His mercy and faithfulness with which He fulfils the promises given to the fathers, and does to Abraham and his seed as He has sworn to him.

It is thus that these hymns, these prophecies in the circle

of the pious in the hill country of Judea, greet the first morning red of the new time of salvation, which is already dawning full of hope. And how often there may have resounded in that circle the hymn of praise, which our historian puts into the mouth of the heavenly hosts, whom the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem believed they heard praising God: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased! (Luke ii. 24).

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM AND SALUTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

SOME six miles to the south-east of Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron, lies the little town of Bethlehem, originally named Bethlehem-Ephratah, *i.e.* house of bread among the corn-fields. Even now we find the terraced hill-sides of the near environs covered with plantations of fruit trees and rich fields, while the neighbouring hills to the south show luxurious meadows of meadow hay and brilliant flowers. In the time of Micah (v. 1) it was so insignificant as not to muster an independent thousand (of heads of families). Our sources at one time call it a town (Luke ii. 4), at another a place (John vii. 42), and so with the later writers. But a halo from the past rested upon the unimportant little town; here it was that the renowned king was born, who was associated with the fairest remembrances of the nation (comp. 1 Sam. xvi. 1, xvii. 12), and the magic of those recollections surrounded still the old Davidic city (Luke ii. 11).

Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, and there, in obedience to a divine command, Joseph had doubtless taken home his bride. It is related nevertheless by two evangelists that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 1; Luke ii. 7). Criticism supposes this to have been inferred from the prophecy in order to gain for Jesus a new Messianic sign; and those, at least, who regard the traditions redacted in our Gospels as essentially fabulous, have no right to hold this one incident to be historical. Micah's prophecy (v. 1) may not really have signified incontrovertibly that the Messiah should be born in the town of David, but it is apparent from the Gospels that this was thought to be the meaning of that passage in the work of the prophet (Matt. ii. 5), and that the people considered the coming of the Messiah from Bethlehem as in accordance with Scripture (John vii. 41). It is, however,

altogether a different question from that regarding the Davidic descent (comp. p. 213 f.). When called on to say where the Messiah should be born, even the speculative acumen of the scribes could refer to no passage but that in Micah. And although antipathy to the Galilean Messiah (John vii. 41) once led to the existence of this Messianic sign being doubted, this does not prove that the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem had taken root in the popular expectation as His Davidic descent had done, which was involved in the whole history of prophecy and demanded by the character of the existing Messianic hopes. But above all, the naïve remodelling of such an expectation, even if proved to be widespread, into the assumption that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, would be opposed by the fact of its being widely known that Jesus was a Nazarene, Nazareth being His birthplace (comp. p. 213).[1] For the inference thence drawn of Jesus' actual birth in that place was a serious difficulty in the way of the formation of a contrary opinion which could only appeal to a dubious interpretation of Micah's prophecy.

Criticism itself is not agreed as to whether Matthew's account of the early history is the earlier, which simply assumes the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, and begins with describing the removal to Nazareth which took place at a later period. It might be that Luke's narrative is the first, for it begins with adjusting the hypothetical birth in Bethlehem to the palpable fact of His Galilean home, which is the first source that can have provided Matthew with the already justified presupposition. The one position is as untenable as the other. A legendary formation, which begins by reasoning away the objections to an assumption it would pronounce as fact, is a self-contradiction; for the *unconscious* transposing of

[1] It is difficult to imagine how this could be considered a historical testimony against the statement of our Gospels. For the custom is still general of a man's being named after the town where his youth is passed, even when accidental circumstances caused his birth to occur in another place, or during his infancy his parents sojourned elsewhere. We ought not to expect that when John communicates a popular rumour arising from lack of certain knowledge of the circumstances without protesting against the truth of it, he may therefore be summoned as a witness on that side. But there is no need for a misinterpretation of John iv. 44 to make him a witness for the nativity in Bethlehem, for he presupposes all the older tradition, and his silence in i. 46, vii. 42, does not mean that its testimony was invalid.

an assumption into a fact belongs to the nature of legend as well as to that of myth. The simple assumption of the fact as it is presented by the first evangelist is absolutely impossible, for the continuation of his narrative shows how conscious the author was of the facts standing in the way of that presupposition. If, on this account, the hypothesis of an unconscious legend-formation be given up and recourse had to that of conscious invention, which has of set purpose embraced this detail in its narrative, the difficulty must at once be met of the same incident occurring in two perfectly independent narrative groups, and it must then be derived from a common tradition lying at the foundation of both, and one whose origin must be either legendary or historical. But the independence of our two narrative groups of one another, already so strikingly apparent in the genealogical tables, is here made very evident; indeed, the incongruity of their contradictory accounts has always been one of the strongest arguments employed by criticism against their historicity. In regard to the points in question, the Gospels are undoubtedly only apparently in harmony. No apologetical ingenuity has succeeded in eliminating the fact that our Gospel of Matthew, looked at separately, can only be understood to mean that Joseph and Mary dwelt originally in Bethlehem, and only through special circumstances were induced to remove to Galilee and to choose Nazareth as their permanent abode (comp. Matt. ii. 22 f.). Luke, on the contrary, informs us with all the distinctness one could wish, that Nazareth was their original dwelling-place (i. 26, ii. 4), to which, after being led to Bethlehem by peculiar circumstances (ii. 1–5), they returned as soon as possible (ii. 39). From the fact of both evangelists extracting from their store only detached traditions regarding this early history, it would not be surprising were the first evangelist to infer from the traditional fact of the birth in Bethlehem that it was the parent's original home, and that their equally verified recorded residence in Nazareth was the result of some such removal. We shall see presently how even Luke's combination is based on insufficient information as to the facts. But the naïve way in which the one completely ignores the assumptions of the other is possible only if he were unacquainted with the

work of the other. Their concurrence as regards the birth in Bethlehem rests on the joint foundation of historical tradition.

Perfectly independent of this is the question whether the reasons that led the parents of Jesus to Bethlehem were known when our narratives were written. It would not be at all astonishing if they had been long forgotten. The descendant of David might easily have had family relations at the old centre of his family to occasion his journey, while the narrator would go a step farther, and regard it as a divine dispensation which he would represent as being brought about by express divine arrangement.[1] Even if this were not so, and Joseph's journey was specially connected with some political event, it is still most probable that the tradition was guided by a recollection of the actual state of the case. This does not exclude the possibility of this recollection being already faded, or of the real occasion of the journey having been imperfectly apprehended in the tradition. The latter must have happened if Luke really speaks of a taxing decreed by the Emperor Augustus for the whole empire (ii. 1). For all the attempts of apologetics to prove the probability at that date of a universal census of the empire, or at least of a provincial census, have been without success. They are shattered upon the fact that at that time Palestine by no means belonged to the Roman Empire as a province, but was ruled by an independent king, who was by rights a confederate of the Romans. We know historically of only a thrice repeated imperial census under Augustus which concerned Roman

[1] In his *Leben Jesu* of 1864, p. 335 f., Strauss has, with caustic wit and much enjoyment, pictured instead of this how the evangelist laboured in vain at the task of bringing Jesus' parents to Bethlehem, and at last hit upon the taxing by Cyrenius, which he knew of from Acts v. 37, and could verify from his knowledge of antiquity. To be sure, this taxing could never have taken place in the existing political circumstances, and was actually carried out ten years later. It was certainly confined to Judea, and could not concern the Galilean Joseph. A census in the Roman form would not have led Joseph to his ancestral town; and even though conducted in the Jewish manner, it could never have caused Mary to accompany him. But this Gentile Christian, who was as ignorant as we are of the political circumstances of the time and the method of the Roman census, held fast to those unlucky ideas, and involved himself in a mass of contradictions, instead of adopting the theory, advanced by Strauss himself, of the parents' being led to go to Bethlehem by an angel's appearance, which, moreover, would have given more significance to the birth itself.

citizens, and to these the Jews did not belong. But the burden of that statement, which must have been contained in the source employed by Luke, since it forms the necessary presupposition of the following narrative, does not refer to an edict ordaining a valuation for the purposes of taxation, which, according to our knowledge of the historical circumstances, would not have taken this form, but refers solely to an administrative measure commanding a general enumeration of the people, such as suited the consolidating tendency of the emperor's reign, and is analogous to the general imperial survey, while it might extend over the countries of the vassal kings. But if it is a fact that Augustus possessed memoranda estimating the population, the number capable of bearing arms, the extent to which the whole empire, including the countries of the allies, was available for revenue, this involved throughout the empire just such estimates of the people; and it was one of this kind which took Joseph to Bethlehem.[1] There is not in the story the slightest indication of the great significance which the speculative acumen of the apologists would find in this dispensation, whether by making prominent the concurrence of the commencement of redemption with the completion of Israel's bondage, or by finding expressed in it the signification of Jesus for the whole world. But it follows from this that no such idea guided tradition to this combination; it must be founded upon historical recollection.[2]

If this had been a valuation, then, according to Roman law, every man would have been subjected to it at his dwelling-place; but in this case every one must betake themselves to

[1] Comp. Suet. *Octav.* xxviii. 101; Tacit. *Ann.* i. 11.

[2] It is a totally different question whether this historical condition was still clear to the evangelist, who, writing after the manner of a historiographer (comp. iii. 1 f.), has added the explanatory notice ii. 2. It does indeed seem most improbable that he should have confounded this measure with the taxing authorized by Quirinius. For the Acts of the Apostles shows him to have been well acquainted with the former event and with the accompanying historical circumstances. The way in which he draws a parallel between it and this taxation proves that he regarded it as a real valuation, while the simple purport of his notice tells that he distinguished between them. For when he tells of a first taxing being carried out during the proconsulate of Quirinius, he cannot mean a first taxing of the Jews, as, according to ii. 1, he was thinking of an universal imperial taxation, but only of a first tax taken by Quirinius as governor of Syria, which he would distinguish from the better known second

their ancestral town (Luke ii. 3), so that a protest is entered by the narrative itself against the assumption of an actual census. The people could scarcely refrain from imputing the measure to momentous ulterior views, and from looking forward to it with mistrust. It was therefore only politically sagacious to execute it after the national method of tribal reckoning, especially when it was facilitated by the tribal registers. But this may have been done only when families were able to trace their descent from the old races, while other methods of reckoning were made use of in the case of those who could not. We have seen already that Joseph's family belonged to the first class. It has indeed been maintained that Mary's journey was by no means obligatory, and that the attempts made by apologetics to deduce such an obligation have turned out to be equally artificial and arbitrary. But our source by no means asserts that she accompanied Joseph in order to be registered along with him, but, following a correct exegetical view, explains the journey as owing to her actual condition (ii. 5). It has commonly been supposed that Joseph did not wish to leave his young wife alone in such an agitated time, with the dangers of a critical hour before her. But it is more probable that as Joseph expected with certainty the birth of a son, he intended, if the confinement should precede the enrolment, to enter the child in the public register as his legitimate son.

Thus it was that Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem. The fact that they counted upon hospitality being shown them there, indicates that they still had relations with the old city of David; for the narrative mentions expressly how,

one made on the annexation of Judea. A second historical error is bound up with this confusion, for at the time of Jesus' birth C. Sentius Saturninus, not P. Sulpicius Quirinius, was proconsul of Syria. Testimonies from antiquity have frequently been used to substantiate the probability that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria; but these attempts fall far short of being perfectly convincing, and do not refer directly to the time we are treating of. It must therefore be taken for granted that Quirinius, who, as we know, was about this time employed in the East in the performance of unusual commissions (comp. Tacit. *Ann.* iii. 48), conducted that census as imperial commissioner, and that Luke mistakenly thought of him as in the higher position which he afterwards possessed as proconsul of Syria. But apologetics will never tire of torturing the clear text with the most far-fetched exegetical artifices in order to free it from this easily comprehensible mistake.

owing to the little town being crowded by people on the same errand, there was no more room in the house of their host (ii. 7; comp. expression xxii. 11). Besides, according to existent circumstances, there can scarcely have been a caravansary in the town, for these are generally referred to by quite a different expression (x. 34). Their connections were indeed only shepherds, for it was obviously in a cattle enclosure that they found shelter at last, as the flocks still passed the nights in the field (ii. 8). An old tradition, quoted by Justin and Origen, representing Jesus as having been born in a cave near the town, is quite compatible with the evangelical narrative, for such caves were often arranged as cattle stalls.[1] So it came to pass that the first resting-place of the Saviour of the world was in a manger. This incident is certainly far from agreeing with the tendency to throw a halo round the birth of Jesus, which must, however, be assumed if we would look upon this as a fabulous picture.

Assuredly we cannot refrain from seeing a significant dispensation in the fact of Christ's entrance into this world being surrounded by everything that was mean. But if we have actually to do with a series of legends or fictions, in which there were dreams of royal thrones, and which tell of the parents being led to the old royal town in order that the royal child, surrounded by the radiance of His heavenly origin, should be born there, it is surely a strange intrusion of modern conceptions to imagine that this brilliancy is only increased through the contrast of a dark stable and a wretched manger. And yet it is thought that just here the process of the formation of the glorifying legends can be observed at work in its special sphere. Do not the celestial hosts sing their hymn of praise to the child of heaven, and the adoring shepherds kneel round the cradle in Bethlehem? How strange,

[1] There is not the slightest likelihood of this being a fabulous incident originating with the Septuagint version of Isa. xxxiii. 16, when in the original text no mention is made of a cave, nor is a reference to the Messiah conceivable. The statement in Ps. lxxviii. 70, that David was taken from the sheep-folds, is surely no reason for the son of David being born in a stable; and besides, if the legend really alludes to Isa. i. 3, yet the later legendary inventions showed how much more drastically they could incorporate such a trait by their representing the ox and the ass as adoring the child Jesus.

indeed, is the intermingling in these conceptions of the charm, which the imagination of adoring Christendom has ever woven round the cradle at Bethlehem, with what the unbiassed view of the simple text tells us! (Luke ii. 8–20). It appeals naïvely to the testimony of the mother of Jesus (ii. 19) when reporting how, during the holy night, shepherds, who had been keeping watch over their flocks in the field, appeared beside the manger in Bethlehem, and to the amazement of the bystanders related that they had seen a "vision of angels," which made known to them that this night in the city of David the Messiah of Israel was born. There is no mention of an adoration, and far from there being a glorifying of the birth from a virgin, the amazement of the parents has been found surprising. They knew, indeed, of the child's Messianic vocation, but had every reason to marvel at this sacred secret of their home being suddenly made known to strangers. The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God, for in the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger they had found the confirmation of the message of peace which had reached them in the field; now, indeed, they knew that the hour of deliverance for the nation had come.

In all this the narrative presupposes divine revelations by means of which the meanest among the pious ones of earth may know the profoundest secret of the divine decrees. But, of course, the account given by the highly-excited shepherds of their experience, which, besides, was first circulated in oral tradition, must not be taken as a dry prosaic representation. The declaration made to them is clothed in a form which is the narrator's own. Do we not hear in the angels' song the re-echoing of the thoughts that stirred the hearts within the newly-awakened prophetical circle? (comp. p. 246). It is unquestionable that this message impelled the shepherds to Bethlehem; and that they learnt there in what house a child had that night been born is quite comprehensible without the aid which apologetics would give, by a supposititious relation of the shepherds to the house where Joseph and Mary had halted. We understand, from the analogy of earlier occurrences with which we are already acquainted, how the token of corroboration found by the shepherds in the manger at

Bethlehem, beside which they doubtless learnt also of the hopes roused in the parents, is carried back into the angel's message.[1] To the inquisitive question why that revelation was given to precisely these herds, who may perhaps not have lived to see the fulfilment of those hopes, it is enough to answer that the birth of Jesus ushers in the time when the religious life of the individual is first estimated at its true value, and therefore becomes an object of God's hallowing and providential grace. But whether the experiences of that sacred night enabled these shepherds, through all the conflicts and testings of that time of fulfilment, to attach themselves to the community of believers in the Messiah, or whether they died with only a freshly-strengthened faith in the realization of all the promises, yet their appearance by the manger strengthened the faith of the parents, and was a ratification of their hopes as to the future of the child, which, according to the testimony of our source, they never forgot.

Ingenious calculations have been made to establish from the Gospel the day of Jesus' birth, but in vain. The point to be first ascertained was the time when the priestly class of Abia served in the temple (i. 5). But these attempts have all been shattered on the complete uncertainty as to the starting-point, which depends on whether the order of the priestly courses is computed from their commencement at the dedication of the first temple or from their termination on the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as on the entire uncertainty as to whether this course lasted without any interruption or exceptions. Then, too, the year and the probable season of Jesus' birth would require to be settled previously, as each course occurred twice in a year. But even if this calculation were successful, nothing would be gained. For the statement as to the time when Elisabeth conceived, and as to the sixth month when Mary was told of the conception (Luke i. 24, 26), is of such a general nature that no calculation as to the day can be founded upon it, especially as the period which must elapse before the birth (Luke i. 57, ii. 6) cannot be decided to a day. The day on which, after wavering for

[1] The myth-hypothesis labours in vain to explain the part played by the shepherds by the pastoral tales of the ancients, and is even obliged awkwardly to press into service the legends of Cyrus and Romulus.

long, the Church fixed the celebration of the birth of Christ, was certainly not justified by chronological computations. But even the hypothesis that at least the negative result can be ascertained, that the actual day of Christ's birth could not have been in the winter season, because, according to the tradition of the Talmud, the flocks remained all night in the fields from March till November, has not been unassailed. Attention has with reason been drawn to the probability of this being applicable to the driving of the herds to the hill pastures, but that in the valleys and in the neighbourhood of habitations the flocks could, if the weather were favourable, remain much longer in the open air.

Eight days after the nativity the child was circumcised in conformity with the law (Lev. xii. 3), and so was admitted into the sacred community of Israel. This was done to John (Luke i. 59), and was now undergone by the child of promise (ii. 21); and in the one case as in the other, the name was given at the same time. Whether the name Jesus is a contraction for Jehoshua (Jehovah is help) or a direct reproduction of the Hebrew Jeshua, can no longer be ascertained; in any case, it pointed to the help and deliverance that would reach the people from Him who bore it. It was certainly not an uncommon name, more particularly after the exile; but in this case we must either regard it as being the strangest accident that this freely-selected name corresponded precisely to the very lofty calling of Him who bore it, or we must assume that it was given by divine appointment to shadow forth the calling of the child. Our evangelists thought that this dispensation was accomplished by the angel who proclaimed His birth having foreordained His name (Matt. i. 21; Luke i. 31); but our own opinion is, that in this annunciation scene they only set forth the truth that the hope of the Messianic destiny of their child, which was awakened in the parents by a divine revelation, is expressed in this significant name.

Looked at from the standpoint of the view which beholds in those narratives only the highly-coloured tradition of the infancy, it might reasonably be found surprising that circumcision, which was always regarded as a putting off of the impurity in the flesh (Col. ii. 11), was performed on the

miraculously God-given child. But a Messiah who was not incorporated with the people of promise through the rite of circumcision, was a contradiction to the Jewish-Christian consciousness, and so it is apparent that men would be far from inferring the absence of a natural generation. On the contrary, it is inconceivable how legend could think of imposing upon the virgin mother the duty of purification, which proceeded upon the idea of the natural uncleanness attaching to the act of child-bearing. According to the law (Lev. xii. 2 f.), a woman was unclean seven days after the birth of a man-child, in addition to which she was commanded to keep within doors for three-and-thirty days until she could present in the temple her offering for purification, and again have a full share in the fellowship of the holy congregation. Yet Luke relates expressly how the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem at the proper time in order to perform their legal duty (ii. 22). He has even treasured the remembrance of their presenting the offering of the poor, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons (ii. 24; comp. Lev. xii. 8). The tendency to exhibit the parents' strict observance of the law cannot possibly have been powerful enough to conceal the contradiction with its own suppositions in which legend was thereby involved. How much more natural would it have been to glorify the miracle of the birth from a virgin by a miraculous prohibition of this fulfilment of duty, which seemed to be in itself a humiliation! But the legal regulation which decreed that each first-born must be presented to Jehovah as being His special property, and then be released from the obligation to perform service in the temple after that was entrusted to the Levites (Ex. xiii. 2, 12 f.), did not appear appropriate for this child, who was dedicated to the service of God in a higher sense than any priest. Nevertheless this presentation (Luke ii. 22 f.) is said to be the object of the visit to the temple, with express reference to the command in the law (comp. ii. 27). Assuredly we are not here within the province of legend, but in that of history, for there was no need of such preparations to introduce the following scene; if they had been employed once, the inventing legend, without necessarily conscious reflections, would not have failed to introduce some feature in the carry-

ing out of this legal requirement in order to justify its applicability, or some higher indication answering to all that had gone before. But in our narrative these incidents only form the simple elucidation of the situation which puts us in a position to picture to ourselves the significant event which is afterwards related (ii. 25–35).

In those pious circles at Jerusalem where the Messianic hope was still genuinely active, lived an old man, Simeon by name, who was greatly respected for his fear of God and fidelity to the law. He belonged to those on whom the newly-awakened spirit of prophecy was first bestowed (comp. p. 241), and in answer to prayer he received the assurance from this spirit that he should not die without having seen the Messiah. Moved by the spirit, he entered the temple just as Jesus' parents appeared there to present their first-born to God; in virtue of this prophetical spirit he recognised the Messiah child, and taking Him in his arms he glorified God for this fulfilment of His promise, after which he could die in peace. But the narrative gives prominence, as being specially important, to Simeon's denoting the deliverance appearing in the Messiah as one that would be known to all peoples, because in Him a light would arise for the Gentiles that would reveal Jehovah to them in the fulness of His majesty, and would glorify Israel, the people of God, as the bearer of His light and salvation. This prophecy also is only a vivid reproduction of ancient Messianic promises, according to which, when redemption was perfected, Israel was to be highly exalted before all nations, who, attracted by the salvation realized in it, would come to connect themselves with the perfected theocracy, and find in it knowledge and worship of the one true God (comp. Isa. ii. 2 f., xi. 10, lx. 1 f.). This prediction also bears in itself the guarantee of its arising in the period of the newly-awakened prophecy. For the fact that the light and salvation brought to the Gentiles by the Messiah actually led to the rejection, not to the glorifying of Israel, has been expressed by no one more clearly than by the apostle, whose pupil adopted this narrative into his Gospel (Rom. xi. 11, 15). He certainly therefore did not invent it, but in his Acts of the Apostles has pointed out purposely how it happened that this was not fulfilled.

There is really no reason for being surprised at the amazement of the parents (Luke ii. 33), who not only heard a man, whom they now saw for the first time, openly utter what they had been guarding in their hearts as a silent hope regarding the future of their child, but they saw assigned their son a destiny that included far more than the most pious of Israel had conceived. For the nation so trodden under foot of the Gentiles had long forgotten to regard its expected salvation as one destined also to be brought to the Gentiles through the instrumentality of Israel, because with and before this salvation could only come the judgment of the nations who had so shamefully abused the chosen of Jehovah. But still more of what was unexpected awaited the parents. For after blessing them, as those who were to foster the Messiah as their own child, Simeon predicted the opposition which this token of divine grace and deliverance would encounter among His own people. The most secret thoughts of the hearts would be revealed to Him, and according as the individuals of Israel attached themselves to their Messiah should they be saved or destroyed. Turning to the mother, he said the time would then come when a sword should pierce through her soul also (ii. 34 f.). It is to confound the unforeboded fulfilment of this prediction, made to the MATER DOLOROSA at the foot of the cross, with the simple word of prophecy, presented in our source, when there is seen in it an impossible prediction of the hour of crucifixion,—impossible, because it had no point of connection within the mental horizon of the speaker. It refers, in truth, only to the pain in store for the mother's heart when she saw her child rejected by many who had hitherto been esteemed the best in Israel, and whose inner nature was revealed by their opposition to the promised Bringer of salvation. The prophet's glance may well have seen farther than all those who had till now hailed the child of promise; but the more contracted the limits to this presentiment, the less will it be asserted, that along with the highest destiny of the child, which he clearly saw, there may not also have loomed before him a presentiment of the most grievous of what was allotted Him.

But it is not alone the possibility of such a prediction that can be affirmed; our narrative offers security of its historicity,

and even points out the source from which this tradition comes. It introduces a second member of that devout circle in Jerusalem, who was likewise endowed with the spirit of prophecy. This was the prophetess Anna, accurately described as a daughter of Phanuel, who could still trace her family to the long-vanished tribe of Asher. She is minutely described to us as a widow who had remained without a husband from her short seven years' marriage till now, when she was in her eighty-fourth year, in order to devote herself to prayer and devout exercises. There is nothing to relate of her except that she joined in Simeon's song, and afterwards spoke of this event among those in Jerusalem who looked for redemption (ii. 36–38). It is useless to ask what the object of this addition can be, if the narrator does not thereby point plainly to the source from which the tradition of this scene in the temple is taken. Our source has narrated it afresh as Anna related the incident in that circle, and as it was there faithfully preserved as a memorable recollection of that day when the light of a blessed hope rose on those who had waited for it so long and so anxiously.

The evangelist, or it may be his source, assumes that when the cause no longer existed which had led Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, and after they had fulfilled their legal duties, which first kept the mother in the house for forty days, and then necessitated a journey to Jerusalem, they returned to their own home (ii. 39). Not so in Matthew, where the narrative in chap. ii. without doubt presupposes the residence of the parents in Bethlehem for a year at least. It must be conceded without qualification, that the narrator who proceeded on this supposition knew nothing of these traditions, and we see in it only a new proof of Luke's lack of acquaintance with our first Gospel. But, in truth, it follows from this that the traditions from the history of the infancy were circulated singly, and were known to our evangelists only in a fragmentary way; therefore Luke's statement as to the return of the parents is a mistaken combination induced through his incomplete knowledge of the state of the case.[1] It is only

[1] Criticism certainly supposes that here is the point where, as regards time and place, our history of the infancy is involved in insoluble contradictions, which from the first are evidence to historical criticism of the entire incredibility

a question whether the supposition forming the basis of Matthew, that the parents of Jesus remained longer in Bethlehem, has any probability as against the fact that Nazareth was their proper home. But, indeed, the parents of Jesus could scarcely help seeing in the divine dispensation, which had led them to Bethlehem directly before the birth of their child, a sign that the promised son of David should grow up in the old Davidic town. While we are only able to explain this dispensation as one of the means which should remove out of the people's way every pretext for disbelief in the Messiahship of Jesus, it did really seem as if this could only be done were the old royal city actually His home. According to all that we have heard of the form of the hopes aroused in His parents, they can have thought of no other fulfilment of His destiny than His ascending the throne of His fathers, and seizing the reins of government. If so, nothing was more likely to occur to them than to bring Him up here in the vicinity of the capital, where alone could the fulfilment of His great life-work one day be completed. We have seen already that the family was without means, also that it still had connections in Bethlehem. It was much the same whether it was here or in Nazareth that Joseph gained his livelihood by means of his craft; for as he was necessitated to remain more than a month in Bethlehem, he would have found difficulty in passing the time without seeking and finding work.[1] We

of the traditions contained in it. Here, too, apologetics has greatly erred, and has simply forged the weapons for criticism, either when, contrary to the obvious meaning of the narrative in Matt. ii., it endeavours to provide for what is there recounted in these forty days, or when, contrary to the manifest purport of Luke ii. 39, it asserts that this passage does not exclude a return to Bethlehem, with the episodes related in Matt. ii. The first evangelist concluded that Bethlehem was the original abode of the parents from their having dwelt there for more than a year (comp. p. 249), and Luke assumed that they returned to their Galilean home as soon as it was possible. Both were incorrect. But no credibility would be given to historical traditions regarding a period of which there could, from the nature of the case, no longer be authentic knowledge, if one may, without further ceremony, infer the incredibility of the traditions preserved by these authors from the easily explained differences in the method pursued by individuals in arranging events which they are imperfectly acquainted with.

[1] Criticism numbers it among the more serious contradictions of our Gospels, that, according to Luke, the parents lived in a stable, while Matt. ii. 11 represents them in a house. Yet it is easily conceivable how, after the multi-

need not therefore be surprised to find them in the child's second year still dwelling in Jerusalem. But God's purpose was not like that of men. It was enough for Him, by the birth in Bethlehem to have brought forward a fresh token of this being the child of promise. God's ways of fulfilling the promise were very different from what the parents expected when they desired to train the child in Bethlehem. The plans of His enemies must aid in sending the child to His true home.

tude, brought to Bethlehem by the census, had taken their departure, and they had made up their minds to remain, they sought and found a lodging, either in the house of the friend where previously there had been no room, or elsewhere.

## CHAPTER V.

### DANGER AND DELIVERANCE.

SINCE the exile, or rather since the difficult and calamitous times experienced for centuries by the new colony in the Holy Land, there were numerous Jews scattered throughout the countries of the Gentiles, some as voluntary fugitives, some as prisoners of war, or those sold into slavery. The Jewish dispersion extended far to the eastward. There they built their synagogues, and the simple service, with its reading and explanation of the sacred rolls, and its prayers to the one God of heaven and of earth, became an unintentional but mighty propaganda in the midst of the Gentile world, long dissatisfied with its religions, and yearning for something better. But even when they did not go so far as to take the decisive step of attaching themselves to Judaism by the narrower or wider bands of proselytism, the Gentiles must have received information of what was predicted as to the future of Israel in those holy books read among them every Sabbath day. It is related by the Jewish author Josephus, and confirmed by the Gentile historians Suetonius and Tacitus, how throughout the entire East tidings were diffused of a great King who was some day to arise in Judea, and to obtain dominion over the world.[1] How many who still hesitated to connect themselves with the Judaism of the present, would look longingly towards a future which, along with the fulfilment of that promise, promised to bring a golden age of peace and prosperity to the terrestrial world sighing under war and bloodshed! Indeed, searching and questioning as to the future were by no means unusual in the East. Among the Medes and Persians the Magi were an important priestly caste, who occupied themselves with secret physics and medicine, and also with astrology. Far in the West their name was applied

[1] Comp. Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 5. 4; Suet. *Vesp.* iv.; Tacit. *Hist.* v. 13.

to all who, coming from the distant Orient, busied themselves not only with astrology and interpretation of dreams, but also with magic and all kinds of jugglers' tricks. How many of them may have sought long in the stars for what was predicted in the writings of the Jews, of that great beautiful future which should be awarded to all nations!

The evangelical narrative relates how once in Jesus' earliest infancy such Magi appeared in Joseph's house at Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 1–11). Every endeavour to glean from our text a more definite indication as to their country has been in vain; it only says that they came from the far East, and indicates that they were Gentiles. Believing they had seen the star of the great King of the Jews, they set out to pay homage to the new-born King. Our simple narrative knows nothing of a miraculous star, *i.e.* of a phenomenon effected by God and beyond the course of nature, as later legends pictured it, and as was willingly supposed by the mythical expounder; it rather assumes that the astronomical Magi had attributed to an expected phenomenon the foretelling of the birth of the Desired One. We can no longer know whether the appearance of a single star, viz. a comet, is meant, or whether it is the commencement of a conjunction of planets; for the New Testament, like popular speech, demonstrably does not distinguish sharply between the designations of a star and a constellation. In all times, astrological belief has held that the birth as well as the death of distinguished men was proclaimed by some sort of sidereal appearance. And if the event really occurred, which the Magi believed they had calculated according to their astrological rules, we see in it only a divine dispensation which permitted the Oriental philosophers to find what they longed for in the line of their searching and inquiries, and, fitting in with their perceptions, made known to them the appearance of the Saviour of the world.[1]

[1] Kepler's celebrated discovery is only of importance as showing how such an astrological combination can have arisen. According to that, an unusual conjunction of the three superior planets, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars, must have occurred in the spring of A.U.C. 748, that is, about the time of Jesus' birth. According to Kepler's theory, a star appeared between these, which shone with the brilliancy of a fixed star of the first magnitude and then after a year and a half became extinct, just as happened in the conjunction which occurred again in A.D. 1604 (comp. *de Jesu Chr. servatoris nostri vero anno natalitio,* 1606).

The fact of the Magi seeking the new-born King of the Jews first of all in the capital of the country (ii. 1 f.), only shows that here we are not within the domain of legend; we have already seen how they might have learned there that the Messiah must be born in the old city of David (comp. p. 247). When they set out for Bethlehem by night—in the East the favourite time for travel—they evidently required no miraculous star to point out the well-known highway. That the house where the child Messiah was to be found could not be shown them, through any miracle by the star, follows from the familiar laws of optics, to which even the most wondrous star is subject when observed by human eyes. But our tradition shows no trace of any such guiding star, which could only belong to the wonderful realms of fable. It relates how the star, whose appearance had announced to them the birth of the Messiah, was before their eyes all the way to Bethlehem; how it seemed to the travellers to go before and to stand still with them; and emphasis is laid naïvely on their joy at seeing in this, manifest security for their being on the right road to find what they sought (ii. 9 f.). The narrator sees no necessity for explaining expressly how they discovered the infant Messiah in Bethlehem; he is contented with the declaration that they found Him with Mary His mother (ii. 11), for in the little town they could learn without difficulty where the babe of Mary from Nazareth was, on whom such great hopes were placed. But they would not approach that royal babe

Even in the fifteenth century the Rabbi Abarbanel speaks in his Commentary on Daniel of the significance of this conjunction which had happened in the Constellation Pisces three years before the birth of Moses. He pronounced it to be the constellation of Israel, and believed that after its return in 1463 the appearance of the Messiah must be at hand. But this affords no ground for reckoning the year of Jesus' birth, for the assumption is purely supposititious that the Magi were guided by this combination, and that the appearance of that conjunction actually coincided with the birth of Jesus. And it yields no proof for the historicity of our narrative, as even legend might seize on the significance of such an appearance. On the other hand, however, no confirmation of or encouragement to astrological superstition is involved by the Magi receiving the revelation, destined for them by God, in a way answering to their spiritual horizon, for even the most marvellous of divine revelations are always effected through the spiritual life of the receiver and conditioned by its form.

without the costly gifts with which in the East one seeks the presence of the king (ii. 11).[1]

But are we justified in regarding this tradition as historical, although we can plainly ascertain nothing more regarding the source from which our first evangelist obtained it than we succeeded in ascertaining in respect of the narratives in Luke? Or is it not simply the recognition which Jesus did not meet with till much later in the history that is here carried by legend into His infancy? There is certainly no mention made here of a glorifying of His miraculous birth, or even a recognition of a supernatural Being; but the homage paid to the new-born King of the Jews would even in the heathen world be the legendary anticipation of the acknowledgment of Jesus as the promised Messiah.[2] It has been thought possible to prove in this case more especially how two Old Testament motives guided this legend-formation; first, the star out of Jacob prophesied by Balaam (Num. xxii. 17), and then the prophetical descriptions of the pilgrimage made by Gentiles to the light which was to arise in Zion (comp. particularly Isa. lx. 1–9; Ps. lxviii. 30, 32, lxxii. 10 f.). But that prophecy of Balaam's doubtless speaks of the Messiah Himself, and even in the Targums is interpreted in no other way. It was not till post-Christian times that, owing to the influence of our history, and contrary to the clear

[1] From the fact of gold and incense coming from Sheba (see Isa. lx. 6) as well as spices (see Ezek. xxvii. 22), Arabia has most frequently been regarded as the country of the Magi by those who have not held to Persia with its old priestly caste. But apart from the fact that Arabia was by no means the only place where such luxuries were found, this cannot mean that they had brought with them out of their own country what were customary gifts throughout the entire East.

[2] The narrative of the shepherds in the field must then, of course, be another form of this glorifying legend of infancy, which can the less disclaim connection with our accounts, since the star, which here effects the revelation of Jesus' Messianic destiny, is still in the metaphorical language of the Apocalypse the current symbol of an angel, such as appeared to Luke as messenger of the birth of the Messiah. But even in regard to this, criticism has never been able to agree as to which of these forms in the development of legend was the original. For ourselves, indeed, since on internal and external grounds we must regard the narrative of the shepherds as historical, there is no other possibility but to look upon our narrative as a legendary remodelling of that. And even if it were regarded as legendary, it would yet appear the more original form of the tale, because connected with the situation of the parents in Bethlehem which is historically proven.

parallelism, it was referred to a star announcing the arrival of the Messiah. In these prophetical descriptions, however, those who bring gifts to Zion are always kings, wherefore the later legends which really reflected upon these predictions did not fail to transform the Magi into kings. It has actually been supposed that just the combination of these two *motifs* required the substitution of the astronomical Magi. But it was absolutely impossible for an age dependent on the metaphorical language of the Old Testament to explain by a star the light which was breaking upon the Gentiles in the Messianic age, and all on account of a misinterpreted prophecy which contained nothing regarding it; and such ingenious reflections are in all cases opposed to the method of a legend-formation guided by unconscious *motifs*. Now, at last, all idea of an actual legend-formation must be given up, and the admission must be made that we have here to do either with history or with conscious invention. Only one of these could freely modify and combine the motives presented to it, according to the needs of its composition. But, in fact, this narrative likewise corresponds entirely with the foundation ideas of the first Gospel. For while the latter demonstrates how the salvation, destined and prepared according to promise for Israel, was, through the guilt of the nation, taken from Israel and given to the Gentiles, this prefatory narration appears like a prediction of the issue of the whole evangelical history (comp. Matt. xxviii. 19), for it is Gentiles coming from afar who render homage to the new-born King of the Jews. But whether, therefore, this narrative was openly invented, or whether it was chosen of set purpose from the collection of traditions at the disposal of the evangelist, can be decided only according as it rests on historical suppositions or solely on ideal *motifs*. We have shown that the former are not lacking, and the slender efficacy of the latter is made evident by the fact that the evangelist who at other times searches zealously for the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions, nowhere refers in this narration to one of these prophetical passages from which it is said to have arisen.

If from this there arises a presumption favourable to our having to do with a historical tradition, yet it can only be corroborated by this narrative being by no means one that floats

in the air, like the productions of the later legend-invention, but is connected with familiar historical circumstances, and closely interwoven with a totally different description of narration. This has indeed been regarded as only a variation of a favourite theme from the tales of the childhood of great men, which deals with the peril and saving of their lives. But apart from the fact that the Old Testament, at least, presents no other analogy than the perfectly different history of Moses which received a certain similarity in a remodelling by Josephus, it forms a combination so artificial by reason of its interweaving with the story of the Magi which was in no way necessary for the explanation of its *motif*, that the unconsciously forming legend could not possibly have consummated it. This could far sooner be credited to a freely inventing author. For to the consciousness of our evangelist the heathen who came from afar to adore the infant Messiah were placed in designed contrast with him who was then king of Israel, who strove to kill the babe, and from whose menaces it had to be miraculously saved (comp. p. 64). But whether this situation was brought about by the freely composing author, or whether, by ingenious selection of subject-matter, it was made available as a prediction of the destiny of Him of whom this Gospel will treat, cannot be decided by preconceived opinions, but can only be answered in so far as the narrative possesses internal probability, or the details can be sufficiently explained by the ideal *motifs* of the narrator.

The Magi related in Bethlehem how King Herod's attention had been called to them while in Jerusalem, when, as a matter of course, they had first inquired at the palace for the royal babe, and how he had himself directed them to Bethlehem, with the command to bring him tidings of the child in order that he too might come and adore (Matt. ii. 7 f.). Naturally, they soon learnt there that this could only be a dissembling pretext made by a king always fearful about his sovereignty, and then, without visiting Jerusalem again, they returned to their own country (ii. 12). But the parents of Jesus, fearing to be waylaid by a king as cruel as he was suspicious, promptly fled over the not far distant southern frontier of the land, where, among the numerous Jews of the Roman province of Egypt, they found a safe refuge until the death of the king

(ii. 13–15). When, shortly after this, some children between one and two years of age were murdered in Bethlehem, this was with sufficient probability attributed in the popular mind to the suspicion of Herod, who, left unassisted by the Magi, attempted in this way to make sure of striking the infant Messiah (ii. 16).

These are doubtless the simple facts lying at the basis of our first Gospel's delineation. When the narrator pictures how Herod was struck with fear, and all Jerusalem with him (ii. 3), on hearing of the birth of the promised king, because the capital adhered more closely to the usurper king than it waited for the anointed of Jehovah, this is no historical notice, but only the author's conception, although it corresponds to the character of the king, who, for a much more trifling cause, had trembled for throne and life. But the presupposition that the birth of a child on whom the Messianic hopes were fastened was not known in the capital till now, is not opposed to the fact that these hopes had long been talked of among pious circles (Luke ii. 38). There is certainly no detailed tradition as to the particular negotiations between Herod and the Magi, but, as a matter of course, he had himself to inquire where the babe, so dangerous for his throne, was born. After he had learnt from the scribes and dignitaries of the theocracy, who must have had the greatest interest in such things, where according to prophecy the Messiah was to be born (Matt. ii. 4), he might easily hope to gain further information through the Magi.[1]

[1] Criticism stumbles on what is nothing but a self-created caricature, when it mocks over the holy assembly summoned by Herod to fix the Messianic Dogmatic. Herod's calling the Magi privately was an action not without sagacity, as otherwise they might have been enlightened before the time as to his true intention, while now they had no reason for mistrust; but it was not wise to confide in them generally, while he really deceived them as to his intentions, and their announcements could not but seem insidious. Experience teaches, moreover, that suspicion and fear by no means act always wisely in their intended cunning. But it is quite a mistake to draw from the question regarding the time when the star appeared (ii. 7), a supposition of Herod's being left unassisted by the Magi, and so being forced to act for himself. For from the presupposition shared by the Magi, that the appearance of the star coincided with the birth of the child, he could gather the probable age of the pretender, as on this all his after measures were dependent. Whether, indeed, he asked expressly or only learnt incidentally when the star appeared, of that we have no certain historical information. Enough that the murder of children up to the age of two years shows he

On the other hand, if legend desired to represent a threatening and a deliverance of the infant Messiah, it had truly no need for the Magi, because by the presentation of Jesus in the temple the hopes which rested on this babe must have been made sufficiently well known in Jerusalem (comp. also Luke ii. 38). The flight into Egypt, however, has been regarded as historical even by those who, in general, have found in all this only a series of legends; in fact, the tale does not present the slightest point of connection for such a construction.[1] But neither does the tale need the Magi in order to furnish reasons for this flight into Egypt, for the evangelist refers it to express divine leading (Matt. ii. 13). No one can dispute that the massacre at Bethlehem was quite in keeping with the regardless bloodthirstiness of the suspicious Herod; and when it is considered that in the little country town the cruel order would cost the lives of only a limited number of children, it is not surprising that this one sanguinary deed is not mentioned by the contemporary author; for, compared with the many by which Herod vented his rage against members of his own family and many others, it would scarcely be taken into consideration. But more than all, this deed, which, if it were to accomplish its purpose, would not be officially arranged, but be carried out by hired assassins, could be referred to the suspicion of Herod only by those who knew the destiny of the babe Jesus, and the fears that had occasioned His parents' flight. From his standpoint, moreover, this measure was neither imprudent nor superficial. He could not know that the child which was being sought for had escaped, and inquiries beforehand were impossible without frustrating his object. Nothing then

had assumed from the communications of the Magi that this alleged infant Messiah could at the most be somewhat over a year old.

[1] The evangelist beholds a typical prediction of this in Hos. ii. 1, according to which God called His Son out of Egypt; but it is evident from his intentional avoidance of the expression indicating Israel collectively, contained in the LXX., which he elsewhere employs so readily, that the original bearing of this passage upon the people of Israel was by no means unknown to him. It was not then from a misinterpretation of this passage that the supposition can have taken its rise of Jesus being necessarily in Egypt during one period of His infancy. No one has yet dared to affirm in earnest that the narrative of the massacre of the innocents can have been drawn from Jer. xxxi. 15 (on account of Matt. ii. 17 f.).

remains in our narrative offering even an apparent occasion for its apprehension as legend, except the divine directions repeatedly communicated in dreams (ii. 12 f.; comp. ii. 19 f.). These present little that can be offensive from our standpoint, and yet it is evident from the statement which we made above, that they were not needed to bring about the direct return home of the Magi or the flight of Jesus' parents. It rather follows from previous discussions that this is only the form in which our evangelist has communicated the undoubted fact that it was a divine disposition of the circumstances which kept the Magi from being entangled in the king's godless schemes, and had preserved the infant Jesus from his snares.

If our narrative really rests upon historical tradition, we have at last found a point where our history is connected with secular history and chronology. In the year 40 B.C., Herod the Great, son of the Idumean upstart Antipater, was, on the motion of Antony and Octavius, appointed king of Palestine by the Roman senate. He had, indeed, first of all to seize it from Antigonus, the descendant of the Asmonean dynasty, and then to secure himself by merciless atrocities perpetrated upon the whole family, which were not abated by his alliance with the house in marriage. Those who regard the whole association of Herod with this history as the work of legend, have assuredly no reason for assuming that it was in the time of this Herod that Jesus was born. But although Luke and his sources appear to know nothing of these tales, yet, in entire independence of our first Gospel, he places Jesus' birth in the days of King Herod (Luke i. 5), so that we have every reason for believing this recollection to be historical. It is not clear from Matthew how long the parents of Jesus must have remained in Egypt, but it cannot have been for any length of time, as otherwise more recollections of this period would have been preserved. What the age of Jesus was, when His parents fled with Him to Egypt, cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty. It was only a supposition on the part of Herod and the Magi that Jesus was born at the time when the star or the constellation appeared, and the measure of infanticide was so regulated in accordance with this as to prevent the possibility in any circumstances of the

right child being missed. But even if we could suppose this story of the Magi to have been enacted somewhere about a year after the birth of Jesus, we would still be without a clue for a definite chronological calculation of the year of His birth. According to the latest investigations, the death of Herod the Great took place just before the Passover 750 A.U.C. For reasons that we shall see later, our era fixed the year 754 A.U.C. as the date of Christ's birth; but this was in any case four or five years too late. The story of the infancy in no way leads us beyond this negative result.

After the death of Herod his kingdom was divided between three of his sons, in conformity with his last will. Under the title of Ethnarch, Archelaus received the provinces of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea; Galilee and Perea were granted to the Tetrarch Herod Antipas, and the provinces lying to the east of the Lake of Gennesaret to the Tetrarch Philip. Jesus' parents wished to return to Bethlehem after the death of Herod; but learning that a son of Herod's now reigned there, who was not a whit behind his father in suspiciousness and cruelty, they looked on it as a divine intimation to give up their previous intention and to return to their old home (Matt. ii. 22 f.). Our evangelist, who, as we have seen, was unaware of this being their original home, regarded their choice of Nazareth as significant, for even the name of the place recalled the prophetical saying which speaks of the branch (*Netser*, comp. Isa. xi. 1) growing from the roots of Jesse. It must have been like a first undeceiving of the parents, that the son to whom so brilliant a future was assigned had to grow up in that remote corner of the northern province which was regarded as contemptible in the metropolis of the country (comp. John vii. 52). But He was well hidden there from the storms that were soon to break over the south. It was not without reason that, immediately after the death of Herod the Great, an embassy was sent by the Jewish nation to the administrators in Rome to protest against the appointment of Archelaus,—an event from which an allegorizing trait in the parable of the talents borrows its colouring (Luke xix. 12, 14, 27). The rough tyrannical rule of the Ethnarch was only endured with murmuring, while in his private life an unlawful marriage gave occasion for great scandal. Once more, after an interval of

nine years, a deputation of the Jewish nobility repaired to the Emperor Augustus in order to lodge complaints against Archelaus, and in consequence of this he was deposed and banished. The portion over which he had ruled was united to the Roman province of Syria, as had been desired by a large party among the Jews at the time of Herod's death. They thought they would live according to their own religion more undisturbedly under the tolerant Roman rule than under the dominion of the Herodians, who were always looked on by the people as aliens. The authority of the highest ecclesiastical court could only gain by the alteration, for Roman policy willingly acquiesced in its retaining a considerable degree of independence and of jurisdiction within wide limits, only reserving for the governor of the province the right of deciding in questions of life and death (John xviii. 31). Of course, the administration was in Roman hands, the taxes and imposts flowed into Roman treasuries, while Roman soldiers manned the fortresses. But it was seen in Rome how a country in such peculiar circumstances could not well be governed from Syria. Therefore it was that Judea received a procurator of her own, who, although certainly under the control of the proconsul of Syria, was invested with the highest jurisdiction and military power.

The new arrangement of things was nevertheless not completed without violent convulsions. The Roman occupation was inaugurated by the Syrian proconsul Publ. Sulp. Quirinius being charged with the carrying out of a general census, *i.e.* of a valuation of property in behoof of taxation (comp. p. 250 f.). A measure of this kind, unpopular in any case among the Jews (2 Sam. xxiv.), and now the symbol of the foreign dominion just commencing, agitated the people profoundly. The high priest Joazar succeeded in quieting the multitude, but the strict theocratical party found an able and enthusiastic leader in Judas of Gamalar, who, in conjunction with a Pharisee named Sadduc, incited the people to revolt against Roman dominion, for their king should be Jehovah only. Partisans of the Romans were killed, and robber-bands roamed through the country, burning and plundering. The insurrection was soon quelled by the procurator Coponius (comp. Acts v. 37), but the party continued under the name

of Zealots (*i.e.* the enthusiasts), and under one of its sons, named Judas, it played an important part in the last desperate struggles of the Jews.

It is vain to reflect on the impression these events must have made on Jesus, and the lessons He must have drawn from them for His future appearance. Jesus at that time was a boy of ten or eleven years, and His home was not affected by these storms. Certainly Judas, whose native town was in Gaulonitis, eastward from the Lake of Gennesaret, is called by Josephus and in the Acts of the Apostles the Galilean; and it is not improbable that the impetus to rebellion proceeded from the north, where there was less active interest in the hierarchy friendly to Rome, and, in consequence, where the old theocratic principles were still active. But the census which provoked the revolt was not extended to Galilee, and it remained untroubled. As we have seen, the tetrarch Antipas ruled there since the death of Herod; he was a full brother of Archelaus, for both were sons of the Samaritan Malthace; he named himself Herod on coins, and is so called in the New Testament. The childhood of Jesus was passed in peace under the reign of this pleasure-seeking and pomp-loving, cunning but characterless prince, who entirely lacked his father's strength of will and pleasure in action, and seemed to have inherited nothing but the art of winning by flattery the favour of the powers in Rome.

## CHAPTER VI.

### IN THE DAYS OF HIS YOUTH.

ONE of the most unique features of the national life of Israel was its concentration in Jerusalem around the temple,—a concentration which contributed so essentially to the strengthening of the consciousness of national unity, and to the maintenance in their purity of the legal customs relating to worship. Thrice a year each male Israelite should appear there (Ex. xxiii. 14 ff.; Deut. xvi. 16), at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; and although in practice most had to be satisfied with one yearly pilgrimage, and a Jew of the dispersion was often glad to be able to appear but once in his lifetime before the face of Jehovah, yet thousands upon thousands gathered together to these feasts from all regions of the world, so that Josephus reckons the number of pilgrims who were present at the feast of Passover at more than two millions. From all the divisions of the Holy Land, into which it was now broken up politically, the caravans went up, singing their pilgrim psalms, the "songs of degrees" (Ps. cxx.–cxxxiv.). It was the most sacred reminiscences connected with the history of their nation, around which they gathered at these feasts, the departure from Egypt the house of bondage, the giving of the law at Sinai, the wandering through the wilderness; there the recollection of the great miracles of God, which had accompanied these events, became once more vivid. Then the enthusiastic multitude surged in the wide fore-courts of the temple, the flame leaped high upon the great altar of burnt-offering, and the people waiting without engaged in prayer, while the priest brought the incense before God within the sanctuary. How rich and fruitful must have been the stimulus given to their religious life, which the pilgrims brought back with them to their homes!

It was there also that the Israelitish boy became acquainted for the first time with the beautiful services connected with the worship of Jehovah. No doubt his pious mother had already instructed him at home from his childhood in the faith of his fathers, according to the Scriptures (2 Tim. i. 5, iii. 15); and, as was enjoined by the law, his father had diligently taught him the commandments and statutes of Jehovah (Deut. vi. 7, 20 ff.) But as soon as he reached his twelfth year, he became a "son of the law," and had to take part in the exercises connected with divine worship. So it was also in the home of Jesus at Nazareth. And when His father now went up to the feast of Passover, accompanied by His mother, who was not compelled by any legal obligation to make the pilgrimage, but was led to do so by genuine piety, the twelve-year old boy Jesus was also taken along with them to Jerusalem (Luke ii. 41 f.). Regarding this, His first pilgrimage to a feast, the Gospel has preserved for us a narrative which, like a clear beam of light, scatters the darkness which envelopes His youth (ii. 43–51). The week of the feast was over, and the caravans had gathered together, in order to commence the return journey. The parents of Jesus, convinced that the boy would be found in another circle of pilgrims, consisting of their relatives or friends, had departed; but the boy had remained behind. His first participation in a feast within the national sanctuary had, unquestionably, made a deep impression upon the mind of the piously brought-up boy; He had the feeling that His true home was here, and He could not sever Himself from the holy place. He had accordingly come upon one of the vestibules which surrounded the fore-courts of the temple, and were used as lecture-rooms by the great teachers of the law. There He sat at the feet of the teachers in Israel (cf. Acts xxii. 3), who, sitting in a half circle, disputed over legal questions and listened readily to the inquiries of eager disciples; or, by putting queries to them, awakened and tested their susceptibility. The eager lad, whose questions betrayed no less intelligence than His answers, they had probably drawn near them, and had readily offered Him support, for from such a pupil they would hope to obtain honour. But as soon as they reached their first night-

quarters, His parents became aware that the lad was not in the company which had travelled along with them. Full of anxiety they returned to Jerusalem on the second day; and thus it came to pass that it was not till the third day that they found Him in the vestibules of the temple. His parents were astonished to find Him, who had probably never given any token of any inclination for the profession of the scribes, sitting here among the teachers of the law; and it was His mother that reproved Him, tenderly, it is true, on account of the painful search which He had caused them. But the word with which the boy justified Himself was almost more incomprehensible to His parents than His tarrying behind had been; and without a word He returned home with them, in order to be and to remain subject to them, as is becoming in a child.[1]

In connection with this narrative, also, all manner of improbable individual features have been sought out, for the purpose of discrediting its trustworthiness; but the circumstance has been overlooked that, while the alleged contradictions with the presuppositions of this history make the assumption of the formation of a myth impossible, these contradictions do not even exist for the historical reality. For one who takes into account that Jesus had never deserved to be distrusted, and had therefore been brought up without needing to be subjected to constant watchfulness, and who

[1] With regard to this story, the doubt of those who regard almost the whole history of the childhood as legendary has been shown to be groundless by Schleiermacher, Hase, Schenkel, and Keim; no one would like to pass it over in his narrative. And yet it is only logical, when Strauss and Weisse declare that it also is merely a legend or a myth; for it is undoubtedly derived from the same source as the rest of the early history; and although the appeal to the recollection of Mary (ii. 51) is convincing for us, yet it is nothing else than that which guaranteed to us the narrative regarding the shepherds of Bethlehem (ii. 19). But although Strauss strives hard to adduce Old Testament or non-biblical parallels, which, nevertheless, do not at all affect the kernel of the matter; and Weisse philosophizes the deepest thoughts into this history, which were certainly altogether foreign to that age,—a real motive for the forming of this myth can nowhere be made apparent, unless we drag into the text what is altogether alien to it. It is the later apocryphal Gospels that first make the boy appear upon the scene in the temple before the teachers as a teacher Himself, and cause all the wise men in Israel to be ashamed by His hidden wisdom; our simple narrative does not contain a single trace of this insipid, as well as subjectively false, glorification of the boy Jesus.

also considers the many casualties of a departure under circumstances which are little known among us, the narrative itself sufficiently explains the negligence of His parents; whereas a legend, which had committed a miraculous child to their protection, would scarcely have invented it. We understand the sorrowful quest of the parents, for it is not the nature of anxiety to reflect that the child of promise could not be harmed in the streets of Jerusalem; we understand the mother's injured feeling, which first expresses itself in the word of reproof; and the astonishment of the parents at a word, which seems for the first time to overstep the limits of the purely childish development of a boy twelve years of age. But a legend would certainly have remembered that the child which was born in a miraculous manner could not miss its destiny; that she, to whom the child had been presented, could by no means assail it with reproaches, which should have come from the father, and that the parents should not all on a sudden disown all the information which, according to the legend, they had received so liberally concerning the divine sonship of their child. Here the impeachment of criticism becomes the most striking confirmation of the trustworthiness of the history.

Or is there anything in the word with which the boy Jesus justifies Himself, which would be inconceivable for the consciousness of the twelve-year old boy? Here, in the first place, we listen only to the expression of a genuine Israelitish consciousness, to which the temple at Jerusalem is the dwelling-place of God, in the specific sense, which feels God near, in a special sense, within the limited space of this sanctuary, and which therefore sees in the irresistible drawing to this place the justification of its forsaking the circle to which the child always primarily belongs. For that by that which is His Father's the boy means His house, and that, too, exclusively, appears indubitably from the context, since the place where He was certainly to be found must be named, in order that they may feel ashamed of their search. It is true He calls God His Father; and whoever will measure this expression with the measuring line of our dogmatic, has no longer any right to believe in a Christ who, like us, has been a child, or he must allow that we have

here a fiction with a tendency, a fiction which would already put into the mouth of the boy Jesus a testimony to the later article of faith. For a twelve-year old boy, who speaks of His metaphysical consubstantiality with God, or alludes even to His supernatural conception, is no longer a living human child, but a dismal spectre, like those which are found in the insipid and absurd fancies of the apocryphal Gospels. We may not find in that expression even an allusion to His Messianic calling, even supposing we should seek to explain such an allusion as arising merely from a presentiment or foreboding of His destiny; for, apart from the circumstance that that is not what lies primarily in the word, we should thereby also step over the impassable boundary-line which is drawn around the consciousness of this stage of life. But have we a right to explain that word, which has been handed down to us, by means of our dogmatic *usus loquendi*, instead of by means of the Israelitish consciousness, which we found so unmistakeably expressed in it? This consciousness, however, is determined by the revelation of God in the Old Testament, and the latter knows the term "divine sonship" only as the expression for the relation of love into which God has entered with His elect. In this expression, the highest relation of human love is employed as an illustration of the love with which Jehovah encompasses His people on the ground of their election (Deut. xiv. 1, 2). Israel is His son (Hos. xi. 1; Jer. xxxi. 20), His first-born (Ex. iv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 9), because this is wont to be the special object of the father's love. It is only from this *usus loquendi* that we can start, when we find the word in the mouth of an Israelitish boy.

It is true, however, He does not, like the prophets (Isa. lxiii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 9; Mal. i. 6), call God the Father of the people to which He belongs; nor does he call Him "our Father," as if the relation of love in which He stands to Him were brought about by the fact that He belongs to the elect nature, and as if it were shared by all who belong to that nature; He calls Him *His* Father. He therefore describes a personal relation of love to God; and since the word is meant to justify His apparent disavowal of the relation of love in which He stands towards His earthly parents, the former appears as a relation that is quite unique, inasmuch as the consciousness of belong-

ing to tne elect sons of Jehovah would never in His case, any more than in the case of others, have formed an antithesis to this human relation of love. Here, then, a new religious world is opened up before our eyes. This boy knows Himself to be standing in a unique relation to God His Father, whose drawing He must follow, even though in doing so He should seem to be violating the obligation of love which he owes as a child to His earthly parents. This is either reprehensible pride, or it is the expression of such a unique religious life as He has led from His childhood. Since this child, when lying upon the bosom of His pious mother, learned to look up to the one God of heaven and earth, the God of His fathers, He has felt Himself to be the Son of this God, who encompassed Him with His fatherly love. This feeling has constantly drawn Him to loving intercourse with this Father in heaven; and this intercourse was more to Him than all human love, the love of His mother's heart not excluded. Certainly this presupposes one thing. No consciousness of sin, no impure affection of His heart, has ever disturbed the pure blessedness of this loving intercourse. He has not earned the love of His Father by His piety or virtuous conduct, for He has possessed it ever since He could lisp the name Father. But neither has He ever been conscious of having forfeited it. This is the ray of light which this word throws upon the past youthful days of the boy Jesus, which now all at once lie before us in the utmost clearness. But so they lay also before the eyes of His parents, and the boy ingenuously takes for granted that they should have known and understood Him in His uniqueness. "How is it that ye sought me? *Wist ye not* that I must be in that which is my Father's?" Nevertheless they had not altogether understood what it was that so uniquely distinguished this child from other children, and therefore neither were they able to comprehend in all its fulness the meaning of the word which He spake.

Again, the Gospel lets the veil fall upon the mystery of this youthful life. We hear nothing of those caricatures contained in the apocryphal Gospels, which delight in making this marvellous child in a most unchildlike manner show off His divine glory as contrasted with His parents; "and He was subject unto them," it is said in Luke (ii. 51). We hear nothing

of those insipid and absurd childish miracles, of that ostentatious display of mysterious wisdom or divine omniscience, with which the self-conceited boy of the legends impudently enough shuts the mouth of his parents and teachers. It is a steady, unimpeded growth and advance in body and spirit, in wisdom and stature, that the evangelist asserts of Him, and there is only one thing of which he knows to glory in: He advanced in favour with God and man (ii. 52). How could it have been otherwise? The word of the twelve-year-old boy in the temple solves for us the enigma of such a blessed growth; for such love to God, as gives expression to itself there, must have been followed by the fulfilling of the divine will on His part as well as by every promised blessing on the part of God. And it was no unblessed house in which He grew up. Only the later worship of Mary, which transferred its ascetic ideals to her who was blessed among women, had any interest in making that house childless, or at least, as is already done by Origen and Eusebius on the ground of later apocryphal Gospels, in filling it with children of Joseph by a previous marriage.[1] The later opinion, according to which the so-called brethren of Jesus were really His cousins,—an opinion which was propounded early, and which has become current in the West mainly owing to the influence of Jerome and Augustine,—is also based upon the same prejudice, and does not find the slightest support in the Gospels. According to Mark, Jesus had four brothers, who were called James, Joses, Simon, and Judas;[2] sisters are also mentioned there, who were probably married later in Nazareth, but their names

[1] We know already how foreign these views are to our Gospels. When it is said in Matt. i. 25 that Joseph did not know his wife till she had brought forth a son, the language as well as the context of the passage teaches that the divinely-appointed connubial intercourse was only deferred to that point of time out of regard to higher considerations; and when Luke calls Jesus the first-born son (ii. 7), he can have done so at the time when he wrote his Gospel only because he knew of other sons who were born later to Mary. Only such can be meant, when the brethren of Jesus are repeatedly mentioned along with Mary in the Gospels (Mark iii. 31; John ii. 12), and also in the Acts of the Apostles (i. 14).

[2] It is true that in the oldest text of Matt. xiii. 55 the second of these is called Joseph; but it is more probable that the redactor missed the name of the father among those of his sons and substituted it for the similarly sounding Joses, than that there should have already been found in Mark a confusion with the sons of another Mary (cf. Mark xv. 40), which the first evangelist, with better information, corrected.

are not mentioned (Mark vi. 3). James, the eldest of His brothers, afterwards took a leading position at the head of the church in Jerusalem till his martyrdom, and was for a long time highly honoured even by his unbelieving fellow-countrymen on account of his legal piety; his Epistle and that of his brother Jude, which are contained in our canon, show us men whose spiritual life had been nourished on the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and whose speech is not inferior in illustration and in imaginative flight to the prophecy and proverbs of the Old Testament. These are evidences that in the circle in which Jesus grew up, there was no lack of earnest piety and spiritual riches.

According to Mark, Jesus, while He was growing up in His father's house at Nazareth, wrought at the trade of a carpenter (vi. 3); and it is only the incapability of a later age to represent to itself the true human beginnings of Jesus that has caused many to take offence at this.[1] Among the Jews a handicraft was not accounted at all degrading. Even Saul of Tarsus was a tentmaker, although from his youth he had been educated at the high school of Jerusalem to be a scribe. It is certain, however, that the latter was not the case with Jesus. In Nazareth, where they were acquainted with His youth, they could not comprehend whence He had His wisdom (Mark vi. 2); and in Jerusalem they were aware that He had not studied there (John vii. 15). If He is addressed as Rabbi both within and without the circle of His disciples (Mark ix. 5, xi. 21; John iii. 2, vi. 25), this is sufficiently explained by the circumstance that He appeared upon the scene as a teacher of the people, and gathered pupils together; but even the people received from His teaching the impression that He did not belong to the guild of scribes (Mark i. 22). This does not exclude the likelihood that Jesus, who had already when but a boy of twelve years of age felt Himself stirred up by the teachers of the law in Jerusalem (Luke

[1] Origen regarded this merely as a slander of the inhabitants of Nazareth (*c. Cels.* vi. 38), and appealed to the fact that the Gospels relate nothing regarding this; and Justin Martyr (*Dial. c. Tryph.* 88) made Jesus teach already in sacred symbolical language by means of the ploughs and yokes which he made. Celsus, the Gentile, reproached the Christians with this past condition of their Master; and even Neander doubted whether it was not thereby simply meant to represent the fact that Jesus was in the form of a servant.

ii. 46), eagerly availed Himself of all the means of education which His native town afforded Him. But we have no certain information as to what these means were. The reading and interpretation of Scripture in the synagogues afforded to one who habitually frequented these places of worship a valuable introduction to the word of God; but it can hardly be doubted that He, who afterwards disputed so frequently with the scribes, and had always at hand a fit word taken from Scripture, knew it not merely from hearing, but had Himself read and searched it. Whether the *chassan* or clerk of the synagogue at Nazareth in his time taught reading and writing, or whether Jesus of His own accord connected Himself with one or more of the teachers who visited His native town, and thus acquired the art of reading and understanding the Scriptures for Himself, we do not know. Lastly, we can no longer decide whether He read them in the old original Hebrew, or in one of the Targums which had translated them into the dialect of the people; it is self-evident that He could quote them only in the Aramaic language which was then spoken in the land, and which we know He employed both from the nature of the case and the testimony of the Gospels. Like the lower classes in Galilee, who, owing to the mixed population, could not be dainty in intercourse, He, no doubt, also understood conversational Greek; for when He talks with those who speak Greek,—with the Roman centurion, with the Syro-Phœnician woman, or with the procurator,—no mention is made of an interpreter.[1]

Certainly for the best, which Jesus sought and found in Scripture, He required no human teacher; and the expounders of Scripture of His time, with their unfruitful literalism and their fantastic allegorizing, were far from being able to teach him to find it. From them He could learn to understand the letter, so often dark and difficult; they could introduce Him to the various kinds of knowledge required for the comprehension of this wonderful book, on which centuries

[1] It by no means follows from this, however, that Jesus read Greek, or made use of the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The latest biographer of Jesus will hardly be able to convince us that the modest house of His parents possessed the costly treasure of sacred rolls of Scripture in which He studied; but undoubtedly those who had charge of the synagogue were liberal enough to grant the ardent youthful student access to its treasures.

had laboured, and which tells the story of thousands of years, in which the life of nature and of nations is often so richly reflected, and which is at home in heaven as well as on earth. It is true they could do this only in so far as they understood these matters themselves, or rather in so far as a tradition, which had long since become a dead letter, with an often wonderful misconception of words as well as of things, thought it understood them. What the youth, who was ripening into manhood, sought and found there was information regarding the divine revelations which had, from the beginning, been made to the chosen people in the miraculous deeds performed by God in the course of its history, the breathing of the Divine Spirit, which He felt in the powerful word of its prophets; the beating of genuine religious life, which He overheard in the prayer and song of the holy psalmists, as well as in the enlightened wisdom of the collectors of its proverbs. Here the unique religious life, which He had led from His childhood, gave Him a key of sympathetic intelligence, which was so completely awanting to the men of His time; and, conversely, the word of Scripture explained to Him that which up to this time had still unconsciously stirred within Him, and brought to full maturity His comprehension of that which fellowship with His Father in heaven disclosed to Him regarding the most mysterious depths of the divine Being and the divine decrees.

What further means of education were required by one for whom such springs were flowing, to whom the religious life was at once the highest end and the deepest satisfaction? From this standpoint His eye was open to the glory of nature all around Him, to its mysterious and yet so significant movements; but as His parables will show us, He beheld therein only a new revelation of God. From this standpoint He regarded the life of men around Him with the look of love, whose eyes are not bound by the self-sufficiency of self-complacency, and with the clear critical look which no prejudice blinds and no partiality deceives. Here it may not be out of place to remind ourselves of the circumstance that the population of the northern province, among which He grew up, was simpler and healthier, more versatile and animated, than that of the south, upon which the pressure of the hierarchy weighed more directly; that it was diligent and valiant,

patriotic and full of attachment to the theocracy; and that the more stirring life of the East likes publicity rather than the quietness of the house. Not, however, as if He could have received from thence aught which He did not possess in Himself; only He here became early acquainted with human life in its manifold circumstances, which He afterwards depicted so vividly in His parables; with the national life in its sores and needs, which He was yet to heal and satisfy; and, above all, with the misery of the time, which was crying for the long yearned-for help. For even he who is richest, who lives altogether from within and draws from inexhaustible sources, may have the form, in which his spiritual life expresses itself, partly determined also by the life around him; and in a certain sense it must be so, if he is to remain in sympathy with it, and if he is to have any influence upon it. In this sense Jesus also has undoubtedly lived with His people, the more so as that which gave its individuality to the life of this people was religion, which formed the central point in its life. But the religious life of that age was no longer uniform; it had already expressed itself in various forms and tendencies; and, accordingly, we cannot *à priori* refuse to consider the question whether He had not received from one of these tendencies impulses for His development. It is, of course, clear that He neither could nor required to receive from them the best which He possessed, but nevertheless such influences might have helped to determine the form and manner in which that best was represented.

There is no doubt that in Galilee the most popular tendency was that of the Pharisees, in which the nature of post-exilian Judaism had found its model expression. In proportion as in the sorrowful times of the second temple the nation was denied the development of its independent political life, with so much the greater zeal it embraced the idea of completing the religious individuality of its national life, and of sharply separating it from the mode of life followed by the Gentile nations around. Once for all it had been thoroughly cured of all inclination towards idolatry and heathenism by means of the exile, which its prophets had proclaimed as a punishment for such sins. Now it was necessary to expound the law in which the will of God had been revealed to it, and

which, in addition to its moral and ceremonial precepts, had in many respects already laid down the outlines of a domestic and social rule of life; it was necessary to apply this law to all the circumstances of the national life until there was thoroughly impressed upon it the stamp of a condition of consecration to God, which separated the nation from everything Gentile or heathen. Since Ezra's days the guild of the scribes had worked at this task, and had furnished the law with a vast number of explanations and additions, among which its kernel often almost disappeared. To realize this ideal of a life which was regulated at every step in private as well as in public by the law, first of all in their own life, then in the life of the people, was the task of the Pharisaic party. For this tendency had assumed the form, not of a school or sect, but of a party, ever since in the time of the Maccabees it attached itself to the national movement, whereby the Greek heathenism of their Syrian conquerors, which expressly threatened the religious side of the nationality of the Jews both inwardly and outwardly, was overthrown; although, it is true, it immediately afterwards lifted itself up against the new national royal house, because it, with its politics, was very far from being in keeping with the Pharisaic theocratic ideals. Already under John Hyrcanus the opposition had reached the open outbreak, which under Alexander Jannæus led to a frightful war of extermination against the powerful party, until even the Asmonæans recognised that they must reconcile themselves with this popular movement. When the Romans intermeddled with the controversies regarding the throne which raged within this royal house, the Pharisees had in vain attempted to obtain the complete abolition of the kingdom, as being alone in keeping with their theocratic ideal; they had then turned towards the Idumæan upstarts, and had experienced in rich measure, though not without periods of hardship, the favour of Herod the Great, who tried to make use of their popularity among the people for the purpose of strengthening his throne. It was involved in their principles that they could accommodate themselves even to this form of foreign rule, so long as it did not dispute their influence upon the religious life of the nation. Indeed, they saw in it a divine providence; and, besides, they looked for

the ultimate realization of their ideals, not from any political measures whatever, but from a miraculous interposition of God, which should bring about the completion of the theocracy in the Messianic future, the blessings of which the nation was to deserve by a more and more complete subjection to their leadership. In this sense the Pharisees dominated the spiritual life of the nation, especially in the northern province, where it looked up with reverent admiration to these representatives and embodiments of its religious ideals.

We shall see how the public ministry of Jesus developed itself in a constant struggle with the Pharisaic party, without His ever having been reproached with being an apostate from it. Hereby every more intimate contact with it is already excluded. Like everything that stirred the life of the nation, He certainly early and carefully directed His attention also to this party and its powerful influence upon the people; and His polemic will show us how clearly He discerned its fundamental errors and the defects that were involved in its very nature. But what He seems to have in common with it, and from which some have recently hastily concluded that He had sympathetic points of contact with it, and had experienced influences from it, is nevertheless simply owing to the Old Testament basis, from which He, like it, started, and to the development of the religious consciousness, which was thoroughly characteristic of post-exilian Judaism, and which He also favoured, so far as it was a genuine fruit of the revelation of God contained in the Old Testament. On the other hand, some have reflected, on account of His opposition to Pharisaism, upon the influences of Sadduceism, with which it is fancied He connected Himself by means of that opposition; but this view is altogether destitute of historical support. For in Galilee this latter tendency has hardly had a party worth mentioning attached to it; and although Jesus became acquainted with it on the occasions of His annual visits to the temple, yet it presented no points of contact whatever with His striving—a striving that aimed at the inner religious life.

The Sadducees were a political party in the proper sense of the term; they were the party of the old priestly families (comp. Acts v. 17), which formed the real nobility of the

Jewish nation, and from which the high priests were taken, in order, in conformity with the old legal constitution, which did not know of a kingdom, to stand at the head of the theocracy, and have the most essential influence over it. When Jonathan, one of the Maccabees, who was still supported by the Pharisees, attained the dignity of the high-priesthood, the old priestly families saw themselves eclipsed by this upstart; and it is from this period that their opposition to the Pharisaic party dates. In proportion as the latter gradually came into collision with the Asmonæan reigning family, the party of the Sadducees accommodated itself to the unalterable shape which matters had now assumed, in order to secure power and influence to the old noble families by a close connection with the kingdom. Accordingly, they still contended for the last scions of the old royal house, for a long time after the Pharisees had already come to terms with the Idumæans, and thereby drew upon themselves the hostility of Herod in the same measure in which the latter enjoyed his favour. But they also gradually learned to accommodate themselves to the new state of affairs; and when at last the annexation to Rome came, which no one had desired more eagerly than they, by means of their pliancy towards the foreigners, they obtained the measure of power and influence which they could ever expect to enjoy under a foreign dominion. Therewith, it is true, the strength of their political antagonism to Pharisaism was broken; they had now to make up their differences with that party, seeing that it enjoyed the favour of the people, on account of which alone the Roman Government allowed the priesthood to retain its position and importance in the land. The Pharisees now sat along with them in the supreme ecclesiastical council; in spiritual matters they had now to allow that party the supremacy, so that they themselves might retain whatever authority over the nation was still left them. The opposition between the two parties now became more theoretical, and thus it could happen that Josephus, who is fond of coquetting before his Greek readers with all kinds of analogies that he could find between them and his own nation, represents them as two opposed philosophical schools; and even to the present day this has in many ways caused a total misconception of the real character of both tendencies.

And yet their divergent tenets, which have been so frequently discussed, follow in a simple manner from the historical development of the two parties. The old priestly nobility based its rights upon the written law; for them oral tradition, this new law, upon which the Pharisees laid the chief weight, had no interest; or rather, they felt themselves bound to reject it, inasmuch as it was it that gave to the opposite party its power and influence. In proportion as this new law contributed to guard against Israel's having any intercourse with the Gentiles, the policy of the Sadducees led them to cultivate such intercourse; and they could maintain that they had a right to do so, seeing that the old law as yet knew nothing of the Pharisaic exclusiveness against the surrounding nations. The Pharisees taught a resurrection, for the ultimate end they had in view was the glory of the Messianic kingdom, in which the risen pious of bygone generations must also share. This doctrine the Sadducees denied. They were satisfied with the present, provided they maintained therein their power and dominion; and here again they could appeal to the law, which knew no more of a resurrection than of angels and spirits. Accordingly, they denied the existence of these also in opposition to the Pharisees, while in both points the latter only accepted the legitimate development of the religious consciousness of Judaism. Lastly, even that antithesis which seems most of all to be philosophical, was in its deepest ground a very practical one. According to Josephus, the Pharisees taught a divine providence, to which everything, even evil, had to be traced back; while the Sadducees rather espoused the doctrine of the freedom of the will, whereby each one was the author of his own destiny. But even this difference simply amounted to this, that the Pharisees accepted political changes as a divine providence, and prepared the nation for a future, which only the strong hand of God could ultimately bring about, with none save spiritual means (in their sense); while the Sadducees carried on practical politics, and sought to control the destiny of the nation, in their own interest, of course.

If, accordingly, we cannot think of any influence exerted upon Jesus by either of the two parties, which alone substantially swayed the life of the nation, if neither the popular

party of the Pharisees, nor the conservative party of the Sadducees, if neither the party of religious idealism, nor that of hierarchical realism, had ever numbered Him in their ranks, still less can we speak of an influence of the Essenes, who lived after the manner of a separate religious community, principally in the region of the Dead Sea. For whether we regard this peculiar manifestation of mystico-ascetic piety as a product of genuine Jewish spiritual life, or trace it back to heathen influences,—a question which is not even yet settled, —it involves a withdrawal from the real life of the nation into a separatistic sectarianism, which is as foreign to the public appearing of Jesus among the people as their painful provision for purity in the Levitical sense, and their anxious asceticism, are out of keeping with the emphasis that He laid exclusively upon purity of heart, and with His liberal views of life.[1] We must, accordingly, come to the conclusion that Jesus has received no impulses from any of the peculiar religious tendencies that were current among the people, that He grew up spiritually as a child of His nation under the influences of His pious parents' home, and of the free, active, natural life around Him; yet in such a manner that the life-giving spring of Scripture, from which the latter drew its best animating principles, flowed directly for Him; and the original purity of a soul, which breathed in the atmosphere of a divine love which had never been clouded, preserved Him from every false way.

His bodily growth was also in keeping with that of His spirit.

[1] Nevertheless, English Deism attempted to derive the manifestation of Jesus altogether from Essenism, while the older rationalism showed a great predilection for adducing all manner of mysterious links between Him and the Essenes, for the purpose of giving a rational explanation of certain miraculous occurrences, and traced back His miracles of healing to healing arts practised among them. But when subjected to a more particular examination, the alleged links connecting His life and teaching with the practices of the Essenes disappear. The law of the Essenes forbidding oaths, which was merely meant to give emphasis to the sacredness of their terribly solemn oath of initiation, has nothing to do with the fundamental declaration of Jesus regarding that subject; His living with the disciples out of a common purse did not rest upon any organized community of goods, and nowhere shows the tendency of becoming a pattern for a Christian institution; the endeavouring after the kingdom of God, which was demanded by Him, has nothing in common with their flight from the world; He has never given a commandment forbidding sacrifices and marriage, and, indeed, celibacy was by no means universal among them.

The promise, which piety has also for this life, was undoubtedly fulfilled in His physical development, which was not hampered and impaired by attacks of sickness. On the ground of prophecies, which were falsely interpreted in a literal sense, the old Church at first conceived of Him as uglier than other people, because He should have had no form nor comeliness (Isa. lii. 14, liii. 2); later they praised Him as the fairest among the children of men (cf. Ps. xlv. 3). We cannot conceive that the nobility of His soul did not somehow or other impress itself also upon His bodily appearance; but this is not to say that He corresponded to any of our ideals of beauty.[1] Questions have been raised as to the temperament of Jesus; but in doing so it has been overlooked that a marked one-sidedness in the natural disposition, which can be surmounted only by means of severe conflicts, and leaves its traces even in the case of the most normal moral development, cannot be attributed to Him, who should realize the ideal of human perfection, and that the always individually different mixture of blood, without which a real man cannot be conceived, no longer comes out in the ethical form of the life of Him, who does not live according to His nature, but only in accordance with the will of God, which always demands first of all the conquest of self. Some have inquired as to the talents of Jesus; and yet we can inquire regarding these only where the point in question is as to the choice of a calling. But where, as in the case of Jesus, a man's calling has been originally given him, it is self-evident that no gift can be awanting which he requires for the fulfilling of his calling; and the specific equipment for His vocation could not have been given to Jesus in any natural disposition; He must have received it from above. In our time, some prefer to speak of the development of the character of Jesus, and describe His life as the "picture of His character." But it is a mistake to suppose that a marked moral idiosyncrasy belongs to the reality of human nature; it is characteristic

[1] That which was related later regarding portraits of Jesus, which He sent to Abgar of Edessa, or imprinted upon the handkerchief of Saint Veronica, which Luke painted and Nicodemus engraved, or regarding the votive statue, which the woman whom He had healed erected at Paneas, naturally belongs to legend, just as the later delineations of Jesus belong to the history of Christian art.

only of the imperfection, which always attaches to the reality of the ethical form of our life, inasmuch as it always shows, in good as well as in evil, a one-sidedness, which is not surmounted by means of a complete harmonious development. However beautiful the words are, with which it has been attempted to portray the character of Jesus, they always ultimately amount to this, that in Him that normal harmonious unfolding of the moral nature, which should be in every man, but which is perfect in none, has actually taken place; and this very fact excludes one-sided traits of character. Some have called Him the type of a masculine religious character; but to be masculine is only the normal nature of man; and to have the centre of gravity of His life and being in religiousness is the common task of man, but no feature of his character. That His whole spiritual life found its outlet in His religious calling, lay, not in His character, but in His exclusive devotion to His calling, which lay within the province of the religious life. It was not owing to a one-sidedness of His natural genius or of His character that He did not become also a scholar or an artist, a statesman or a general. For His divinely-appointed calling demanded the activity of His whole person; and in His always fulfilling this demand He realized the ideal of human perfection, which shapes itself diversely for each individual, in accordance with His natural endowments and His calling.

When he reached his eighteenth year, the Hebrew youth was wont to enter the state of matrimony. Even in the early days of the Church there was much speculation as to the reason why Jesus remained unmarried. Our feeling revolts against this question. But this very feeling of revulsion shows that it cannot be passed over; for such a feeling is either owing to dogmatic views, which endanger the real humanity of Jesus, or to a way of regarding the relations of the sexes which questions the sacredness of marriage, which Jesus Himself has so energetically accented, and esteems celibacy as a higher kind of perfection. Much that is trifling, far-fetched, and perverted has been imported into the answer given to that question; and often enough the answer has in the long run violated the deepest interest which gave occasion to it. It is not even sufficient to answer that in

His time Jesus did not meet, or, as we prefer to say, ever could meet, any heart that was worthy of His; for love cannot be at all merited, and the similarity of the inner, and at the same time moral life, which the closest bond which unites hearts presupposes, is always only a similarity that is growing. Here also the reason is rather to be found in the uniqueness of His calling, which demanded the whole man, and left no room for the fulfilment of that universal human calling which, with few exceptions, unites itself with all human ways of living. What, however, He should be, that He also willed to be; and the fulfilment of His calling furnished Him with an inner satisfaction (John iv. 34), which of itself constituted the full happiness of His life. He was one of those who, as He expressed it in a bold figure, have made themselves eunuchs, *i.e.* have made themselves unfit for marriage, for the kingdom of God's sake (Matt. xix. 12). Just because His heart, His love, and His life belonged to all, whom He had come to serve in conformity with His calling, no single individual should be able to boast of having possessed all these in a singular manner.

Thus the consideration of the development of the youth of Jesus leads us over once more to the question as to His calling.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MESSIANIC CALLING.

WHEN a youth attains to manhood, he has to decide on the choice of a vocation. But it is the privilege of all who are intended for great things not to require to seek and choose long. The calling forces itself upon them inexorably, operating secretly with an impulse of external and internal necessity by which they know it is given them by God. Why should not He, who was destined for the highest conceivable calling, have early recognised and apprehended the same?

This certainly assumes that this calling was conferred in accordance with a divine decree, and was not a humanly devised one. There was much said at one time about the "plan devised by the founder of the Christian religion for the good of humanity,"[1] and this was regarded as a scheme for the improvement of religion, of morals, and of society, which could only be carried through by convincing instruction and institutions suitable for the purpose, or this design may have determined Him to implant genuine humanity in mankind. But although well-intentioned at a time when in the person of the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist the modern enlightenment had grossly attacked the moral character of Christ and His apostles (comp. p. 193), yet that period was utterly wanting in historical sense when it simply transferred to Jesus its ideal of humanity, and only regarded Him as contriving means for the realization of this ideal. Even the older rationalism never got farther than regarding the establishment of purer ethics as Jesus' ultimate aim. At the

[1] *Plane, welchen der Stifter der christlichen Religion zum Besten der Menchheit entwarf*, is the title of a pamphlet by Reinhard, 1781, which was once much read. Comp. Herder, *Vom Erlöser der Menschen*, 1796; *Vom Gottes Sohne der Welt Heiland*, 1797.

most, He combined along with it an endeavour to purify the ancient worship from ceremonial elements, and to elevate it to the grade of a higher, more purely spiritual worship of God. In recent times this has been apprehended in an incomparably more profound way, and Jesus is regarded as the first on whom the consciousness of divine Sonship broke, by the implanting and development of which in those around Him, He became the founder of a new religion and a new ethical view of the world. There is no one who would now dispute that, considered historically, the point of view of a founder of religion, such as is entertained by us who belong to the modern time, can never be applied to Jesus. For the Israelitish conception, founded on the Old Testament, knows no plurality of religions only relatively different. Heathenism is to it no religion, but an apostasy from the worship of the one true God (comp. Rom. i. 18–23), who by His revelations has made the people of Israel the possessors of the one true religion. Jesus always recognised completely and fully the divine revelation in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; it was only by constant association with it that His own religious consciousness was developed; in the law of the Old Testament He saw a revelation of the divine will, although He learnt to understand it better than His age understood it. But His aim was far beyond a reform of worship or a purification of ethical ideas, and the idea of founding a new religion could never occur to a son of Israel.

It is no longer denied that, historically considered, the calling which Jesus embraced, and with which was bound up His significance for the world, was and could be no other than to be the Messiah of His people. It is, however, denied that He, from the beginning, clearly recognised this vocation. The fact that Jesus' consciousness of His Messiahship was gradually matured, is manifestly connected with His genuinely human development; but it does not follow that this development first took place during His public life. In common life it is considered a sign of immaturity for one to commence a public activity without being clear about his object and the means for its attainment. We must therefore suppose that Jesus did not appear without distinct knowledge of His calling, and that this knowledge did not acquire a more definite

shape as well as undergo purification in the two or three years of His public ministry. But we shall see how the situation provided for Jesus by John the Baptist gave no scope for a public ministry, if He Himself were unconscious of His Messianic calling. If it was during His public ministry that He first became aware of His Messiahship, surely a moment like that would have formed such an epoch in His life and activity that traces of it would certainly be preserved in our tradition; and yet there is not one. Indeed, throughout the course of His public ministry, even those circumstances were lacking which might have suggested to Him the idea of His Messiahship. For however high His results may be estimated, and even if these include not alone the spiritual impressions which He produced, but also His miraculous cures, still it does not excel the activity of a prophet who was mighty in word and in deed. He could place everything in its proper relation to His mission only if convinced of the Messianic character of His calling, but He could never infer the latter from the former. So there is nothing left but to assume that the popular expectation which He encountered first gave Him a clear understanding of His calling, and that it was only during the course of His ministry He assumed the character of the Messiah.[1] But quite apart from the difficult ethical and pedagogic considerations which stand in the way of this hypothesis, it is a fact, that Jesus neither desired nor was able to fulfil the expectation of the Messiah in the form in which He encountered it. Indeed, His struggles against the popular form of this expectation brought about the tragic

[1] After picturing a period in the activity of Jesus, prior to the appearance of the Baptist, of which our sources know nothing, and during which Jesus is said to have entertained Himself and His followers with innocent aphorisms of an ethico-religious import, Renan supposes that it was the Baptist who first drew Him into the Messianic movement. He regards it as a dulling of Jesus' originally purer consciousness, when, under the impulsion of public opinion, He lost Himself more and more in Messianic aspirations. According to Schenkel, Jesus' applying the Messianic conception to Himself was His only way of permeating at least a portion of Israel with His lately formed ideas. This is supposed to have first occurred at Cæsarea Philippi, although in our sources the passage manifestly refers to the attitude of the people and the disciples to the Messianic question. But if before this Jesus only appeared as the "regenerator of Israel," or as the "founder of a sacred community," that meant to an Israelitish consciousness nothing else than the Messiah.

course of His public ministry, and led inevitably to the final catastrophe. It is, however, an insoluble contradiction how He should first have accommodated Himself to a popular expectation, and then wasted His power and caused His ruin by His conflicts with it.

On this account it has lately been more generally acknowledged, that Jesus could not have appeared publicly without possessing the consciousness of being the Messiah. But the greater number of the recent conceptions are more or less based on the supposition that this Messianic consciousness was, in a child of His age and race, merely the necessary form by which alone Jesus could be made aware of His higher calling, but that He must have remodelled it fundamentally before He could introduce what was new. For in its historical form the Messianic idea presupposed especially that, in contradistinction to the surrounding nations, Israel had not to seek for knowledge of the one true God and of His holy will, because already possessing these. In this knowledge Israel possessed an inalienable superiority over these nations, and was some day to become by reason of it the dispenser of salvation for all people. It is certainly assumed also that Israel was not as it ought to be, that its life did not answer to its knowledge, or its reality to its high destiny. But what Israel lacked, was not an improvement or increase of the possession which made this nation a religious people before all other nations, but the ultimate, complete realization of what it should and would be so soon as it truly incorporated the divine revelation confided to it, and translated it into life and action; so soon as the true religion, whose first conditions it possessed, had thoroughly penetrated the entire national life, and had become in the fullest sense the religion of each individual. These presuppositions were rooted in the history and the revelations of Israel, and would be shared in to the fullest extent by a genuine son of Israel who had nourished his spiritual life on the Holy Scriptures. But they were utterly gainsaid by Jesus' desiring in any sense to increase or correct the knowledge of His people on religious or ethical matters, and His whole activity was vitiated by intrinsic falsity, when on this behalf He attached to Himself the current Messianic conception in the presuppositions of which He could not

share. The Messianic idea, then, was not the form in which a somewhat recently disclosed ethical or religious consciousness would present itself to Him; He must rather break with this form and combat all its presuppositions, if He desired to establish the value of that consciousness.

Jesus did not do this. When He appeared with the knowledge of being the Messiah of His people, He believed that He brought the fulfilment of the promises made to them. When He buried Himself in the sacred books of His nation, it was these promises He encountered at every step. It is a question here not of some detached and more or less obscure predictions, but of the fundamental ideas permeating all Old Testament prophecy. All the prophets hoped for a future for their nation in which it would fulfil its appointed destiny, and the religio-ethical ideal would be realized which dwelt in it by means of divine revelation, and in conjunction with this the existence of true religion. But this future would certainly not be attained by means of a natural development of the national life. The prophets had seen too deeply for that into the heinous evils of the national spirit and life; there was too active a consciousness in Israel, that as all true religion can only originate in a divine revelation, therefore every fresh advance in the religious life, not to speak of its ultimate perfecting, could only be brought about through fresh acts of divine revelation. The day of Jehovah would come when God Himself would meet His people, perfecting what He had begun in them, healing their wounds, and putting an end to all their miseries. This was the kernel of the so-called Messianic idea. The form in which it was expressed, the aspect which the prophets expected the commencement of that future to present, showed great variation; for it was conditioned by the historical circumstances within the framework of which the prophets saw this shortly-expected advent. Although preponderatingly so, it was not always by the sending of an appointed person that Jehovah was to bring about this advent in which He was Himself to meet His people; and the idea of this person, also, must have fashioned itself differently in accordance with the historical conditions. It was most generally the picture of an anointed king of Davidic lineage, who, as his great ancestor once did, should

bring for the nation the age of greatest prosperity; the designation of Messiah, *i.e.* the Anointed, given to this Bringer of blessings, was plainly connected with this expectation. But after the overthrow of the royal Davidic house by the exile, we see arising the conception of a simple servant of Jehovah, in appearance only a prophet. Moreover, the picture of the external circumstances to which that advent was to give rise must have been fashioned necessarily in a different manner, according to the circumstances of each individual prophet.[1] But the one fundamental idea is held fast all through, that that consummation of the nation would, according to its intrinsic character, bring the richest blessings upon it in all the relations of earthly life. It is the indispensable conception of any true religion which runs through the Old Testament, that righteousness advances a nation, that the accomplishment of the divine will is the condition of all earthly weal, and that the perfect realization of the full salvation which God has decreed for mankind must come along with the entire realization of religion. Besides all this, the great purpose of Israel in the history of the world must be realized at this consummation; and thus prophecy is permeated by a hope that in the Messianic age all nations would come and join themselves to Israel, and receive from her the true religion, along with that highest salvation of which she was the channel.

An age of hypercriticism has indeed affirmed by its boldest spokesman, that at the time of Christ the Messianic hope no longer existed.[2] But it is a simple historical impossibility

[1] Some would hide from themselves the fact that predictions which are literally to be fulfilled are not treated of here, and that it is only the form in which the prophets were obliged to represent to themselves the future of Israel that was assured by divine revelation, if they would prophesy of it vividly. Those who do so must resolve to spiritualize, or give a fantastic explanation of all these prophecies by a clumsy distortion of their literal meaning, and to resign their hopes, which have no foundation in Scripture, of the ultimate restoration of Israel as a nation. The idea, dominant on the opposite side, of its being a question here of the carnal hopes and dreams of a high-flying patriotism, or even of a limited particularism, is, according to what has been mentioned before, equally unauthorized.

[2] This assertion of Bruno Bauer's was only the natural reaction against the equally unhistorical assumption of the existence at that time of a complete Messianic dogmatic, a distinct conception of what must and should occur in the Messianic age, and of what that age was to bring about. It would then have

that this nation, which was edified every Sabbath day by the words of the law and the prophets, should ever have given up the hope of a Messiah. The Jewish historian Josephus appeared to know nothing about it, and the only thing he mentions in this connection becomes a flattery of the Roman emperor's rising star; but this is only a sign that this Jewish man of letters was no type of the religious life of his nation. By reason of their absorption in the politics of the present, the Sadducees stood coldly aloof from the Messianic expectations of their nation, and besides, although without any intention of rejecting prophecy, all their interests were centred in the law. On the other hand, the Messianic idea was for the Pharisees the soul of all their efforts, even if the form in which they apprehended it was far inferior to the conception entertained by the prophets. It is a matter of course that the great mass of the nation, engrossed as it was by the pleasures and anxieties of daily life, and the present oppression and distress, scarcely thought of the Messianic promise; but it is equally certain that it was well known among the circles of the truly pious, and that, in consequence of the misery of the present, it was perpetuated under the form of a growing longing for the promised future. We have seen how the Messianic expectation was freshly stirred in these circles by the events attending the births of Jesus and of John, and we shall hear how the whole nation was set on fire by the glowing words of the Baptist. In Israel the fire of this expectation had now and again glimmered from under

been an easy task to decide whether Jesus, who claimed to bring about the Messianic future, was the Promised One or not; or, after it had been resolved to believe in His Messiahship in spite of everything said against it, to sketch out a picture of His life, not indeed as it was in actuality, but as it ought to have been in conformity with the idea, and as it therefore represented itself to faith. But even the prophets themselves did not contain such a unified picture of the Messiah and the occurrences of the Messianic age, and our Gospels show how very different in detail were the Messianic expectations and the interpretations of single prophecies. It is manifest from them, that, upon the question whether or not the appearance of Jesus answered to the expectation founded upon prophecy, it was not easy for the people to attain to a clear decision. Even when the most undoubted characteristics were still awanting, they did not at once give up their hope of His being the Expected One. His very followers had constantly to be taught afresh to modify their expectations in conformity with the fulfilment, and to adopt, as bearing upon this, traits from prophecy which till then had been entirely overlooked.

the ashes, and only a favourable breath was needed to kindle it into a blazing flame.

Jesus had no need whatever of fresh revelations and prophetical utterances. He believed what His Father had spoken in the Old Testament Scripture, and the glaring contradiction between the internal and external life of the nation and the ideal placed before them would surely burden His soul most heavily, and the longing for the time which, according to the divine promise, should explain this contradiction would become in Him a hope vanquishing victoriously all the wretchedness of the present. But when was the age to come in which this expectation would be realized? The time and hour had been revealed to none among the prophets, and although heaven heard the cry of this nation which was still God's chosen people, torn as it was by political misery both in north and south, under the Roman procurators as well as the sons of Herod, and terribly hurt and bitterly mortified in its most sacred national feelings, yet it could not be said that times had never been worse or that the arrogance of the enemies who trampled on the people had not been more unbearable. How was Jesus to be certain that the hour of deliverance had now struck, and that it was He who should bring this deliverance? It may be reasonably doubted whether the pious parents had felt themselves called on to tell their son of the prophecies and the miraculous events which surrounded His birth and the slumber of His unconscious infancy. According to all we have heard of their idea of the Messianic future, they must have been absolutely certain of one thing at least, that it was only the miraculous hand of God which could so prepare the way before their child as to lead to this future. They must have thought that to tell Him of His high calling would be to anticipate the divine dispensation; and what could human wisdom or calculation do to bring about the accomplishment of this destiny? The voices of the new prophets who had greeted the first dawn of this salvation time had now long been silent; and it was permitted once more to hope and wait in faith, as had been done for hundreds of years. And although Jesus may have heard from one direction or another of the hopes which were attached to His person, this could only give an impulse

towards accelerating the development going on in His soul, but it could not be its starting-point. References have been made to His Davidic descent, to His birth in Bethlehem, to His significant name of Jesus; all may have become significant to Him after that development was consummated, but they could not account for it.

In His own soul must have lain the conditions which produced certainty of His being the Chosen One of the Messianic future, the God-given Saviour of His people; and these conditions existed in Him. When with confident faith in the promise of Scripture He inquired as to the time when this expectation of His people was to be fulfilled, He must have been assured of one thing, that there was already realized in His person and life what was to be accomplished in the people. A life, such as He led, of constant assurance of the fatherly love of His God, of childlike reliance on Him, which shut out every clouding of this connection, of joyous fulfilling of His will, which was to Him a necessity of existence and ordered every step of His way,—what was this but the perfecting of true religion, and the realization of the ideal which was placed before His people? A life on which God's blessing rested from the beginning, not in respect of outward riches, but by the inward peace of an unclouded communion with God,—was not this the commencement of an epoch of salvation such as the Messianic advent was to bring to the nation? To Him indeed the longed-for future had already dawned: in the midst of the wretchedness of a quarrelsome people there was already one spot where God's love had realized all it had ever promised. And because it was not promised to an individual, but to the whole nation, what happened in His life could only be the commencement of that which God's grace would accomplish through Him in the whole nation. When a twelve-year-old boy, He had in a unique manner felt Himself to be the Son of God, and the object of a divine love, such as neither was nor could be possessed by any around Him. Even the Old Testament did not only apply the name Son to the nation as a whole, but also to an individual, to the Chosen of Jehovah, who was to be the object of His especial love (2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. ii. 7). The people were not thereby to be deprived of the love that was

promised to Him on His election as First-born, but through Him they were to be sharers in the most sublime manifestation of Jehovah's love. This is why the Messiah was called in Israel the Son of God; it was not giving Him an empty title of honour, but it denoted the Chosen of divine love, Him who was called to the noblest vocation, to be the Mediator of supreme salvation for the people. Did He feel Himself the Son of God in this unique sense, then it must be He who was to bring about the Messianic future for His people.[1]

According to the whole of prophecy, the Messianic future could only be brought about by an unparalleled divine act. This divine act had been performed. One stood there along with whom had come the time of salvation, and through whom it would extend over the whole people. Jesus knew that in the sending of Him that divine action was effectuated which was to convey the perfecting of salvation to His people; and to this end the perfected divine revelation had been disclosed to Him. The ultimate object of the divine decrees was made known to him; He knew how God had prepared the highest welfare for His people, and that this was accomplished by sending Him. But here we stand on the spot where the profoundest secret of Jesus' self-consciousness is disclosed to us, in so far as it can be penetrated by man. How then was this divine sending effected? At other times, when a prophet was commissioned by God, He poured His Spirit upon him, and, impelled by the Spirit, he appeared and prophesied; or else it was in a vision he was called to the prophetical office. But of visions seen by Jesus we hear nothing, and of such extraordinary moments in which the awe of God's Spirit laid hold on Him He knew nothing; His transparent and devout life was passed in beautiful uniformity, and needed no

[1] It is incomprehensible how there should be any dispute as to whether Jesus reached His unprecedented consciousness of sonship from His consciousness of Messiahship, or *vice versâ*. It was not because the Messiah had received an especial calling that He received the name of Son, but He received the highest, the Messianic office, because God had chosen Him to be the peculiar object of His love. Since Jesus realized in Himself what was yet to be realized in the people, He must have been called to accomplish this. Since He was Son of God in the fullest sense, it was only through Him that all the individuals of the nation could become really children of God, and then would the Messianic age have come; for in the consciousness of this sonship lay the perfecting of religion and the assurance of that supreme salvation which sonship conveys.

momentary excitement. In the consciousness of the divine love that was directed to Him as to the Chosen One, He became certain of the calling to which He was destined; His mission reposed on His selection by the divine love. But when was it this selection took place? When did He begin to be an object of this unprecedented love of God's? We have seen already that in a truly pious Israelite there could be no question of deserving this love by obedience, or by any other proof of a genuine childlike spirit (comp. p. 280). As little as the nation of Israel deserved to be chosen (comp. Deut. vii. 6 f.), so little could the Chosen of Jehovah, through whom it was to attain its destiny, make this people worthy of its high destiny. Only in the certainty of God's fatherly love, possessed by Him from the beginning, could He obey and love Him as a child; only in the consciousness of His selection could He perform the vocation to which He was chosen. In the persons of the patriarchs, Israel was chosen to be God's people, and elected to sonship; and on Sinai it was called on to become this. As far back as Jesus could look in His past life, He knew of no moment when God's choice of Him was made, when God's love had turned towards Him; He was conscious of possessing it since He first learnt to look up to God, and knew that in this love He was chosen as the Messiah; His mission, indeed, commenced with His existence on earth, but did it absolutely begin there? Could a babe in his mother's arms be already an object of divine love, chosen for the calling by which God would accomplish the promises made during hundreds and thousands of years?

It was this course of thought which must have led Jesus to the consciousness of having possessed that love of God before His existence on earth began, and to the knowledge of His selection having had its origin in the depths of eternity. When we see Him, although only in obscure enigmatical utterances, referring to a heavenly origin, to an existence before His earthly existence, we find in this the natural key to such utterances. It is certainly inconceivable that He should have led an unearthly duplicate life, one unaffectedly human, and one in the recollection of that past in heaven with its participation in divine existence and life. But it may be He

was Himself conscious that the highest object of divine love, the Revealer and the Perfecter of God's final decrees regarding salvation, did not become an object of divine love only because He was to bring this about, but He must have been so from the beginning. If this consciousness formed the deepest background of His unique spiritual life, in which not only all its peace and holiness, but also its force and power of action were rooted,—and even if it did not pervade every moment of His life, uniformly and with like perspicuity,—yet it is impossible to affirm that no representation whatever can be given of Jesus' human consciousness, and of the actual history of His life. We have already had to explain how unlikely it was that the parents told the Son, at an early age, of His miraculous birth, and assuredly He would have inferred from it as little as our evangelists do regarding His heavenly origin; but when consciousness of this had arisen in Him, He would see in the miracle of His birth only a confirmation of the same. Of this profoundest secret of His self-consciousness He certainly did not preach on the streets and in the market-places, as is assumed by those who introduce our dogmatic conceptions and decisions into the name Son, along with other words which have no such reference; or by those who resist the separation of the didactic elucidations of the Apostle John, which refer with predilection to the ultimate presuppositions of the utterances of Jesus, from the utterances themselves. Such a declaration would neither have been understood nor adequately realized by His hearers. But it is not surprising that here and there an illuminating flash breaks from these profundities, throwing suddenly a new light upon the nature of Him who was most unique among the children of men. And even when this does not take place, it must, if we would apprehend them thoroughly, often be regarded as the concealed presupposition of His words.

Thus did Jesus become conscious of His divine selection and commission. And from this it appears that it is to mistake the matter in question to speak of a resolution taken by the Messiah, or to laud as a noble act Jesus' having imposed this exaction upon His own soul. To an Israelitish consciousness there could be no more certain mark of a pseudo-Messiah than for one to resolve of himself to become

the Messiah. For as certainly as the sending of the Messiah is a divine act, by which God reveals the profoundest depths of His character and decrees, it is equally certain that only He can choose who is to be the Messiah. The chosen one must assuredly obey the call; but this will first be when God directs Him as to the method of accomplishing His vocation. For it is involved in the nature of the Messianic calling, that the ways and means by which He is to execute it cannot be planned and devised by man, but can only be administered and directed by God.[1] Therefore it was that Jesus had to wait till God's call reached Him, telling Him that His hour was come, and the day of His people's salvation was about to dawn. And God's call came.

[1] It was not alone the impulse of self-dedication which He required to follow in order to act in a Messianic manner. This was Schleiermacher's idea, and it led him to deal with a period of Jesus' ministry before the baptism by John, of which our Gospels are absolutely ignorant.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PROPHET AT THE JORDAN.

IN the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, the entire nation of Israel was agitated by a powerful spiritual movement such as it had not experienced since the great days of the Maccabees. A mighty prophet had arisen as in the days gone by. It was in the southern portion of the Jordan plain, where the river hastens to the Dead Sea, and the banks, elsewhere green and luxurious, assume a desert-like appearance, that he appeared in the garb of the old prophets, and summoned the people, who came to him in crowds from far and near. For he preached of the approach of that great and terrible day of Jehovah which the prophets had proclaimed (comp. Joel ii. 1 f.; Isa. xiii. 9 f.; Zeph. i. 14 f.). In view of this he called the nation to repentance, to complete conversion, which they were to seal by immersion in the river Jordan. And, after confessing their sins, they went down, man by man, into the waters of Jordan, in order to emerge new born, a people prepared for the Lord.

We are already acquainted with this prophet. He was born among the mountains of Judea, and the word of prophecy was pronounced over the new-born infant, that he was to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah. In order to devote himself to his important but difficult calling, and to prepare for it, he passed his youthful years in the desert as a hermit, like Banus of whom Josephus tells us (*Vit.* ii.). Now God's call had reached him, and he had entered upon his office of prophet (Luke iii. 2 f.). The region where he appeared must have been called, in the oldest source, the plain of the Jordan,[1] and he lived in tradition as the preacher in the

[1] This appears from the two Gospels, which are entirely independent of each other, mentioning in their narrative of the Baptist the technical designation of the Jordan plain, although in different connections (Matt. iii. 5; Luke iii. 3). The

wilderness; that this designation was not partially borrowed from prophecy (Isa. xl. 3), is evident from Jesus asking the people who had made a pilgrimage to him: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" (Matt. xi. 7). Jesus refers to John's rough clothing in the same address when He asks whether they had sought there a man clad in soft raiment (xi. 8), and when He reminds them of the prophet's ascetic mode of life, neither eating nor drinking (xi. 18), *i.e.* rejecting with disdain the usual nourishment of man, and contenting himself with what the desert offered. Mark describes, more particularly, how he lived on locusts, which were eaten by the poorer classes in the East, and wild honey,—*i.e.* probably such as flows from palm, fig, and other trees,—and how he was clothed with camel's hair, *i.e.* he wore a rough garment made from camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins (i. 6). The hairy garment seems to have been the prophet's garb (comp. Zech. xiii. 4); but it is not improbable that John intentionally copied his great model (comp. Luke i. 17), the mighty preacher of repentance in the northern kingdom, the prophet Elijah (comp. 2 Kings i. 8). In the East such externals are supposed to lend a higher significance to the appearance, and therefore John appeared as a strict ascetic both in food and dress. It has been supposed that he wished to express thereby his sorrow over the destruction of the people. But this ascetic manner of life was only the continuation of his youthful life in the wilderness. It was very natural that he whose life's task it was to preach repentance to the people, and to require of them the renunciation of present desires and passions, and a self-denying beginning of a new life, should wish to show in his own life how no renunciation or self-denial affrighted him. His asceticism is without any peculiar trait that might be referred to Essene influence; as his dress was conditioned by the prophetic model, so was his food by the circumstances in which he was in the desert. But above all, there is not the slightest trace

first evangelist names especially the wilderness of Judea in chap. iii. 1, but that did not extend as far as the Jordan. There must either be a confusion with the desert where John passed his youth, or an approximate but incorrect definition of the expression in Mark (i. 4), which signifies the *steppe*-like character of the country at the southern end of the Jordan, that is designated as wilderness by Josephus also (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 10. 7).

in our sources of his having demanded the like asceticism from his more intimate circle of disciples, or from the people, which alone could have indicated Essene conceptions.

It follows from this that John did not desire, as has been supposed, to enforce a change of disposition through severe exercises of penance and austere renunciations. And it was altogether a mistake to seek to exalt Jesus by regarding the repentance preached by John as only an outward one, not demanding the sacrifice of the whole man. Not only was it actually the same complete change of disposition required afterwards by Jesus which he demanded, and not a mere improvement of the course of life; but Jesus Himself expressly recognised his demand of repentance as the condition of true conversion (Matt. xxi. 32). From the source peculiar to Luke have been transmitted to us some of the Baptist's sayings, which show us how he directed the several classes of the community to the method of effectuating this repentance (Luke iii. 10–14); and they contain no trace of any external exercises which he desired to impose upon the people. He demanded that the publicans should lay aside their dishonest greed of gain, and the soldiers their great avarice; from all he demanded the exercise of charity, and the sharing of food and raiment with the needy. But it was not his preaching of repentance, and his demand for absolute change of disposition and life, that was most extraordinary in his appearance; it was his manner of demanding it, the motive by which he thought to influence the people. Of this we are informed by the sayings of the Baptist preserved by the oldest source, which manifestly present a picture of the powerful words of thunder by which the prophet roused the nation out of its security and life of sin.[1]

[1] These sayings (Matt. iii. 7–12; comp. Luke iii. 7–9, 16 f.) were communicated there without any more particular statement as to their occasion, which may be gathered from their contents, for each of the two evangelists amplifies it in a different way, and neither of them succeeds completely. For, judging from their purport, these utterances can neither have been directed to the crowds of penitents coming for baptism (Luke iii. 7), nor to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. iii. 7) to whose peculiar character nothing in them refers. The words in which the first evangelist condenses the sum of the Baptist's preaching (Matt. iii. 2) are as visibly a literary (reflective) imitation of Mark i. 15, as it is improbable, on the other hand, that Jesus adopted intentionally this saying of the Baptist's. How far it can be said, with Matt. iii. 2, that John explained the

The words indeed proceed upon the supposition that on the day of Jehovah the expected "wrath to come" will be nigh. Already the axe is laid to the root of the trees, and the hewing is to begin (Matt. iii. 10). As the husbandman who has threshed the produce of his harvest on his floor takes the fan in hand and commences the winnowing which is to separate the chaff from the wheat (iii. 12), so does God's judgment approach without impediment in order to perform the great separation which will decide the fate of each individual among the people. In Old Testament prophecy also, the Messianic advent dawns with this judgment day of Jehovah's. This coming wrath of God will certainly concern the Gentiles most of all, because they have trampled His people under foot; but it is a thought by no means unusual in the prophets, that among the people of Israel a sifting will take place at the same time, separating the honest from the unworthy members of God's people, and, by giving them over to destruction, will exclude them from the salvation of the Messianic advent (comp. Luke ii. 34 f., and in addition p. 259). It is this that John lays hold of exclusively in order to warn the people to repentance. But then, John evidently thinks of the course of development precisely as it was conceived in the prophecies at the birth of Jesus, namely, that the Messiah would begin by seizing the reins of secular government, and would immediately hand over to richly-merited punishment all who had omitted to prepare themselves worthily for the opening of that age of salvation which He was to bring.[1] For the present generation was far from being ripe for the perfecting of the theocracy which the Messiah was to bring about, and it was therefore not worthy

motives of his preaching of repentance by the nearness of the kingdom of God, is made plain by the succeeding delineation.

[1] It has indeed been asserted that he conceived of this judgment as being directly conducted by Jehovah, and the relation in which his proclamation (Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17) is put with the appearance of the Messiah may have been conditioned even in the oldest source by the manner in which, as here, all the traditional sayings of the Baptist were placed together. But in addition to the fact that it was inconceivable that He who was to come after him, and whom the Baptist regards as only relatively superior to himself in worth, was Jehovah Himself, it is perfectly undoubted that John conceived of the Messianic future as brought about by a human person. And this would be He who was to execute Jehovah's judgment.

of the salvation that was thus to come to the people. The prophet calls them a generation of vipers, *i.e.* a race tainted through and through by the poison of sin. It is because of this he demands an entire repentance if they would escape the wrath to come; and, as was fitting, it was to be a change the fruit of which was visible in the whole walk and conversation (iii. 7 f.). He knows, indeed, that even his proclamation of the impending judgment will not alarm this generation too greatly. They will say that this day of Jehovah brings, according to prophecy, judgment upon the Gentile people. But we have Abraham for our father, the judgment does not affect us; for we are the chosen nation with whom, when the horror of the judgment has passed and left us unscathed, the Messiah will erect the Messianic kingdom with all its blessings. Against such foolish self-deception the prophet raises his warning voice. The judgment falls first of all upon the nation itself; every unfruitful tree will be hewn down and cast into the fire, the chaff will be divided from the wheat. And if the entire race continues as it is, and the whole nation is annihilated at the judgment, God's miraculous hand is still mighty enough to create a new Israel, that His promises may be performed to it; and that, even if He have to create the new generation from the rough stones scattered on the banks of the Jordan (iii. 9). The prophet assuredly did not mean the Gentiles, to whom now-a-days these words are so often applied.

Every word of this address bears the stamp of genuineness, just because the immediate future presented so little which corresponded to the views expressed in it. It proves irrefutably that John considered his task was to prepare for the Messianic future, and to make ready the way for the coming Messiah.[1] Even Strauss assumes that he did not conceive of

[1] This is contested even in the case of Weisse, "Philosophical View of History." It regards this as an ingenious thought of Jesus to see in Himself the bearer of the promised salvation in the future, and in the preacher of repentance by the Jordan, His own forerunner. The divine arrangement for preparing for His work, which to the evangelical tradition was a glorifying of Jesus, is regarded as an injury to Him and His divine dignity (comp. p. 239). Weisse will therefore only admit that John, like every other preacher of ethics, had pointed to a better future while he denounced the corruption of his age. But, to begin with, there was no mention of a better future, but of God's "wrath to come,"

this Messianic future as being imminent. But then it must also be admitted that John was a prophet in the proper sense, and was granted direct divine revelations. Otherwise how could he have proclaimed the Messianic judgment to be immediately impending? As little as a son of Israel could resolve to become the Messiah (p. 305), could John, by himself, come to the determination to remain no longer idle, but through his activity to bring about the fulfilment of the Messianic promise, which was Ewald's view. But if it is supposed, with Strauss, that he had read in the signs of the times and in the comfortless position of the people the approach of the expected Judge and Deliverer, still even according to human calculation times had been worse, and the hoped-for assistance had not come. We must also regard as historical the revelation to the parents of the high calling of their son, and his own preparation for this during his residence in the wilderness; but even John could not appear till God's command reached him, till the counsel of God was revealed to him that the hour of the promised deliverance had struck; along with this revelation given was his call to the prophetical office. As Luke represented, it must have been in the wilderness that God's command to appear as His prophet reached John (iii. 2 f.). The entire nation regarded him as a prophet (Matt. xi. 9; Mark xi. 32), although, as we learn, he performed no miracles (John x. 41). Jesus expressly recognised him as such (Matt. xi. 9), and he himself was perfectly conscious of his divine mission (John i. 33). But with him, as with the prophets of the Old Testament, this does not preclude the possibility of his having conceived of this future, whose immediate approach had been revealed to him, under the only form retained by the expectation of his age, founded as it was on Old Testament prophecy. The form was that of a national kingdom, of an earthly empire that the Messiah was to found, but whose inauguration was to be preceded by a great

awaited on the ground of prophecy; and as certainly as Jesus did not Himself plan His calling, but acknowledged it as one meant by God for Him, and prepared for throughout Israel's history, equally little can it be contested that John was himself conscious of being the forerunner of the Messiah, and the pioneer of the Messianic age.

judgment. This alone gives the key to the enigma of his after history.

The requirement which John laid on the people, to seal their repentance by immersion in the Jordan, must really be referred to the divine command given to him as a prophet. In tradition he bears the name Baptist, from this rite which he introduced. The conjoining of this with a confession of sin, and its designation as a baptism of repentance (Mark i. 4 f.), sets forth that this is to accompany the required and promised repentance, as an emblematical action which in the manner of the East gives an outward representation of inward occurrences, and will be to the individual a constant recollection and reminder of the undertaken obligation.[1] Holy ablutions were quite customary among the Jews, and with the Essenes more particularly were characteristic of their mode of life. But these ablutions aimed at a ceremonial purity in the Levitical sense, and had nothing in common with this figurative act, which portrayed through immersion the complete disappearance of the old nature, and by the emerging again the beginning of a totally new life. Every attempt to explain this rite from Essene influences, or to attribute to it any effect relative to Levitical purity, is wrecked on the fact of the action being performed only once; it is to be a fact decisive for life, and thus can have only a symbolical significance. But if this is required to take place at one definite moment, there is involved its necessary reference to an immediately imminent future for which the course indicated in it was of decisive importance.[2] The prophecies

[1] When this is referred to in Mark as leading to the forgiveness of sins, it shows that tradition had already transferred to John's baptism the specific character of the Christian baptism. The Baptist's recorded sayings offer no support for the idea of the forgiveness of sins following immediately on the conversion effected through the prophetical office of the forerunner, or that the people were thereby prepared for the Messianic age (comp. p. 243). The addition peculiar to the first evangelist, that John baptized "unto repentance," may be misunderstood. Baptism presupposes and seals the change of heart, it can only bind and lead to a confirmation of the change of heart in life and conversation.

[2] This rite could not be an initiation into the Messiah's kingdom; for the kingdom was to come with the Messiah, and He alone could decide who were worthy of it by reason of their fulfilment of the obligation undertaken at John's baptism. Besides, to account for the rite by proselyte baptism, which in the full sense was not customary till a much later date, presupposes an utterly

are certainly suggested to us which present the prospect of a general lustration of the people in the Messianic era (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Zech. xiii. 1); but the prophet's manner of using this so as to make the magnitude of the required resolve perceptible to the people, and to give it a lasting token of the accepted obligation, was entirely his own act, and as such was derived from his prophetical consciousness, and perfected in the certainty of accomplishing the divine will. In this sense John's baptism was from heaven, and not of human disposition (comp. Mark xi. 30).

It is a mistake to conceive of John as desiring to establish a union of those who had undergone baptism, or to combine those baptized by him into a separate community among the people. At the very most, this would be analogous to the Essene confederation. But opposed to this is the entirely national character of the movement to which he gave rise, as well as the fact that our sources do not refer to it. They speak indeed of John's disciples (Mark ii. 18), and this has been looked upon as a proof of the Baptist's having founded a school that was far from being inclined to retire before his greater successor, and that consequently he did not regard himself as Jesus' forerunner. But these disciples of John were by no means those baptized by him, but his assistants in the ministry of baptism. When the crowds gathered, every one confessing his sins and desiring to be immersed in the Jordan (Mark i. 5), John would doubtless require the help of colleagues. It was on this account that he gathered about him, not certainly a small circle of disciples, but those who would be more close participators in his religious life. He taught them particular prayers (Luke xi. 1; comp. v. 33), and directed them to fast frequently, as was done by the pious throughout the country (Mark ii. 18). Even in prison his connection with them continued (Matt. xi. 2), and at a later date they were pointed to as patterns of Israelitish piety (Mark ii. 18).

Since the Baptist appeared in the south of the country, it is easily understood how the movement first affected Judea

unhistorical view of it, for in the latter case the question concerns fellow-countrymen only and all fellow-countrymen comprehensively, and in the former it concerns the reception of unclean Gentiles.

and its capital (Mark i. 5). But it undoubtedly extended to Galilee, where Jesus addressed the multitudes as those who had gone out to the Baptist (Matt. xi. 7). Indeed, in the Fourth Gospel we find a set of Galileans in the circle round the Baptist, yea, among his disciples. Even the hierarchy must have regarded the movement for a time with satisfaction (comp. John v. 35); but of the scribes and Pharisees we hear distinctly that they were not baptized by him (Luke vii. 30; comp. Matt. xxi. 32).[1] It is quite intelligible how these patterns of piety regarded themselves as absolved from a rite by compliance with which they would have disavowed their whole past history; and it was a matter of course that those in high station, who formed the party of the Sadducees, had just as little inclination to compromise themselves by a public confession of sin (comp. John iii. 11). It is indicated by Jesus Himself (Luke vii. 29; comp. Matt. xxi. 31 f.) that it was the sunken classes especially who manifested readiness for repentance, and we learn from Luke (iii. 12, 14) how publicans and hirelings were those who particularly inquired after the way of salvation. This does not preclude the possibility of many among the people being profoundly agitated by the prophet's words, and of their making a good beginning with the renewal of mind and behaviour; but even Jesus observed that the effect was not lasting (comp. Matt. xii. 43–45). We learn, on the other hand, how the overdone severity of the Baptist gave offence; and although the malicious report which referred his severe asceticism to demoniacal influence (Matt. xi. 18) assuredly did not originate among the people, but was repeated only by his Pharisaical opponents, yet this pretext was readily seized upon to withdraw with a semblance of justification from the too severe requirements of such a fanatic. The people as a whole retained the conviction that he was a great prophet (Mark xi. 32), and, regarding one point at least, there was an inclination to believe this only too easily. His threat of the approaching Messianic judgment might be disregarded, but still it had in the background the promise of

[1] The notice in Matt. iii. 7, according to which many Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, is only inferred from the following speech, regarding which we have seen that its accuracy cannot be assumed.

the Messianic advent so long expected, and now doubly desired in the misery of the present. We possess the distinct witness of Jesus, that from the days of John the Baptist a powerful movement had mastered the people, which not only awaited with certainty the Messianic accomplishment, but endeavoured with fierce enthusiasm to force it on (Matt. xi. 12). The long slumbering hope was aroused, and with mighty billows the Messianic movement surged through the entire people.

To that quiet house in Nazareth where Jesus awaited His Father's signal, penetrated the tidings of the great prophet by the Jordan, and of the nearing of the Messianic future, which was proclaimed by him. Could He doubt that this was the long-expected call from God? He certainly did not hesitate to obey the command of God which, through the prophet, was issued to the entire nation, and He would not be among the last of those who started on a pilgrimage to the south to respond to the Baptist's call. It is therefore absolutely inconceivable that the Baptist's ministry should have existed for long, perhaps for years before Jesus came to the Jordan; the whole style, too, of his activity was not that of a long-enduring, but gradual influence; rather was it a momentary, stunning impression, which seized the people like a hurricane. But from Luke's alluding to the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, and expressly indicating it by synchronistic dates (iii. 1), it is evident that he, writing not the history of the Baptist but that of Jesus, only made this year, in which the Baptist appeared, so significantly prominent because it was also the year when Jesus came publicly forward, perhaps, as we shall see, the year of His ministry in general. The reason why he enumerates in detail all the contemporaneous rulers in Palestine and the adjacent countries, is that he may sketch at the same time a picture of the age and the district where was enacted the history of the Baptist and his yet greater successor. But as the Emperor Augustus died on the 19th August 767 A.U.C., the fifteenth year of the reign of his successor, who was his stepson Tiberius, would run from 19th August 781 into 782.[1]

[1] At that date the two sons of Herod ruled in the north, who had entered upon the government on the death of their father in 750. Their sway lasted

We learn from Luke that Jesus was about thirty years of age when, soon after His baptism, He began His public ministry (iii. 23). But as He must have been born one year, if not more, before 750 (comp. p. 272), He was thirty-two or thirty-three years of age in 781. Luke's statement would then require to be regarded as only approximate; but even if it did not rest upon a popular custom which could not be applicable to this case, or upon the canonical age of the priests and Levites, which as a matter of course had nothing to do with the Messiah's entrance on office, yet the evangelist might content himself by naming the decade at the commencement of which Jesus appeared. But the current calculation of the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign is by no means beyond question. For already, at the commencement of 765 or the end of 764, Tiberius as co-regent had conferred on him, by decree of the senate, the full power of his father in all the provinces and over all the armies; in the East his reign may well have been calculated from that time.[1] This would bring us rather to the year 780, when Jesus would be somewhat

beyond the epoch that we must now discuss, since Philip died in 786–787, and Herod Antipas was not deposed until 792. The south was governed by the fifth of the Roman procurators, who entered upon office in the year 779, or at the earliest towards the close of 778, and continued there for ten years. Luke mentions besides a certain Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene, a territory situated on Antilebanon with a capital named Abila. A certain criticism finds a useless pleasure in assuming that this is a crass chronological mistake on Luke's part, this being a Lysanias who was murdered by Antony about 718 or 720 at the instigation of Cleopatra. But this Lysanias is nowhere named tetrarch, nor is Abilene referred to as his possession; his dominion probably extended over the district of Chalcis, which Josephus expressly distinguishes from the tetrarchate of one Lysanias, to which Abila is reckoned, and which was afterwards given to Agrippa by Caligula and Claudius. It is evident from this, what is assumed by all thoughtful historical inquirers, that at the time of Christ this region was governed by a younger Lysanias as tetrarch, who was probably descended from the family of the elder one.

[1] It is useless to appeal to the fact that neither the Roman historians nor Josephus reckon thus. It could certainly not be done from the Roman standpoint, for in the capital Tiberius experienced no augmentation in outward authority from that decision of the senate in the provinces; even an historian, if he would not produce confusion, when computing according to the imperial years, would only take into consideration the commencement of Tiberius' own reign. But when Luke, from the standpoint of a Palestinian, mentions the year of the reign of him who wields the greatest power there, he might well reckon from the year in which, along with the co-regentship, Tiberius was invested with supreme power in the provinces.

over thirty-one years of age, which answers just as well to the synchronism of Luke. Our present era, which originated from a calculation by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century, starts from the year 781–782, but supposes mistakenly that the Baptist had been at work for several years when Jesus, then precisely thirty years of age, presented Himself for baptism: this makes the date of His birth 754, which is therefore fixed four or five years too late. For us the question can only be as to whether the Baptist appeared towards the close of the year 780 (27 A.D.), or in 781 (28 A.D.), for it is evident that he could not summon the people into the wilderness by the Jordan during the scorching heat of the summer months. But, according to John, at the first Passover which Jesus attended, some months after His baptism, it is stated by the hierarchy that the temple had been forty-six years in building (ii. 20), and this agrees far better with the first date. For the magnificent extension and restoration of Zerubbabel's temple began in the eighteenth year of the reign of Herod the Great, at the close of 734 or the commencement of 735, so that in the month Nisan of the year 781, forty-six complete years had actually elapsed, according to the computation from the co-regency of Tiberius, to the first Passover in Jesus' public ministry. A difficulty is presented by the usual calculation, and by the statement as to Jesus' age, which is not indeed insoluble, but is avoided by every other method of computation.

We would therefore prefer to think of Jesus journeying towards the Jordan in the early days of the year 28 A.D., in order there to obey the command of God, which had been made known to the entire nation, and therefore to Him also.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

WHEN John came forth with his call to repentance, he knew not who was that Chosen of Jehovah for whom he was to prepare the way. Not because he was already acquainted with the Messiah did he appear with his baptism of water; it was rather that, after he had created the first conditions of this, the Messiah would at last be revealed to Israel (John i. 31).[1] The hopes that had once been aroused in Mary with regard to her son were certainly not unknown to him; but as, notwithstanding the promises at his birth, he could not come forth as a prophet until in the wilderness he received the call of God through divine revelation, neither might he acknowledge any one as the Messiah till indicated to him by a new divine revelation. Some such revelation he might expect in the course of his baptismal ministry; for the express promise had been given him, that He who was to baptize all Israel with the Holy Spirit (comp. Matt. iii. 11) would be recognisable by His receiving from above the baptism of the Spirit simultaneously with His submission to John's baptism of water (John i. 33).

It was narrated in the very oldest apostolic source, that when Jesus presented Himself for baptism, John would at first have dissuaded Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (Matt. iii. 13 f.). This cannot possibly involve a contradiction of John's declaration just alluded to (John i. 31, 33), as has been affirmed; for it

[1] There is no reference here to a personal acquaintance with Jesus. Such an acquaintance would by no means necessarily follow from Mary's relationship with the family of the priest in the hill country (Luke i. 36); for we neither know whether there was constant intercourse between the families in spite of the considerable separation of the respective places of abode, nor how soon it was that John retired into the wilderness, and was thereby removed from all such personal relations. The possibility of it is, however, not gainsaid.

by no means follows from that refusal of the Baptist's that he recognised the Messiah in the familiar son of Mary, on account of the promises made concerning Him. As Messiah He had nothing to do with the baptism of water (comp. Matt. iii. 11), which John therefore could not require of Him; and the baptism of the Spirit, which appertained particularly to the Messiah's vocation, was not required by Him who, as prophet, was already endowed with the Holy Ghost. The words mean only that John, who, in spite of his high calling, was yet conscious of being a sinful man, recognised in the man standing before him that unique spotless One who needed no baptism of repentance. As the divinely-commissioned Baptist had not been able to seal in baptism the change of heart demanded of himself also, it was fitting that in presence of this sinless One he should confess, and obtain baptism at His hands (comp. Mark i. 5). John could not have had this knowledge of Jesus' purity, even if he had been personally acquainted with Mary's son from childhood; he whose daily duty it was to disclose to men their corruption, could only acquire this knowledge when, assisted by his prophetical endowment, he read the heart of this man also, and recognised that there no consciousness of guilt interrupted the communion between Him and His God. It may be left undecided whether this happened at their first meeting, or not until after they had had an interview; for the narrative, which is naturally inserted along with the question asked at baptism, does not preclude this. It was quite natural that this knowledge should rouse the hope in him that his anticipated great successor would be no other than that spotless One (Matt. iii. 11); but this hope could only yield the necessary psychological point of contact for every divine revelation; it did not render the sign promised to him indispensable. It was, on the contrary, not a little strengthened when Jesus, in His answer, fully recognised the feeling which had prompted the Baptist's refusal. He demanded baptism in spite of the contradiction to His proper position as regarded the Baptist that was apparently involved, since it was fitting both should submit themselves blindly to the will of God (Matt. iii. 15). This indicates that Jesus presented Himself for baptism with entire consciousness of His Messiah-

ship; for the injunction to permit, for the present, an act such as the being baptized by John, which appeared to express a subordination to him, necessarily involved a glance into that future when His actual superiority to John would be made manifest. For the present, however, all righteousness must be fulfilled, *i.e.* what corresponded to the will of God must be done, even when, humanly speaking, there was difficulty in comprehending it. For what the prophet proclaimed as God's will required at the present juncture the baptism by John of all Israel. Jesus was obliged to submit to him, since He too was a son of Israel, and John in turn had to yield to Jesus, although it was not without reason he had thought himself justified in declining in this exceptional case.[1]

In opposition to the criticism of a Bruno Bauer, which denied this fact, Strauss could suggest nothing more natural than that Jesus permitted Himself to be baptized by John, although this necessitated the giving up of the presupposition of Jesus' sinlessness, which was fatal to every historical view, for even the best and purest of men has to accuse himself of many failures and omissions. We do not need to consider the question whether the simple dogmatic presupposition can be proved, that an actually sinless man there could not be, and therefore never was. The fact of Jesus not refuting John's assumptions when he hesitated about administering baptism on account of Jesus' sinlessness, shows in any case that He was perfectly conscious of the difficulty as to how and in what sense He could submit to the baptism of John. An attempt has been made to explain this by conceiving of

[1] Although this colloquy is visibly coloured by the oldest source, some are disposed to regard it as an addition made by the first evangelist for the purpose of removing what was an offence to a later consciousness—Jesus' baptism of repentance. At the same time it is granted that, properly speaking, this is no solution of the difficulty, that this explanation really explains nothing,—an admission which is completely confirmed by the later heretical remodellings of the first Gospel having presented the matter in the most diverse ways. In fact, Jesus' recognition of a certain justification in the Baptist's declinature increases the difficulty rather than removes it; and the appeal to the duty of fulfilling the divine will does not solve the question how Jesus could recognise as being the will of God what seemed in opposition to His own consciousness. All that follows from this is that this colloquy cannot have been invented in order to remove that difficulty, and that the question is still unsolved how He who was free from sin became conscious that He too must undergo John's baptism.

Jesus as in some way partaker in the collective guilt of the nation, by referring to His *solidarité* with the impure people, or even by reason of His assuming the sins of His people. But when these confused ideas are analysed somewhat more minutely, the dilemma still presents itself: either Jesus had something to confess and cast aside in consequence of this connection, and then He would not be sinless; or He was only a passive participator in the sin and guilt of His people, so that for Him there was no baptism of repentance, in which He must have indeed abrogated His lofty function, which was just what from love to His people He had undertaken. To hold the sinlessness of Jesus in the fullest sense, it is not necessary to assume, with Schleiermacher, that Jesus only intended to recognise the attitude and the work of John by submitting to his baptism, for He could not have expressed this approval by an act that would have involved a contradiction or an essential falsehood. It is useless to say, like Weisse, that Jesus found in baptism a means of religious elevation and strengthening; or, like Keim, that He then dedicated Himself personally to the service of righteousness; for the symbolism of the deed is thereby ignored equally with its historical significance. Both views, however, tell against the conception of baptism as an act of consecration just as necessary for the founder as for the members of the Messiah's kingdom, since this point of view of a consecrating to the Messianic kingdom, promulgated by Neander, Hase, and others, was utterly strange to the Johannine baptism (comp. remarks, p. 314). The difficulty of the question arises especially from the symbolical character of the rite not being strictly kept in view, and by the conscious or unconscious intermingling of the idea of its purificatory character; but the non-repetition of this act precludes the latter view as decidedly as it agrees with the first. The symbolism manifestly referred to the complete conclusion of the life up to that point, and to the commencement of a new life of a totally different nature. To the sinful people it formed the conclusion of their life of sin, and the beginning of a new one that was free from sin, besides being the seal of their perfect repentance. It could not be all this to Him who was without spot; but for Him, too, it marked the close of His former life, and the

commencement of one perfectly new. Certainly this former life, which, as it were, was buried beneath the waves of Jordan, was not tainted with sin, but it had been confined to the usual conditions of human existence, to the human avocation which had hitherto been His, and to His personal equipment. The new life to which He emerged did not differ from the earlier one by reason of its sinlessness, but only by its being dedicated from that time forward to His great divine calling. It was in this sense that Jesus saw in the command of God summoning Him to baptism the long-expected token from His Father that the time was come to enter upon His Messianic career.[1]

But most surely this was not the only significance of His baptism. With the baptism of water was conjoined the baptism of the Spirit, which in the Messianic age was to come upon all, that they might be fitted for service in the perfected kingdom of God, and which must come on Him especially who was to be the founder of this kingdom, and who needed therefore to be extraordinarily endowed. This was, indeed, the sign promised to the Baptist (John i. 33), and to whose fulfilment he testified when he said: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him"[2] (i. 32). Since what is treated of here is the beholding of a purely spiritual occurrence,—Jesus' endowment with the Divine Spirit,—it is self-evident that this beholding cannot have been by means of the natural senses, but only a glimpse

[1] Only when it is disputed that Jesus presented Himself for baptism with the consciousness of being the Messiah, or that it was in baptism He first attained consciousness of His Messiahship, can it be denied that this was the simplest way in which the Johannine baptism, in accordance with its peculiar symbolism, received and retained a significance for Him.

[2] In harmony with his view of the Fourth Gospel is the assertion of Baur, that, through its higher conception of the person of Christ, this Gospel found that the Johannine baptism was no longer applicable to Him, and therefore eliminated it. But the words of the Baptist assume expressly that the token promised by Him who had sent John to baptize was awaited during the course of his ministry, *i.e.* in the case of one of those baptized by him (comp. p. 319). And, in any case, by merely being silent regarding the act of baptism the evangelist cannot have supposed that he had removed or confuted a fact everywhere received by the community on the ground of the older Gospels. It was involved in the manner and the aim of his whole composition that he related nothing concerning the Baptist's popular activity which included the baptism of Jesus, but he commenced with John's witness to the Messiahship of Jesus, in which he only occasionally calls to mind how this was made known to him, though only mentioning by the way how he arrived at this.

in a vision, *i.e.* something divinely produced that took place within, in which, though certainly in the form of a sensible phenomenon, the beholder was made cognizant of a purely spiritual fact. Visions such as this were seen by the prophets of the Old Covenant and, as in this case, by those of the New. It is generally supposed that the Spirit was presented to him in the form of a dove, as Luke undoubtedly understood (iii. 22). But this would presuppose either that the prophet was acquainted through the Old Testament with the symbolical significance of the dove, which from this story of the baptism has become familiar to us, or else he had been expressly promised that he should see the Spirit descend in this shape. For this symbolism, however, the Old Testament offers no point of connection, and there is no allusion to it in the promise made to the Baptist (John i. 33). As is undoubtedly indicated by the position of the words, the Baptist only compared the descent of the Spirit with the hovering of a dove in order to indicate that it did not come upon Him like lightning or seize Him furiously, as happened to the prophets of the Old Covenant, who were therefore vouchsafed only a temporary inspiration; it gently settled down upon Him in order that it might permanently tarry with Him. How easily he might think of the dove that found a resting-place for her feet (comp. Gen. viii. 9), as of the Spirit of Jehovah, who should rest on the branch out of the root of Jesse! (Isa. xi. 1 f.). Indeed, the evangelist makes it intentionally prominent that the Spirit remained upon Him. The Baptist does not say under what sentient form the Spirit was represented to him, but, according to the symbolical conceptions which obtain in other parts of Scripture, we are led to think of a luminous appearance (comp. Acts ii. 3).

Tradition can have received information of this vision only from the mouth of the Baptist; and as we find in the oldest source a colloquy with Jesus before the baptism that was likewise derived from his communications, it too was in all probability narrated originally by the Baptist: "And, lo, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit descending like a dove upon Jesus"[1] (comp. Matt. iii. 16). As it was

[1] The representation of the oldest source is no longer absolutely pure in our first Gospel, for it is shown by the comparison of parallel texts that the first

in visions that the prophets beheld appearances apparently within the range of vision in consequence of the inward excitement, but not in consequence of an external operation of light, the eye indeed being shut to the outer world, they heard at the same time heavenly voices not sensibly audible to the outward ear, but which the internal perception regarded as heard. So, too, in regard to the Baptist's vision, which is thus amplified by Matthew: "And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (iii. 17). It is the voice of God Himself indicating to the Baptist what the visible sign was to make him conscious of, viz. that He on whom John saw the Spirit descending was the Chosen of divine love, He who was destined for the noblest, the Messianic calling. The fact that, in the reproduction of this, the words which John thought he heard accord with an old prophetic utterance regarding the promised servant of Jehovah (comp. Isa. xlii. 1) only shows how here, as everywhere, the divine revelation must take form in the consciousness of the recipient according to the conditions of his spiritual life. In this case the form was given by his acquaintance with Old Testament Scripture. Without express reference to this voice from heaven, but with a manifest remembrance of it, the Baptist says in the Fourth Gospel, that he had seen the promised apparition, in consequence of which he bare record that Jesus was the Son of God (John i. 34). It is involved, however, in the nature of a miracle produced by divine operation, that it does not altogether put before the beholder an unreal picture answering to no objective actuality,

half of ver. 16 is introduced from Mark. By this means the recipient of the vision is changed, although the vision itself still speaks of Jesus; but the voice from heaven in ver. 17 shows distinctly that in the original representation mention was made of a vision not to Him, but to John. In it the consummation of the baptism was in the words: Then he suffered Him, *i.e.* to be baptized (iii. 15), so that there followed immediately the vision which on the same occasion was granted to John. Just as in the utterances of the Baptist given in the Fourth Gospel, so here also, according to the arrangement of the words, the descent of the Spirit is compared to a dove. The opening of heaven, however, is no extraordinary miracle alongside of which scarcely anything else could have been considered; for when the observer beholds anything descending from heaven (comp. John i. 32), it lies in the nature of the case that it must have seemed to open, in order that what is manifested might pass forth. Comp. Ezek. i. 1; Isa. lxiv. 1, and particularly John i. 52, where no one thinks of an "actual" opening of heaven.

but a real fact is visible in it, which because of its purely spiritual nature can therefore not be verified by means of the senses, and is in this way made perceptible to the eye of the mind. In this case, moreover, if only a making known of Jesus' higher spiritual nature was in question, then the token received by the Baptist would not have expressed what was thereby pointed out, but would rather have led to the very opposite. For He on whom the Baptist saw the Spirit descending could not then have been filled with the Spirit; and if from His very nature He *was* filled with it, there was no necessity for the descent of the Spirit upon Him.[1]

It is supposed, indeed, that the view of the Fourth Gospel regarding the incarnation in Jesus of the eternal divine word, like that of the first concerning His miraculous conception, in a like manner excludes the bestowal on Him of the Divine Spirit. But thus it is overlooked that if the Logos was in truth made flesh (John i. 14), as this is understood to mean, He entered thereby the conditions of ordinary human existence to which it appertained to be as susceptible of the operation of the Divine Spirit as it was in want of it; and even that unique divine miracle at His birth would only serve to restore in the most complete degree its capacity for receiving this. Even the most normal of human developments is not one that can produce everything from itself, and dispense with such operations of divine grace, but it is always open to them, and is by them irresistibly influenced. The difficulty found here consists only in the Divine Spirit being

[1] It was affirmed by the Tübingen criticism that the fourth evangelist, by reason of his higher conception of Christ, found that an endowment of Jesus with the Spirit was no longer conceivable, and on this account transferred the entire incident to the subjective consciousness of the Baptist. We have seen, however, that even the oldest source contains a narrative of the Baptist's vision. The school of Schleiermacher, on the other hand, regarded the report of the evangelist John as the original one, and believed that in the older Gospels there might be perceived a re-echo more or less legendary. It was equally unjustified in affirming that at the baptism of Jesus all that was in question was a revelation made to the Baptist, which caused him to recognise Jesus as filled with the Divine Spirit. Not less so was the idea that it was nothing but a premonition of Jesus' Messianic calling that flashed upon the Baptist. For the Fourth Gospel assumes in one of the utterances of the Baptist that Jesus actually received the Spirit in baptism (John iii. 34), as much as in the source of the first Gospel He appears immediately after the baptism as being led of the Spirit (Matt. iv. 1).

regarded as active exclusively in the domain of the religio-ethical life, while the Apostle Paul teaches us that the Spirit of God communicated to believers is the principle of the new religio-ethical life in all God's children. Here this cannot be so, for we have already seen how Jesus' religio-ethical existence developed itself normally from the beginning, and had no need of special impulsions from the Spirit of God. But everywhere in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and particularly in the prophecies of the pouring out of the Spirit during the Messianic age, with which, even in the Fourth Gospel, the report of Jesus' baptism by the Spirit is connected, the Spirit is rather the principle of the gifts of grace by which God equips His servants for the accomplishment of their calling. This is all, then, that can be treated of here. It is not once said, as in the case of the communication of the Spirit received by believers, that the Spirit was poured into His heart, so becoming a new element of being; but it descended upon Him in order, as John expresses it in an emphatic repetition, to rest upon Him (i. 32, 33). From this time Jesus was to be under the constant operation of the Spirit, which enabled Him to say and to do what was needful to His Messianic calling, and what with ordinary human powers He could not have attempted.

Naturally enough, it was not related in the oral tradition, that what the Baptist communicated was part of his experience on the occasion of Jesus' baptism, but it was given as what had then happened to Jesus. Nevertheless, the form of the oldest narrative was so far secondary that even in it mention was made of a vision. But, according to the natural assumption that to Jesus not less than to the Baptist must the event concerning Him have been made known, what Jesus beheld is first related, and then the voice from heaven is apprehended as being directed to Him. Thus arose the report in Mark (i. 10 f.), in which the Spirit Himself appears to be thought of as in the form of a dove.[1] Lastly, and

[1] Those who regard our second Gospel as simply the oldest of the evangelical memoranda, have a certain right in proceeding upon this report, and conceiving of an inner experience of Jesus, on which those, too, who hold to its being in substance a vision of the Baptist's, found with readiness. The truth of the

without reference simply to a vision, it is narrated that from the opened heaven the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the bodily shape of a dove, and a voice from heaven declared Him to be the Messiah (Luke iii. 21 f.). With this secondary form of the tradition is connected the oldest notion of a "baptismal miracle," which so readily designates itself as strictly devout, although it simply ignores the most authenticated form of the apostolic report; following this was the natural explanation of old rationalism, which here thought of a sky suddenly clearing, of thunder and lightning, in which the sultriness discharged itself; and, finally, there was Strauss' mythical explanation of the entire story of the baptism. Strauss sought in vain for a point of connection in the Jewish expectation, that the Messiah would remain unknown to Himself and to others until anointed by Elias, and made public by him (comp. Justin, *dial. c. Tryph.* c. 8). There is not a single mention in our report of an anointing and revealing through the instrumentality of John. Indeed, before adopting the miraculous generation or the incarnation of the Logos, Strauss was compelled to go back upon what was the oldest form of an attempt to explain the unique elevation of Jesus—the regarding Him as a man anointed by the Spirit of God. This at once presented the difficulty that three of our evangelists freely unite this oldest form with that of the younger evangelist, which is said to contradict it. But then everything depended upon marking this association of the Spirit with Jesus as a permanent one, if in this way

report is undoubtedly this, that to Jesus as to the Baptist the fact of His equipment for His calling was made known by the Spirit. But if this latter account be regarded as the original, and referred to Jesus Himself, then, with Weisse, we can only see that the moment is here depicted when His Messianic consciousness awoke, and, as Weizsäcker defines it still more definitely, by means of a divinely-produced vision. But this view is not always in conformity with the purport of the narrative, and introduces into the life of Jesus visionary situations which were found even by Keim not to correspond with the calm, clear quality of His spiritual life (comp. p. 304). Indeed, they could only appear there when the divine revelation was obliged to make its spiritual meaning manifest to the still immature human receptivity by means of a sensible appearance. We have seen, besides, that Jesus was sure of His Messianic calling before He reached the Jordan, and that this is evidently confirmed by His colloquy with the Baptist. When Schenkel constructs at pleasure an internal incident in the life of Jesus, and abandons the form of the representation as a legendary veil, he quits arbitrarily the firm ground of tradition.

Jesus was to be elevated above the level of a mentally endowed prophet, which is all that the Old Testament parallels adduced by Strauss lead to. And yet this point is prominent only in John, who, as the latest writer, is said to have been puzzled by this combination, and to have relegated it to the Baptist's consciousness (comp. remarks, p. 326). By this method it can still less be explained why the anointing of the Spirit was combined with the baptism of water, which appeared so unsuitable to the unique elevation of Jesus. In the oldest apostolic announcement, Jesus' anointing by the Spirit is intended, but without this combination being necessary, if from the historical tradition it cannot be assumed as known (Acts iv. 27, x. 38). All that now remained as a point of connection was the analogy of the Christian baptism which combines baptism by water and by the Spirit; but even this would not elevate Jesus above the level of believers, and the entire delineation nowhere characterizes Him as the Messiah who is to mediate for all the baptism by the Spirit. There is no support for the pretended embellishment of the scene. The appearance of a bodily dove is surely no miracle; and to discover in this a symbol of the Spirit manifesting Himself, is to assume that this symbolism was suggested by the Old Testament, which is far from being the case. Strauss endeavoured to explain the divine voice through a quotation from one of the Psalms (Ps. ii. 7), while it was really in the later heretical remodellings of our evangelical report that this first appears employed in a palpable way. If we are justified in regarding as a fact Jesus' anointing by the Spirit, which was made known to the Baptist by a vision, then it agrees with this that everywhere in His official operation we encounter a unique, assured action, which we can only conceive of as being brought about by the Spirit of God, under whose constant influence He remained from His baptism. This is why, as the modern critics justly acknowledge, there is no mention of Jesus constructing a scheme, of His hesitating and doubting, or of a search for ways and means for the accomplishment of His work. It is indeed the prerogative of the great ones of the earth to act more from an inward impulse and instinct, and to attain their purpose without toilsome reflection. But in the varied

circumstances of life, when it is often difficult to find the right, the pious are especially admonished to seek first the will of God in order that that may be fulfilled. Jesus never indicates it as His life's task to discern God's will, but only that He is to do it (John vi. 38); and, nevertheless, He can do nothing of Himself (John v. 19, 30). At every moment He is perfectly conscious of the divine will, of the greater necessity that guided Him on every step of the way (Luke xiii. 33); this certitude is given by the Spirit which equipped Him for the fulfilment of His vocation. It is the Spirit which after the baptism drives Him into the wilderness (Mark i. 12), and it is He who everywhere directs His course and determines His resolves. This is why we so often see Him acting from impulses which cannot be tested by any psychological analysis, and this not only in John (vii. 8, 10, xi. 6), but also in the older Gospels (Mark x. 32, xi. 1). He cannot act when His hour is not come (John ii. 4); but He knows when it has come. This life of direct consciousness of the divine decrees, and of the methods designed by God for its accomplishment, is the clearest sign that the Spirit which descended upon Jesus in baptism remained in constant operation within Him.

It was this Spirit which bestowed upon Him the superior knowledge and supernatural power of operation necessary for the execution of His calling. The ordinary view certainly refers both to His higher divine nature, and so, of course, the first to His divine omniscience. But although it is dogmatically essayed to combine His true humanity with His eternal, heavenly, aud therefore divine existence, to the acknowledgment of which His own religious consciousness as well as His calling led Him (comp. p. 304), yet our Gospels are only acquainted with a human existence of Jesus manifestly excluding divine omniscience. In Mark (xiii. 32) He expressly repels it; He demanded who had touched Him (Mark v. 30), how much bread they had (Mark vi. 38), where Lazarus had been laid (John xi. 54); He is deceived in the fig-tree which had green leaves but no fruit (Mark xi. 13). There is not the slightest trace in our Gospels that Jesus knew more than others regarding human and secular things which lay outside His calling, or that His opinions of

these were other than those of His fellow-countrymen, and so transcended the limitations assigned to every age and nation.[1] If through any kind of higher illumination, or even by reason of His loftier nature, Jesus was endowed with a knowledge of these matters, which caused them to appear differently to Him than to His fellow-countrymen and contemporaries, this would be no assistance, but rather a constant hindrance to His working. It would have taken Him out of mental sympathy with those on whom He was to act, and would have necessitated His concealing in an unworthy way His better nature, or discussing matters which lay absolutely outside His calling, and which were lacking in the conditions necessary for His hearers' comprehension.

Since in this department He could receive no higher knowledge, He required in His special religious province no illumination by the Spirit. Our sources know nothing of progressive divine revelations made to Him during His official life, such as are assumed by Beyschlag and Weizsäcker. Jesus is Himself conscious of a unique acquaintance with God that can only be compared with the perfect knowledge which the Searcher of hearts has of Him (Matt. xi. 27; John x. 15), and is therefore also perfect. But this rests, as we have seen, upon His original consciousness of His relation to the Father, upon the perfected divine revelation He recognised in the divine act of sending Him, upon the certain knowledge He possessed as to the profoundest secret of the divine nature and the divine decrees,—a knowledge which had its roots in the depths of eternity. After He attained to manhood and to consciousness of His calling, there was in this no possibility of growth, or necessity for a fresh revelation. But yet in isolated cases the Spirit who guided every step of His ministry would give Him what He should say (John xii. 49 f.). This can only mean what it was necessary to say at a given moment for the attainment of a divine purpose; the specific

[1] It is nothing but an empty fiction when Schleiermacher, in order to prove in this department the faultlessness of Jesus, assumes that He had no positive knowledge of such matters, and if He had been questioned about them would have answered that He had not made them subjects of inquiry. What is treated of here are precisely subjects into which no inquiry was instituted, for in that circle they passed as settled, and therefore their certainty was assumed as self-evident.

truth of His speeches He gathered from the inexhaustible depths of His self-consciousness and His unique religious life.

On the other hand, it is assumed of every prophet that he looks through those among whom he sojourns (Luke vii. 39); we have seen how the Baptist in the case of Jesus Himself manifested such knowledge of men. This acquaintance belongs to the requirements of his calling; it is connected, first of all, with ordinary human conditions. For as it is the want of affection and over-estimation of self which so easily affects our judgment regarding our neighbours (Matt. vii. 3 ff.), so the purity of heart with which the glance of love sinks itself in others may read them naturally. But if this capability has different grades according to natural endowments, He who was free from sin would receive without measure this gift from the Spirit. Throughout our Gospels such a penetration of the hearts of men is attributed to Jesus as surpasses all human experience. He is acquainted with the thoughts and intentions of His opponents (Mark ii. 8, xii. 15; Matt. xii. 25); at their first interview He apprehends Simon and Nathanael according to their radical character (John i. 43, 48), He reads the heart of Judas (vi. 70), and knows better than themselves how it stands with His followers, and what was going on within them (vi. 64). This knowledge had, of course, its limits; He knows indeed what is in man (John ii. 25), but what will be in him and will become of him He cannot know, since this depends on the course of development entered upon by man as a consequence of new decisions. Did He know it, His professional activity would not be advanced but hindered; it would rob Him of all the gladness, and therefore of the power of action by which He will operate on these personal decisions, if He foresaw in any way the certain failure of all His endeavours. But the man standing before Him He must search with a sure glance, in order to find the proper word and the right method for winning him or rendering him inoffensive; the Spirit, under whose constant influence He stood, made Him capable of this infallible knowledge of the heart.

The look into the future is granted, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, even to the prophet; he does not prophesy in the way the Gentile seer claimed to do, but he can announce

the future because the divine decrees which prepare the future in the present have been made manifest to him. This talent, too, is connected with the ordinary human faculty of presentiment, and with the penetration of all the truly great of this world, who understand their age, and therefore foresee the developments indicated by the signs of the times. But where the Spirit of God illumines the eye of the mind, this seeing into the future is manifestly infallible. Thus Jesus prophesies His own fate, the fate of His disciples, the fall of the nation and the destruction of the temple, the election of the Gentiles, and the completion of His work on His return. But this foreknowledge also is limited, and indeed doubly so. There is no foreseeing of accidental occurrences, a result which the heathen prophets strove to attain, but a knowledge of how, under the given historical conditions, the divine decree made known to Him must and will be realized. These conditions, however, are formed by the conduct of men, by their incalculable decisions. This foreknowledge, therefore, is an increasing one; it is granted to Him step by step in connection with the results of His ministry, and with the varying situation brought about by the behaviour of the people to Him and to His work. But, then, conduct in the present is not decisive for that in the future, it may alter; therefore this foreknowledge has frequently something hypothetical about it. The final purpose of the divine decrees rests assured, but the manner of its realization is definitely fixed; according to the eternal laws of God's holiness and mercy, although in accordance with His mercy and righteousness, it is made dependent on the behaviour of the children of men. This is why He does not know the day and the hour which God in His wisdom will fix (Mark xiii. 32), and why even to the last moment there remains a possibility that God's hand will turn aside the fate that appeared to be approaching irresistibly (Mark xiv. 35 f., xv. 34).

There is nothing in the superior knowledge of Jesus that would suggest a divine omniscience; it is the prophetical knowledge needful for His professional activity, only His life does not exhibit isolated times of prophetical illumination, but an existence constantly and immutably enlightened by the Spirit who rested upon Him. The modern view would gain for Jesus a genuinely human greatness by referring all

this to the exceptional penetration of a judge of men, to the increased divining talent of one who understands the world, the age, and history. But, according to the view of Scripture, human greatness does not consist in a man's producing everything in a natural way out of himself, but in possessing perfect receptivity for God's greatest gift; therefore God's Son, in whom He is well pleased, receives without measure the Spirit (John iii. 34), to whom He owes this superior knowledge. It is given to Him in cases where every analogy from the human power of presentiment ceases; when it is required by the object of His professional activity, a knowledge is granted Him that plainly oversteps the bounds of usual human knowledge. He wins the heart of Nathanael by beholding him where no mere man could (John i. 49, 51); the heart of the Samaritan woman, though she was a stranger to Him, He wins by His acquaintance with her past (John iv. 18). He does not express forebodings regarding the death of Lazarus; He knows it has happened (John xi. 11).[1]

What was true in regard to His higher knowledge held good, too, of His miraculously powerful operation; as little as the Gospels refer the former to His own divine omniscience, can the latter be referred to divine omnipotence, or to His own miraculous faculty. God alone performs miracles; these are events which could not be brought about through the mediation of natural causes, but by means of a directly divine operation. Thus Jesus Himself declares that the works which none other had done (John xv. 24), but which the Father who sent Him had given Him to do on behoof of the preparation for His mission (v. 36), were done, properly speaking, not by Him, but by the Father (xiv. 10). His works are what God shows Him to do (v. 19 f., ix. 3). God's glory is visible in them (John xi. 40); what the man healed is to tell, is what God had done to him (Mark v. 19), and the evangelists represent men as praising God for what He had done for them by Jesus (Matt. xv. 31; Luke ix. 43). But it is in answer to prayer that God gives Him His works to

[1] These traits are by no means peculiar to John's Gospel; passages such as Matt. xvii. 27, Luke v. 4, show that the idea of some such plainly supernatural foreknowledge is current in the other evangelists, and is concealed in the occurrences where they assume it.

do. Jesus sighs and looks to heaven before proceeding to heal (Mark vii. 34). He prays beside the grave of Lazarus; but He knows all along that God hears, and therefore His prayer resolves itself directly into thanksgiving (John xi. 41 f.). The prayer of thanksgiving pronounced over the slender provision (Matt. xiv. 19) shows that it was God who had granted it to Him that the thousands might be satisfied. If it is asked in what way power was given Him to do what no man could accomplish by himself, He Himself refers to the Spirit of God, under whose perpetual influence He is. He casts out devils by the Spirit of God (Matt. xii. 28); it is said in Luke (v. 17) that the power of God was upon Him to heal. It follows from this that the evangelists could not refer His mighty acts to a loftier divine nature, for had not the prophets performed miracles in the power of God when the Spirit came upon them? But this is the difference, that through the aid of God's Spirit, under whose influence He is, Jesus is sure of the continuous and miraculous help of God whenever He needs it for the execution of His Messianic calling. Above Him, says Jesus, will the disciples see the heaven opened and the angels of God, who brought Him this miraculous help, ascending and descending (John i. 52). It is absolutely the same whether it is conceived of as being given by the Spirit who rested upon Him, or by the messengers of God, who were near Him. But what holds good of the divinely miraculous, holds also good of the divine miraculous protection. He can protect Himself as little as He can do anything of Himself (John v. 30). But were He to ask the Father, He would send legions of angels for His protection (Matt. xxvi. 53). And He is sure of His request being granted whenever He asks what is necessary for fulfilling His vocation. We know already how the Spirit made Him sure of what, for this end, He had to do, and what paths He had to tread in accordance with God's will; on these paths divine help and protection would never fail Him. Only this was necessary, that out of unfettered love to God and to His work He should yield to the will of God who had pointed out His path; then He knows everything He would desire to know, can perform all He has to do, and neither person nor circumstance can affect Him.

Will He do this? The equipment in baptism for His vocation is of no value if the fulfilment of the vocation does not follow; indeed, it is of such a kind as only to be effectual when He completely resigns Himself to the will of God, and only employs the talent God has given Him in order to accomplish His will. Is He the Son of God who desires to be nothing but the instrument of the divine will, and will use what is given Him only that He may accomplish the work His Father has given Him to do? We have now reached the test of this; how Jesus stood the trial, is narrated in the story of the temptation.

## CHAPTER X.

### TEMPTATION AND APPROBATION.

ALTHOUGH the life of the Baptist during the days of his youth in the wilderness had other motives beside its furnishing him with a retreat into loneliness for the purposes of self-meditation and of undisturbed communion with God, yet we have an undoubted example of such a retreat in the story of Saul for almost three years in the wilderness of Arabia, whither he retired after his conversion (Gal. i. 17). Jesus also loved such retreats; but if He felt the need of retiring into the wilderness immediately after the occurrence at His baptism, which was so decisive for His life, yet it was not a necessity of His personal life which drove Him thither. It is expressly stated that the Spirit, who always showed Him the will of God as to His calling, drove Him into the wilderness (Mark i. 12), in order that He might be there alone with His God in the uninhabited desert (cf. i. 13), and in communion with Him become clear as to the ways and means whereby He would have, in accordance with that will, to fulfil the calling upon which He was now to enter.[1] We have no particular knowledge of the locality in which Jesus abode. Evidently the oldest narrative already represented Him as led up from the valley of the Jordan into the higher-lying wilderness; and this must have been the so-called wilderness of Judah, a rocky district in the eastern part of Judea, which, bounding the hill country of Judea in the east, stretched away towards the Dead Sea, extending towards its south-western

[1] Although it is probable that the oldest source already so represented it, as if He was led into the wilderness to be tempted there (Matt. iv. 1), yet it is evident that it can only be inferred from the result that this was the object in view; but it lies in the very nature of the case, that with the revelation of the divine command, which is addressed to man, the temptation at the same time approaches Him, to refrain from fulfilling it, and to take the directly opposite course.

extremity. As to the length of time during which this stay in the wilderness lasted, tradition will certainly have possessed no chronologically accurate information; it will only have an approximative estimate, which it formed according to the interval which elapsed between His baptism and His first reappearance on the banks of the Jordan. Accordingly this time was evidently very early reduced to the round number of forty days (Mark i. 13), a number which commended itself so much the more readily, as it reminded them of the forty years' wandering of Israel in the wilderness. In the oldest source it seems merely to have been related that during these days Jesus had nothing to eat, *i.e.* no common food, seeing that He had to fall back upon the most meagre means of support which the wilderness afforded (Luke iv. 2); and this statement is there plainly an echo of the manner in which the ascetic life of the Baptist is usually described (cf. Matt. xi. 18). But if John satisfied himself with the nourishment supplied by the wilderness, in order that he might set himself forth in his very appearance as a strict ascetic, although he could quite easily have provided himself with other means of livelihood, seeing that he lived in continual intercourse with the people, and in the midst of a circle of disciples upon whom he was far from imposing this same asceticism (cf. p. 309), it was different with Jesus, who had purposely gone in quest of the loneliness of the wilderness. Here we can by no means speak of a special observance of the practice of fasting; the fasting of Jesus was simply imposed upon Him as a necessity arising from the situation in which He was placed in the wilderness.[1]

It is altogether inconceivable that any form whatever of tradition should simply have related that Jesus was tempted

[1] As Mark had determined the time during which Jesus abode in the wilderness to be forty days, so the first evangelist conceived of His fasting during that time as miraculous, like that related of Moses and Elias (Ex. xxxiv. 28; 1 Kings xix. 8; cf. Matt. iv. 2); and, owing to his exaggerating the parallel expression, even Luke appears to think of a complete abstinence from food (Luke iv. 2; cf. vii. 33). From this, however, there arises the self-contradictory notion that, although Jesus was nevertheless miraculously maintained alive, now at the end of the forty days' hunger, the natural consequence of fasting ensued, and that thereupon the temptation, which connects itself primarily with that feeling, first commenced, although, according to Mark i. 13, it lasted the whole of the time that He spent in the wilderness.

by Satan in the wilderness, and that it was only afterwards that a later form of the same tradition attempted to form an idea of the course of this temptation in its details. For that first form of the narrative would have been altogether awanting in intuitive evidence and comprehensibility. Mark could write as he has done (i. 12 f.) only on the supposition that narratives were already in circulation which referred to individual temptations, and thereby gave men an idea of the manner in which Satan tempted Jesus; and with reference to these narratives he would simply point, in the introduction to his Gospel, to the fact that the Messiah who had been anointed in baptism was also approved as such in temptation (cf. p. 49). Now, however, it unquestionably follows from the essential and, in part at least, literal agreement of the first and third evangelists, that an account of the three individual temptations already lay before them both; and according to what we have discovered as to the origin of these Gospels, this account must have stood in the apostolic source. If we are not to regard such an account as a myth or a pure fiction, we can trace it back only to a communication made by Jesus Himself, seeing that it treats of events that befell Him in the loneliness of the desert. One of His own parables has been justly referred to (Matt. xii. 29), the intended application of which to Himself presupposes that, before He began in His official life His victorious campaign against the kingdom of Satan, He must have vanquished even Satan; and this can only have happened in a decisive instance. Here, therefore, there is evidently an allusion to communications made by Jesus, in which He had given an account of severe temptations undergone by Him previous to the commencement of His official life; these temptations He invariably recognised to be Satanic, and He would have His disciples also recognise them as such.

Such temptations must some time or other have come in the way of Jesus; for there is no morally valuable self-surrender to the will of God which is not clearly conscious of the antithesis excluded by it, and susceptible of the full feeling for the charm possessed by ways that are directly opposed to the divine will. This charm lies in this, that these godless ways seem to promise a higher satisfaction to

the natural, and in itself by no means sinful, inclination for self-preservation and self-advancement; and the value of the moral decision depends upon this, that this satisfaction is declined in order that God's commands may be fulfilled. Now Jesus had gone into the wilderness for the express purpose of becoming conscious of the ways which the will of God pointed out to Him for the carrying out of His calling, and of deciding for these ways with a clear discernment of the significance of His decision. For this end it was not necessary that the inclination and desire to enter upon godless paths should be roused within Him, for such an inclination can emerge only from the sinful basis of the human heart; nor was it even required that it was only after an inner conflict that He should decide for the divine will, for such a conflict is not conceivable without a vacillation which, even though momentary, is nevertheless already sinful. But meditation over the divinely ordained ways whereby He was to fulfil His vocation, must necessarily have presented to His mind the picture also of those which were in direct opposition to the divine will. Of course, we must not think of an idle, and in the long run by no means altogether sinless, play of the reflective faculty or of the imagination with these images. For the circumstances under which He would have to work, the notions and desires which dominated His surroundings, of themselves showed Him that way of carrying out His calling which was contrary to the divine will, as lying nearest to His hand and apparently justifiable. The charm of this devious path lay in the satisfaction which acquiescence in these wishes promised to His natural human feeling, and in the success which it promised to His labours; whereas the will of God and acquiescence in it demanded, here as everywhere, self-denial and conflict. That Jesus nevertheless recognised as a Satanic delusion the satisfaction which these devious paths promised to His natural age and to its lawful needs, and therefore decisively rejected everything which was hostile to the will of God,—in this lay the moral value of His voluntary decision for that will, a decision which, in the hour of trial, brought about His approbation.

The question whether Jesus could have communicated these inner experiences to His disciples in a form which sub-

stantially still lies before us in our Gospels (Matt. iv. 3–11; Luke iv. 3–13), depends primarily upon this other question, whether He conceived of the power of sin, which seeks to delude man as to that which is demanded by the will of God, and to set before him a higher satisfaction of his natural human needs, at the cost of acting in a manner contrary to it, as a superhuman spiritual power which endeavours to influence men so as to hinder them from fulfilling the divine will and disturb God's work upon earth. It is true that in the form of a kingdom which is ruled by Satan, and in conflict with God and His kingdom, this idea was foreign to the Old Testament; but even there it already had its points of contact, and in the time of Jesus this form had, as a matter of fact, been long familiar to the orthodox Jews, whatever may have been the influences under which the deeper knowledge of the nature and power of the sin which deceives and dominates men had so shaped itself. Accordingly, even these, who believe that they themselves must give up this notion, allow that, looking at the matter historically, it would be altogether inexplicable how Jesus should not have shared it. It is not only that in the earlier Gospels He speaks so often of the devil or Satan as the sovereign of a kingdom of evil spirits,—in John also this Satan appears so decisively as the ruler of this world, *i.e.* as the superhuman power that dominates sinful humanity, that all appeals to the figurative character of these discourses, with which even Schleiermacher believed he could get rid of this fact, are altogether insufficient. If we will not assume, with the older rationalism, that, with reference to a point that so intimately concerned man's religious and moral life, Jesus allowed Himself an accommodation to the prevailing popular notion, an accommodation which appears to be very questionable, whether we regard it pedagogically or morally, then we must grant that He Himself shared in it. That being the case, however, the picture of the godless ways, whereby He might strive to attain His ends, and of the charm which these had for the natural human feeling, this picture, which did not arise up out of the impure depths of His own sinful desires, but presented itself to Him in the world surrounding Him, could not but appear to Him as an illusion of Satan, who endeavoured to tempt Him to deviate from

the way of God. Because it was all-important in His eyes that His disciples also should recognise that the manner of fulfilling His vocation, which was chosen by Him, was that which had been ordained by God, and that that which He rejected, however much it seemed to have its justification in traditional ideas and wishes, was one which received its seductive power from the deceit of Satan; for this very reason He attempted to give them a full comprehension of the inner occurrences in which He overcame the temptation. It is quite in keeping, however, with His usual manner of teaching and speaking, for Him not to analyse these inner occurrences in an abstract didactic way, but to present them to His disciples in a plastic figurative form. He frequently speaks of a coming of Satan, where He means an inner temptation occasioned by Him (Luke xxii. 31; John xiv. 30), while the notion of a bodily appearing of Satan is altogether foreign to the whole of the New Testament. When the thoughts, which are traced back to Satanic illusion, are clothed in the form of a conversation with Him, the case does not stand otherwise than when the revelation, which is traced back to God, is represented as a word spoken by Him or His Spirit to the spirit of man. The change of situation, however, is necessarily connected with the figurative and plastic form, in which Jesus sought to give a vivid idea of the seductive thoughts that occurred to His mind. When, lastly, Jesus clothes the thoughts with which He overcame the temptation in the form of words of Scripture, He only seeks thereby to point out to His disciples that no special enlightenment was required, but that simple obedience to the revelation of God contained in Scripture, of itself fitted Him for recognising these devious ways as Satanic illusions, and for refusing to follow them.[1]

[1] The false literal interpretation of our narrative insists, it is true, upon this, that it receives its true significance only if Satan presented himself before Jesus "face to face," and that he must therefore have appeared in some disguise or other, however little even one who has the heartiest belief in miracles is able to form a real notion of such a disguise. Bnt even if that were the case, it was only from the character of the demands that were made upon Him, or of the suggestions that were presented to Him, that Jesus could recognise the Satanic nature of the form that stood before Him. If, however, it is maintained, with Hofmann, that here "tempter and temptation appeared upon the scene undis-

The first temptation of Jesus is generally regarded as a temptation to make a selfish or even godless misuse of His power to work miracles. But neither does our narrative indicate that His fasting was laid upon Him by God, and that, therefore, the endeavour to procure for Himself the means of satisfaction was contrary to His command; nor should it be regarded as an arbitrary abuse of His power to work miracles, if Jesus makes use of the forces at His disposal, in order to procure the means of stilling His hunger, *i.e.* of preserving Himself, in conformity with His duty. Above all, however, this view depends upon an altogether erroneous idea of the power of Jesus to work miracles. For Jesus had not at His disposal a power to work miracles, which, like every natural gift, He might misuse; and such a power there can never be. According to the representation of the Gospels, God, who alone does wonders, by means of His Spirit gives to Jesus in each individual case the power to perform His works, and, naturally, only where and how He wills. Accordingly it may happen, and indeed it will happen, that with misery around Him, crying for help, yet He cannot aid, because God commands Him not to do so. Undoubtedly it was one of the most difficult tasks laid upon Him in the course of the life that He led in the fulfilment of His Messianic calling, not to render assistance even in cases where

guised and openly, as they had never done before, and have never done since," this cannot increase the significance of the temptation, but must rather make it altogether illusory; for it is only the hardened villain whom evil as such entices, whereas all temptation depends upon this, that evil presents itself to us in a form in which its character is not at once discernible, but conceals itself behind the appearance of that which is justifiable, necessary, or at least desirable. The magical change of situation could only have been actually brought about if Jesus followed Satan in a manner the morality of which is exceedingly questionable, or if He had been delivered by God into his power, a supposition which is out of keeping with all the other views of the New Testament, according to which Satan has power only over those who have surrendered themselves to sin, and therewith to him. And although the first evangelist already seems to have understood the traditional narrative as referring to a bodily appearance of Satan, and to magical transportations effected by him, yet the account given by Luke does not suggest to us anything more than an inner address of the tempter and a translation by means of the demonic spirit into the tempting situation, *i.e.* it suggests nothing more than a presentation of it to the mind. Accordingly, there is no reason to assume that the form of the narrative that lay before the two evangelists gave occasion for the former conception.

His natural feeling, the desires of the men around Him, and His love to them, urged Him most pressingly to do so, but to wait and see whether and how God would bid Him come to their help. The whole possibility of His fulfilling His calling depended upon His solution of this problem; here lay the mystery of His power to work miracles. For if He waited not upon the indication given by God, if He would help men without His command, He could not do so at all; and the experience of His own weakness must have led Him to doubt whether He was really God's elect One. But was He not always directly subjected to the test, whether He would at all times perform this difficult task? If He was really to be the Elect One of Jehovah, the great Helper of His people, the One who should put an end to all its want, then He must surely in the first place be able to help Himself in His own extremity. He was in the wilderness and suffered hunger. Command, then, that these stones become bread; so speaks the voice of the tempter; and if Thou canst not do so, then Thou art not the Son of God. Of course, just as little as the hunger, which was the consequence of His insufficient nourishment in the wilderness, was not felt till a definite moment, just so little did the tempter need to approach Him, and whisper this temptation to Him only at that moment; it is His whole situation in the wilderness that takes advantage, so to speak, of His natural human feeling to challenge Him to make trial of His power to help, and, in the event of His not possessing it, to make Him doubtful of His calling for that purpose.

But in this thought, which the contrast between His situation in the wilderness and His high calling presents to His mind, Jesus recognises the voice of the tempter. For it is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"[1] (Deut. viii. 3). In these words it is asserted, that the life of man does not depend only upon the means of nourishment, for which

[1] It is in vain that attempts have been made to make this word of Scripture suit the false conception of the sense of the temptation; for it neither speaks of trust in a word of God, who miraculously supports life, nor of a fulfilment of the divine command. It is in vain that attention has been called to the historical connection in which the word was spoken, and where it refers to the miraculous food provided to the people in the wilderness; for it is not the

his natural wants long, but also upon everything which God bids him do; and that accordingly it is not our natural wish, however justifiable it may appear, but only the divine will which has been made known to us, that gives the rule for its right preservation and furtherance. The Messiah has also been subjected to this universal rule of human life. If God through His Spirit bids Him go into the wilderness, He thereby also tells Him that He must be satisfied with the insufficient nourishment which the wilderness affords. If He willed to provide Him with food, He would bid Him change the stones into bread. If God does not do so, then neither should nor can the Messiah; and nevertheless He remains the Son of God, the One who is called to the highest vocation. Therewith He has overcome the temptation and laid down the principle, which is once for all to guide the life He is to lead in the fulfilment of His calling. That life depends not only upon the means whereby the promised help is expected, and to which the wish of the natural man would fain render assistance, but also upon every command of God, which tells Him where and how He is to come to man's aid. For this command He will listen, upon it He will wait, and then, but only then, He will be able to effect everything which belongs to the fulfilment of His calling.

The second temptation is also frequently interpreted in a totally false manner. It is often regarded as an ostentatious miracle of display, by means of which Jesus sought to take the favour of the multitude by storm. In that case He must, of course, have really stood upon the pinnacle of the temple, with the gaping multitude in the quadrangle below; before this multitude, it is supposed, He was to hurl Himself down, in order to show them that as the elect One of God He remained uninjured. But our narrative does not say a single word regarding the multitude of people that was absolutely indispensable for this situation; and could this absurd play-acting really have had any seductive charm whatever for Jesus? Could He really have yearned for the approbation of a crowd, which measured the grandeur of

manner of that time, not even of Jesus, to explain such words by means of their historical connection, but to consider what, according to their language, they have to say to us in the present time.

its Messiah in accordance with the number of fathoms He could leap without receiving any injury? It is not the applause of the multitude that is set before Him as the means of seduction, but the promise contained in Scripture (Ps. xci. 11 f.),—a promise which assures all the pious of the miraculous protection of God, and which must therefore apply above all to the Messiah. In order to appropriate this promise to Himself, Jesus certainly does not need to stand upon the pinnacle of the temple. The life that He led in the discharge of His Messianic calling will often represent Him as threatened with danger and persecuted by enemies; and in such cases it will be an exceedingly natural suggestion, that, in order to put the certainty of His high calling to the proof, He should boldly hurl Himself in the face of all danger, instead of adopting the way of deliverance pointed out by natural human prudence. He communicated these thoughts to His disciples, and in His plastic, concrete manner exemplified them by means of an extreme instance of the kind. If He were to stand upon the pinnacle of the temple, threatened by enemies, ought He to daringly hazard a leap, which appears to hurl Him into immediate destruction, because He knows that the angels of God will bear Him up on their hands, so that His foot shall not dash against a stone? But even a false trust in God can become a source of temptation to us, no less than despair with regard to our calling, when God's longed-for help is delayed. For again it is written: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. vi. 16), *i.e.* thou shalt not by means of a mad daring act at your own pleasure summon forth God's miraculous protection. This is most surely promised to the man of piety, when threatened with danger while walking in the ways pointed out to him by God, not, however, when in a self-willed way he chooses dangerous paths, in order to put this to the proof. The divine promise no more protects even the Messiah upon paths chosen by Himself, than there stands at His disposal a divine power to work miracles, which He Himself chooses to perform.[1]

[1] It is clear that this word of Scripture is far from suiting the traditional way of regarding the temptation; for a snatching after popular favour, which would have led Him to risk such a foolhardy deed, is reprehensible on grounds totally

There was *one* way whereby Jesus could bring to Himself and others the assistance that was longed for in every extremity, and thus be raised above all danger; and in the third temptation this way presents itself to Him. It was the way of the worldly Messiahship, which His people desired from Him. If He placed Himself at the head of His enthusiastic people, and obtained for them in an earthly sense the dominion of the world, into which the prophetic picture of the hope of a spiritual dominion of the world had been changed in His day, all difficulty and danger would cease at once. He could attain this goal, but at what cost? He would have to acquiesce in the wishes of the people, instead of obeying the will of God, which pointed out to Him a way for His working that was totally different from the short straight way to the royal throne. Here the antithesis between self-chosen and divinely-appointed ways reached its climax; in the first two temptations it presented itself to Him only in a covert manner, now it was clear and direct: the will of God or the will of men. But behind the latter Jesus clearly perceived Satan, who, as the adversary of God, directs the sinful hearts of men and influences their wishes. That way to earthly

different from that assigned in the passage quoted. Besides, it is only the assumption of an actual magical transportation of Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple that leads to the adoption of this false interpretation. By introducing them both in the same manner, by means of an allusion, viz., to His Messianic calling, the narrative itself points out the inner connection of the two first temptations. In fact, the first involves a self-willed summoning forth of divine miraculous assistance, just as the second involves an appeal to divine miraculous protection; and in both temptations the point in question is, in truth, the testing of the Messianic calling of Him, to whom both that assistance and this protection had been promised on the occasion of His baptism. On the other hand, however, the two temptations form a certain contrast, inasmuch as, the divine miraculous assistance not being granted, the first would make it natural for Jesus to be perplexed as to the reality of His Messianic calling, whereas, in the full consciousness of His calling, He might be led by the second to an exaggeration of confidence in the divine promise; while both are to be overcome only in unselfish acquiescence in the divine will and in obedience to it. From both sides it is plain that the order of the temptations as given by Matthew is the only correct one. Luke, of course, can hardly have been induced to give the second place to the third temptation by the trifling consideration that the way from the wilderness towards Jerusalem leads over the hill country, an opinion which has often found favour since it was propounded by Schleiermacher; he was led to do so simply by His view of the gradation of the temptations, which, however, can be more particularly determined only by means of uncertain conjectures.

glory was by subjection to the adversary of God, by acquiescence in his will. With this the temptation reached its climax, and also its final decision. Acquiescence of any kind in the will of the world around Him and of Satan, who dominated it, was an encroachment on the sovereign rights of God, to whom alone service and worship belong. With the recognition of this fact the temptation was overcome. He who has resolved to obey truthfully and continually the will of God, which is revealed in Scripture (Deut. vi. 13), has but one answer to the suggestion that He should acquiesce in the will of the world, even when that suggestion offers Him the highest rewards, the answer, viz., "Get thee hence, Satan."[1]

When the temptation was overcome, and Jesus had proved Himself to be the One who was at all times resolved to fulfil the will of God, and it alone, then, and not till then, did the equipment, which at baptism was given Him for His calling, come upon Him in full power and actuality. Under a figure, which He has also used elsewhere (John i. 51), Jesus told His disciples that more was given Him as a reward of such a confirmation of His fidelity, than He could ever have gained by these false ways. Now the angels of God were always around Him, to bring to Him divine assistance and protection; when on the ways of His God, He had command at all times, not of the kingdoms of the world, but of the heavenly hosts. It may be that even

[1] Jesus certainly related to His disciples that He stood in spirit upon a mountain and beheld the glory of the world, which might be His, if He would resolve to turn aside from the will of God. But for this purpose there was no need that Satan should lead Him to an actual mountain; for even supposing it were as high as the first evangelist conceives it, yet no one could look from it over the whole world; and if Satan was able to show Him the whole world by means of a magical illusion, as Luke appears to think, it was not required that they should ascend a mountain. Above all, however, it is upon this temptation that the literal interpretation is hopelessly wrecked. For the suggestion that He would fall down before the actual devil and worship him, is a suggestion which even he who is but moderately pious would without hesitation and with abhorrence refuse to entertain. Herein lies the moral achievement of Jesus, that He recognises that indirect homage, which He would have paid to the devil by acquiescing in the wishes of the people, as that which it really is, and also as that which is absolutely excluded by the obligation to worship God, which He accordingly expressly imports into the passage He quotes from Deuteronomy (vi. 13).

the first evangelist thought that they ministered unto the hungry one with food, after the analogy of what is recorded regarding Elijah (1 Kings xix. 5 f.); undoubtedly Mark so conceived it as meaning that in the uninhabited desert, where only the beasts of the wilderness were around Him, the angels of God, who were more to Him than all human help, were always at the service of the approved Messiah (i. 13). But in the earliest narrative this feature can only have referred in a much more comprehensive sense to the unbroken intercourse with His heavenly Father, which was guaranteed to Jesus by the confirmation of His fidelity, an intercourse which provided Him with everything which He required for the fulfilling of His calling, whether we think of it as being brought about by means of God's Spirit, as it descended upon Him at baptism, or by means of the ministration of His angels, as here.

If we will not acquiesce in this conception of the history of the temptation as the history of an inner occurrence, which Jesus communicated to His disciples, nothing else remains than to regard it as pure myth.[1] But this conception already shows its untenableness in this, that it has not succeeded in pointing out a sure point of departure for the formation of such a myth. At one time, the point of departure is the temptation of our first parents in Paradise; at another, the temptation of Abraham or of the children of Israel in the wilderness, so as to obtain here an antitype of these; again it is the abstract idea of the antithesis between the Messiah and His adversary,—an idea which must have ultimately expressed

[1] The correct conception of this history has already been essentially established by Weisse, Neander, and Ullmann, although there has too frequently been a tendency, on the one hand, to drag in a superabundance of one's own thoughts, with an appeal to the symbolical form in which the narrative is clothed; while, on the other, the salient points of the several temptations have not been rightly understood. The common objections to this view proceed partly on the assumption that it reduces the whole temptation to an empty play of thought, and partly on the assumption that to transfer it to the inner life of Jesus injures His sinlessness; they do not touch the representation which we have given above. Since the notion of a misunderstanding of a parable, which was Schleiermacher's idea, cannot be adopted, for the simple reason that neither the form, nor the purport, nor the aim of our narrative offers any analogy to the parables with which we are acquainted, Strauss has here also, after Usteri, de Wette, etc., attempted to carry out the mythical interpretation.

itself in the notion of a conflict between the two, and the conquest of the latter by the former; and, remarkably enough, both points of departure led to the scenery of the wilderness, which was suggested by the historical situation of Israel, or by the popular idea that the wilderness was the abode of the dæmons. Above all, however, it breaks down upon the utter impossibility of construing the three several temptations, with their deep ethical import, by means of the mythical process. However externally we may regard these temptations, as temptations to sensual lust, to ambition, and to inordinate desire of power, the vain efforts of Strauss show best of all that they can no more be derived from the history of the wandering in the wilderness, to which, moreover, only the number of the days of the temptation, and the circumstance that all the passages of Scripture quoted by Jesus are borrowed from the Book of Deuteronomy would point, than from the idea of a conflict with Satan, who, besides, does not appear upon the scene here as an opponent of Jesus, but as a flattering tempter. For this very reason, criticism, dissatisfied with this view, is always returning to the search for a historical kernel, which, however, can be gained only if we trace back the whole narrative to the testimony of Jesus Himself.[1]

When Luke states that the tempter departed from Jesus only for a season (iv. 13), he rightly takes for granted that

[1] The older rationalists, in whose footsteps J. P. Lange still walks, already substituted for the actual devil a common man, a Pharisee or a Sadducee, who in the name, or at least in the spirit of the devil, sought to gain over Jesus to his political programme. They did so without perceiving that they by no means got rid, in this way, of the worst impossibilities of the false, literal interpretation. Or they made the whole occurrence consist of a vision (which Olshausen, following some of the Fathers, even traced back to the working of the devil), without considering that they thereby did away altogether with its moral significance. In more recent times many have surrendered the form of our narrative as being legendary, while maintaining that it contains some historical kernel or other, whether, like Schenkel and Keim, they have attempted with more or less skill to analyse psychologically the inner conflicts which Jesus had to pass through when He entered upon His public ministry; or whether, like Pfleiderer and Hünefeld, they have endeavoured to find out historical events in His official life, the temptations connected with which are gathered together in this narrative. But as soon as one refuses to fall back upon communications made by Jesus to His disciples, one has no sure ground to go upon in pointing out any historical kernel whatever in this tradition, and it even becomes altogether doubtful whether there is any justification for maintaining His stay in the wilderness to be historical.

the temptation which was surmounted in the wilderness was renewed from time to time during His life, and that, too, not only when altogether new tasks were laid upon Him as His destined Passion drew near, but also as often as it was necessary to carry out in detail the fundamental resolutions which were formed on the occasion of the first assault. Not only does the proclamation of the apostles assert that Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are (Heb. ii. 18, iv. 15), but in Luke, Jesus Himself also speaks of His temptations, which His disciples have experienced along with Him (xxii. 28); and in Mark He characterizes Peter as His tempter (viii. 33). The manner in which He sets Himself forth as an example (Matt. xi. 29; John xiii. 15), or in which He makes the divine favour, which He enjoys, dependent upon His fulfilment of the divine will (John viii. 29), is not compatible with the notion of a holiness belonging to Him by nature, the attainment of which cost Him no moral labour and no conflict. For Him, too, it was necessary by constant self-denial to refuse to follow the paths that promised Him a satisfaction of His natural human wishes, and by an obedient acquiescence in the divine will to resolve upon those ways that were right; as in the case of all men, this was and remained the moral task of His life. Hence the need of prayer (Mark i. 35, vi. 46, xiv. 35), a need which Luke especially delights in setting forth (iii. 21, vi. 12, ix. 18, 28, xi. 1), and which only he can feel who has still to strengthen himself for the fulfilment of the moral task assigned him. For this moral labour, however, every situation which furnishes occasion to choose one's own godless ways, and promises in consequence the maintenance and furtherance of one's own life, becomes a source of temptation; and this temptation cannot be overcome without a conflict with natural impulse, which, though sinless in itself, becomes sinful if, when the higher divine will demands its suppression, the human will acquiesces in it, and asserts it in opposition to the will of God. This conflict can be carried through victoriously without wavering and doubts, but it is renewed again and again as often as life brings new tasks. Accordingly, Jesus refuses to be called good (Mark x. 18). There is none good but one, that is, God. Man can only *become* good, because even after the most

perfect solution of his moral problem, new problems are being continually presented to him, until, having reached the goal, he is approved as perfect.

But have we any right to assume that Jesus solved that problem for all time? Can it be historically established that His life was sinless? This has been most confidently denied by Strauss and Renan; and even enthusiastic adorers of Jesus stand in doubt as to whether His highest perfection, according to which He was altogether that which He should be, excludes all human weaknesses and onesidedness, and includes the perfection of all virtues. Of course, we shall not attempt to prove the contrary by means of an inquisitorial examination into His walk and conversation, or by means of a judicial hearing of witnesses. For it must be granted that the meagre selection of narratives concerning Him which tradition has preserved for us leaves wide departments, yea, even the most important portion of His outer and inner life, altogether untouched, and that His adorers were not interested in reporting anything regarding Him that was offensive. An appeal has been made to the testimony of Pilate and his wife, to that of the centurion under the cross, and of Judas; yea, even to the silent testimony of His enemies, who could not bring anything tenable against Him; but all these merely prove that His external life was blameless. Even the argument drawn from the pure moral tendencies and results of His life, although it is very important, and absolutely excludes all immoral motives and means, nevertheless does not warrant us in inferring more than a moral purity, or at the best, a relative moral greatness. It is altogether different with the testimony of the apostles, who all with one accord ascribe to Him perfect freedom from sin (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 22, iii. 18; 1 John ii. 29, iii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15). And this must not be placed on the same level with the testimony of Xenophon regarding his teacher, for it goes hand in hand with the consciousness of the universal sinfulness of humanity, and of its need of redemption, and is therefore certainly to be taken in the strictest sense. It is true, however, that even this testimony does not depend upon an exhaustive investigation, but partly upon the general impression made by His person, and partly upon a dogmatic postulate, which, considering the

experience they had had of the ministry of their exalted Master, they were perfectly justified in forming, but which cannot from the nature of the case establish any historical proof.

Nevertheless we may enter upon this proof, and that, too, by starting from the unquestionable utterances of the self-consciousness of Jesus, which, from the very fact that the evidence they afford is indirect, forbid any suspicion that they have been forged on account of dogmatic motives. One of the earliest of these utterances already leads us to an altitude of the religious moral consciousness where the world of sin, with its shadows, is altogether left behind. He to whom the fulfilling of the will of God has become the deepest need of His inner life, He to whom this is as necessary as food is required for the life of His body (John iv. 34), can sin no more. He who can say of Himself that He always does those things that please God (John viii. 29), must either be self-deceived in the saddest manner by sinful pride, or His life must bear testimony to His word. It is true that when Jesus asks: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46), nothing more can be inferred from the silence of His adversaries than that His public life was free from reproach. But if He, who so often accused the pattern men of His time of hypocrisy, makes use of this evident external blamelessness of His to deduce from it a sinlessness which would guarantee His truthfulness, He was either more wicked than any hypocrite scourged by Him, or He must have been conscious that the most hidden recesses of His heart and life, as well as His outward walk and conversation, were free from reproach. It is vain to argue that the language in which the Fourth Gospel sets forth these utterances is quite destitute of weight. For in the earlier Gospels also, He demands repentance from all men (Mark i. 15), He takes for granted that they are all evil by nature (Matt. vii. 11), with regard to all His disciples He declares that an infinite debt has been forgiven them (Matt. xviii. 24, 35), and He teaches them to pray daily for the forgiveness of their debts. But there never appears in Himself the slightest trace of any feeling of penitence; no prayer for forgiveness crosses His lips; He never gives expression to the consciousness of in

any way enjoying for the first time a peace with God. He is and remains the Son of God, the One who is conscious of the love of His heavenly Father, while all others must first become such. He sets Himself over against the whole sinful world as its Redeemer, yea, even ultimately as its Judge.

These are facts which no criticism can shake. They speak for themselves. The dilemma is one from which there is no escape. He who has removed from the eyes of us all the bandage of self-deception and of self-righteousness, who has taught us all to seek forgiveness where it is to be found, He was either the chief of sinners, for self-righteous pride is the root and climax of all sin, or He was the only sinless One, upon whose life the peace of God rested. Not because He knew not the temptation and the conflict, without which no man can reach the summit of moral perfection, but because He approved Himself in every temptation and gained the victory in every conflict. Thus He became that which He would not be called until the trial of His whole life was accomplished, He became the absolutely Good, the image of His Father in heaven.

# CHAPTER XI.

## FORMATION OF THE EARLIEST DISCIPLESHIPS.

THE supreme ecclesiastical court in Israel was the Sanhedrin.[1] It held its sittings in Jerusalem, and consisted of seventy-one members, separated by the evangelists into high priests, elders, and scribes. Whether the elders belonged merely to the laity is not perfectly certain. The scribes were the legal (judicial) assessors. Among them would be numbered the members of the Pharisaical party, who long previously had gained entrance into the supreme court, and by intellectual influence largely controlled it, while the leading personalities proper belonged to the first class, which formed the kernel of the Sadducean party. At its head stood naturally the high priest actually in office, although this title was borne by those who had been so, and probably too by the members of the prominent families from whom the high priests were taken. The office of high priest was at first hereditary in the family of Aaron, and was held for life. But even since the Syrian period many depositions had occurred owing to the influence of the civil rulers; Herod the Great had even allowed this honour to be conferred on common priests. During the past years especially the changes had been many. In the beginning of the reign of Tiberius the procurator Valerius Gratus deposed the high priest Annas (Ananus); and about 18 A.D., after three high priests had rapidly succeeded each other, Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, a son-in-law of Annas (John xviii. 13), was appointed

[1] Jewish tradition has no historical basis for referring, as it does, the origin of this court to Moses; indeed, it is manifest from the original Greek name (Synedrium) that this college was first formed in the Grecian age. When the Jewish writer Jost disputes the fact that at the time of Jesus a constitutional Synedrium did exist, we may understand this from the very unimportant *rôle* which it has played in the greatest drama of the world's history; but there is no historical foundation for its existence.

high priest, and continued to hold the office until the deposition of the procurator Pontius Pilate, 36 A.D. But throughout this period Annas—several of whose sons were made high priests—appears to have exercised the most signal influence, on account of the great respect in which he was held by Jews and Romans, so much so that Luke mentions him before the actual high priest (iii. 2). But it cannot be proved that he was the high priest's deputy, or along with him president of the Synedrium. It is affirmed with possible truth that the college had a president of its own. Probably the high priest actually in office presided.

We do not know in how far the Roman supreme authority acquiesced in the Sanhedrin retaining a competence in civil affairs; but its power in religious matters extended over the whole of Palestine, indeed it was recognised, though voluntarily, by the dispersion. It possessed a full course of procedure, could issue commands for imprisonment, hear witnesses and dispense punishments; but condemnation to death had to be confirmed and executed by the governor (John xviii. 31). Such a court could not refrain from noticing a movement like that stirred up by the Baptist; yea, more, it was forced to enter into communication with the prophet on the banks of the Jordan, in order to discover what it was he purposed and on what he based his ministry, for it would be undoubtedly behoving to pass sentence on him as a false prophet if he should prove himself one. It seems to have been owing to the incitation of the Pharisaical party that the Sanhedrin at last resolved to send a deputation of priests to John, who with much display appeared officially at the Jordan accompanied by Levitical attendants (John i. 19, 24). On account of the general liberty in regard to doctrine and the innocuousness of the preaching of repentance, the Council might not have felt itself called on to take notice of the Baptist. But the Pharisees in the Council could not remain indifferent when a man in whose legal devoutness they found little to censure (comp. Mark ii. 18), but who kept himself completely detached from their party, obtained a far-reaching influence with the people, such as till now they alone had possessed; and more than this, his reference to the nearness of the Messiah's advent touched their highest ideals.

Laconic though the evangelist is, for his report of the negotiations between the deputation and the Baptist depended entirely upon the testimony to Jesus given by the latter, yet it is manifest from the words of the Baptist that the delegates in their questioning proceeded on the assumption that John believed himself called to bring about the Messianic advent when he proclaimed its approach with such assurance (i. 20). On his repelling this emphatically, he was then asked whether he was one of the Messiah's forerunners in the sense of the popular expectation (i. 21 f.). We understand from this that this anticipation took two forms. Either the bodily return of Elias to prepare for the Messianic advent was looked for on the ground of a prophecy in Malachi (Mal. iii. 23), or it was expected that the prophet promised in a Mosaic passage (Deut. xviii. 18) would act like Moses (comp. John vii. 40), although it is clear from other passages (John i. 45, vi. 14) that the latter prophecy referred directly to the Messiah. We understand how the Baptist could neither allude to that superstitious anticipation nor compare himself with the great founder of the theocracy. He was contented to call himself the preparer of the way; from him in the desert the summons went forth to the people to make straight the way for the coming Jehovah (i. 23). After this explanation the delegates were surprised that he should baptize, which is regarded with justice by the evangelist as a sign of the dogged non-receptivity of their usual conceptions. They were right in connecting it with the nearing Messianic advent; but as John was not able to present his relation to this advent in terms of their current conceptions, they were disposed to view his baptism as a pretension (i. 24). He pointed out, however, that he laid claim to nothing by his baptism of water, because the baptism peculiar to the Messianic age was a totally different institution, and by this he undoubtedly meant the pouring out of the Spirit promised by the prophets, which might be regarded as an immersion in the element of the Spirit, *i.e.* as a baptism of the Spirit (comp. John i. 33). That the time was come for this preparative baptism of water, although he was not one of the expected forerunners, he proves by this, that One had already appeared among them, who should come after him, *i.e.* appear after

him, historically, and yet was so far exalted above him that he did not count himself worthy to perform for Him the meanest menial duties (i. 26 f.). This makes it clear that Jesus had already been baptized, for it was not till the occasion of His baptism that John himself recognised Jesus to be the Messiah; then it was that Jesus was anointed Messiah, so that the Baptist could call Him one who had appeared in their midst (comp. i. 33 f.). Nothing could be urged against this, and these explanations offered no occasion for interference.

The older tradition contained no detail of this transaction except the word in which the Baptist refers to his great successor (Mark i. 7 f.); and even Luke acknowledged that this was spoken because there was an inclination to look upon him as the Messiah (iii. 15). But the apostolical source retains even yet the original form employed by the Baptist in characterizing the superiority of his successor to himself, not considering himself worthy to perform the service of a slave, such as the carrying of sandals, and placing his water baptism in direct opposition with the baptism of the Spirit (Matt. iii. 11).[1] But even here the older tradition

[1] Of the traditionary utterances of the Baptist, Mark only records the prophecy of the Messiah who was to follow immediately. In his pictorial manner he expresses still more plastically the abasement of the Baptist before the Messiah, which was so profound, that he did not regard himself worthy to bend down and—by his very posture exhibiting the deepest subjection—unloose the latchets of His sandals (Mark i. 7). This is essentially repeated by John (i. 27) in this same accented form which was later in common use (comp. Luke iii. 16). The fact of the baptism by fire at the judgment, when, under the form of fire, the wrath of God is represented as being manifested (Matt. iii. 11), being mentioned in the apostolic source along with the Messiah's baptism by the Spirit, which, judging from John i. 33, is probably expressly made mention of, is connected with this other fact, that in Matthew this word is combined with the Baptist's threatening of judgment. It is by no means unlikely that this most original representation is founded upon an authentic saying of the Baptist's. According to the older evangelists, it appears as if this were an utterance before the baptism of Jesus; but this arises from their lack of acquaintance with the historical condition. There is no reference to the Messiah having appeared, but it is reported along with what they have otherwise to relate of the Baptist before they pass from the history of John to that of Jesus with the baptism of the latter by the former. Opposed to this is the remembrance still contained in Acts xiii. 25, of this being attested when the Baptist was finishing his course, not meaning his imprisonment, but the time when by the appearing of Jesus (John i. 26) his activity came to a close.

contains one remembrance of the transactions recorded in the Fourth Gospel. Our first three Gospels unanimously represent the passage in Isaiah, by which the Baptist had characterized his appearance (Isa. xl. 3 ; comp. John i. 23), as a prophecy of his history (Matt. iii. 3 ; Mark i. 3 ; Luke iii. 4–6). They present the same deviation from the original text in causing the prophets to speak of a voice crying in the wilderness, while Isaiah only mentions the preparation of the way in the wilderness. Modern criticism, which discovers no historical tradition in the Fourth Gospel, must, of course, assume inversely that it transformed the general reference made by the Baptist to a great successor, and contained in the older tradition, into a distinct testimony to the Messiahship of Him who had already appeared. In order to bring into prominence His bearing on the unbelief of the people, this was solemnly proclaimed before a deputation from the supreme ecclesiastical authority, and the application to the Baptist of the passage from Isaiah, which had first been made by the older tradition, now became a statement by the Baptist himself. But it is certain that all that was of importance to the fourth evangelist in the history of the Baptist was his testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus ; the situation when this witness was given was to him of such great importance that reference is made to it at the commencement of his narrative (John i. 19). It is equally certain that from his previous conception of the person of Jesus, he least of all would be likely to invent such a scene which solemnly attested the Messiahship of Jesus in the Old Testament sense. In the only passage in which Jesus mentions the Baptist, He says expressly, that He had no need of his human testimony (John v. 33 f.). It is a complete inversion of every natural way of regarding history, to connect this invention with the question as to His authority put to Jesus by the like-minded sections of the hierarchy (Mark xi. 27 f.), for it is shown by this analogy that the historical circumstances involved the proceeding of the Sanhedrin against the Baptist, as did the later circumstances the action against Jesus.[1] But the assumption of the

[1] To say that a point of connection is offered for the question of the deputation in Luke iii. 15, is to overlook the fact that every kind of connection is shut out by the way in which the question indirectly assumes the expectation of

Johannine account, that the Baptist recognised Jesus as the Messiah, is confirmed by the oldest source, which tells of the apparition he saw on the occasion of Jesus' baptism (p. 325).

It is indeed objected that if John really looked upon Jesus as the Messiah, he would on His appearance have at once ceased to baptize, and must have referred his disciples to Jesus as to one from whom they could receive ampler and better instruction. But this is to assume, in an entirely unhistorical manner, that in consequence of this recognition of Jesus, the Baptist regarded Him as a wise teacher; what he saw in Jesus was the Chosen of Jehovah, by whom, as his own words tell us, he supposed the Messianic judgment would be accomplished and the kingdom established. Before the Messiah began this, it was evident that John dared not cease his preparative ministry, which, indeed, became more urgent the nearer this decisive hour approached. There was no reason for directing his disciples to Jesus, partly because he still required them during the continuance of his ministry, and partly because Jesus had as yet collected no scholars around Him. The distinct position occupied by his disciples even after his imprisonment (Mark ii. 18) was manifestly connected with the fact that Jesus had not yet taken the step, by means of which, according to their master's utterances, He could alone become what He was destined to be, and what He assuredly was not so long as He only traversed the country

John's regarding himself as the bringer of the Messianic future. Strauss' conception of this mission to the Baptist as only a repetition of the message, recorded in the Synoptists, of the Baptist with the question as to who it was who was looked for, is a frivolous play of fancy, lacking in any scientific importance. On the contrary, the precise characteristics of the delegates, which could not be gathered from the older Gospels (John i. 19–24), and the way in which their questions disclose the fluctuations of the Messianic expectations (i. 21), testify to the truth of the historical reminiscence. In accordance with historical truth, it is comprehensible how the Baptist should deny being the actual Elias or a prophet like unto Moses, but not so how it was that the evangelist could put such a denial into his mouth, who knew from the older Gospels how Jesus had declared that the Baptist was His Elias (Matt. xi. 14; Mark ix. 13; comp. Luke i. 17), indeed that he was greater than all the prophets, even than Moses (Matt. xi. 9–11). It is a pure evasion to say that he considered these designations "too Jewish," for they rested on the prophecy of the Old Testament as much as the looking upon Jesus as the Messiah and the self-designating of the Baptist did on the fortieth chapter of Isaiah.

healing and instructing. That Jesus still made no preparations for this, was the reason why the Baptist himself became at last doubtful, and sent to Jesus with the question whether He was the expected One (Matt. xi. 3), while all misinterpretations of this narrative, in spite of the following words of Jesus (xi. 6 f.), show unequivocally that earlier the Baptist had so regarded Him. But when it has been explained to be inconceivable how John could ever be mistaken in Him, if he had actually received a revelation and recognised Jesus as the Messiah, this rests upon an entire misconception of the nature of divine revelation. However effected, this can produce no certainty when resting on sentient experience or logical evidence; but as it can only be received in faith, so the conviction attained to by it can only be retained through faith. But belief, whatever be its purport, may be caused to falter by manifold influences, and even in the case of the illuminated prophets was attacked by doubt (comp. further, Book iv. 1). That, according to the Johannine representation, the Baptist designated Jesus at once as the Messiah, cannot be rendered incredible by asserting that the apostolic announcement did not refer to this testimony, for after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus human testimony was still less needed here than by Jesus Himself (John v. 33 f.).

The historicity of this scene, related by John only, is guaranteed by his reminiscence being definitely fixed in respect of time and place. He remarks that the Baptist was then sojourning in Bethany beyond Jordan (i. 28); and the palpable identity of this name with that of the well-known locality on the Mount of Olives, shows that here there is no question of an invention.[1] This must have been the spot

[1] The suspicion excited by modern criticism, of there being here a confusion with the more familiar Bethany, or even an incorrect and intentionally deceptive transposition of it to Peræa, is directly excluded by the Gospel itself. In chap. xi. 18 the evangelist appears to be accurately aware of the distance of this Bethany from Jerusalem, and expressly mentions in chaps. x. 40, xi. 17 f., the removal of Jesus from the Bethany in Peræa to the one near Jerusalem. Certainly Bethabara stands in our present text, having probably, through a conjecture of Origen's, crept into the manuscript; but this is condemned by the oldest texts. His inability to discover the place there mentioned is simply explained by the Baptist's having appeared in the wilderness, therefore not in the neighbourhood of a populous locality, perhaps it might be beside some ferry which could easily disappear in the course of a couple of centuries, during which

where the Baptist first appeared, for, so far, there had been no occasion for him to change his station. But the evangelist not only recollects this, but also the day when the deputation appeared before the Baptist. He remarks that it was the day before that memorable one on which Jesus appeared at the Jordan for the first time after His baptism (John i. 29). It is not clear from the words of the Baptist how long before it was that the Messiah had appeared of whom he had spoken the day previous (i. 26), and who was now in their midst, and who, at His baptism, had been so recognised; but there is nothing against the assumption that in the interval Jesus had been in the desert, and had now returned to the place where John baptized.[1] It is shown now and again (i. 36, iii. 26) that the Baptist then pointed his disciples to Jesus, and directly denoted Him the Messiah.

But this John did with an unmistakeable allusion to a prophecy in Isaiah, which was fulfilled in Him. What was spoken of there was the Servant of God, who should bear the sins of the people (Isa. liii. 4), *i.e.* endure conjointly or alone an undeserved degree of suffering which had come or was about to come upon the sinful nation as a punishment; on account of His innocence, and the calm patience with which He willingly took these sufferings upon Himself, this Servant of God is compared to a lamb dumb before his shearer (liii. 7). The Baptist pointed out Jesus as this Lamb of God, who bore the sins of the people (John i. 29). We know not whether or in what sense that prophecy in Isaiah pointed to the Messiah; in any case, the conceptions aroused by it were

the country was repeatedly laid waste by war. The very name may indicate this, the meaning of which—boat or ferry house—is not interfered with by the fact of the corresponding Bethany on the Mount of Olives clearly requiring another derivation and interpretation.

[1] The fourth evangelist, who never relates in detail the baptism of Jesus, can neither desire to shut out expressly Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness, because the genuinely human temptation of Jesus does not agree with his conception of Christ, nor can the older tradition, which begins at once with Jesus' Galilean ministry, from reasons involved in the circumstances of its origination, exclude His return to the Jordan. That neither here nor in i. 36 does the evangelist indicate what Jesus desired at the Jordan, agrees with his way of mentioning the external details, in so far only as they were of importance for his didactic purpose, and gives no ground for the suspicion of a purely ideal composition, which only permits of a communication between Jesus and the Baptist in so far as the latter could testify concerning Him.

very far from answering to the picture of the Messiah as it had now taken shape in popular expectation. But it by no means follows from this, that only through an especial divine revelation could the Baptist infer the calamitous fate of the Messiah, and the fulfilment in Him of that prophecy. To the preacher of repentance, more especially, who had gained an insight deeper than that of others into the power of the sins which were practised by the people, it could not be doubtful that the Messiah, who was to bring about the judgment of all the godless among the people, would not be able to accomplish His task without a severe struggle, and that the sins of His people would prepare grievous sufferings for the Sinless One, but which He would willingly take upon Himself for the sake of His vocation and the salvation of His people. It is by no means clear from the words whether and in how far the Baptist regarded the endurance of these sufferings as expiatory.[1] Even if we refer this to an immediate revelation, it was not the custom of divine revelation to communicate knowledge which found no points of connection in the prophet's range of ideas, or in those of his auditors. Only because this has been involuntarily expounded in conformity with later notions has doubt been thrown on the genuineness of this word of the Baptist, which, according to the views of the prophet familiar to us, did not exclude the possibility of these conflicts being carried through victoriously, or of the Messiah being clothed with honour after these sufferings, and exalted to the complete glory destined for Him.

[1] It was the Apostle John who first introduced into that utterance of the Baptist his more mature conception of the importance for salvation of the sufferings of Jesus. By an expression he was wont to employ (comp. 1 John iii. 5), he says that this Lamb takes away sins (stained as its working is with guilt; comp. 1 John i. 7); indeed, the significance of the Lamb for the entire sinful world is made manifest by a specific expression in his doctrinal language, although, from the allusion to the saying in Isaiah regarding the bearing of sins, both are for the Baptist excluded. When, however, criticism acknowledges that Jesus is here characterized by the evangelist as the true Paschal Lamb, this again is contradicted by the manifest allusion to Isa. liii.; and the fact that, according to law, lambs were taken for sin-offerings, forbids the deduction of the sacrificial idea from Isa. liii. 10. From our conception of the fulfilment of this word, we are accustomed to carry into it the picture of the Saviour dying on the cross for the redemption of the world, although it does not transcend the idea which we found in the mouth of Simeon (Luke ii. 35); indeed, that was produced by express reflection on Isa. lviii.

The Baptist knew well how far his disciples would be from recognising in this picture which he presented to them the Messiah they hoped for and expected. Therefore he shows once again that he meant no other than Him who should come after him, and of whom he had yesterday testified to the delegates of the Sanhedrin (i. 27), that He surpassed him as much in dignity as He was exalted above him by His Messianic calling (i. 30). The point of the statement lies in this, that he designates his successor one who should far surpass him in dignity, and then solves this enigma through His nobler vocation.[1] It was now that he expressed himself circumstantially as to how he had become aware of Jesus' Messianic calling through that apparition at the baptism (i. 31–34). This double testimony of the Baptist before his disciples became, later on, important to the evangelist as a proof that he indicated complete knowledge of the work and being of Jesus; yet it was not that alone which led to his communicating it. Rather because this was connected with the most sacred recollection of his life, when he became associated with Jesus, in whom he was to find his all.

Another day passed, and Jesus once more appeared among the circle round the Baptist, who pointed him out as the Lamb of God, of whom he had yesterday spoken (i. 35). It is by no means clear that the Baptist in any way required his disciples to turn from him to Jesus. We have seen already that he could not think then of giving up his baptismal activity, and could therefore not dispense with the circle of followers who aided him in this (comp. p. 360). Moreover, the majority of them may have been little disposed

[1] In this saying, also, the evangelist has introduced his more advanced knowledge of the eternal being and antecedent activity of the Logos (John i. 1–4). He takes the foundation tenet from an earlier existence in time, and apprehends the previous existence from His antecedent activity. It is perfectly idle to discuss whether the Baptist could obtain this knowledge from the Old Testament, or whether it was derived from immediate divine revelation. From the manner in which, according to the apprehension of the evangelist, the utterance assumes the knowledge of the Messiah's eternal existence, it is impossible that he could have spoken to his disciples who suspected nothing of this; and the expressly retained reference to i. 27, where mention is only made of the dignity of the Messiah, shows distinctly how the interpretation of the evangelist, important as it became to him (comp. i. 15), introduced an idea, which originally was strange to him, into that profound enigmatical word.

to leave this distinguished man of the people and betake themselves to the carpenter's son, who as yet possessed nothing but the hope of a great future. But of his limited circle of followers two were deeply moved by his word spoken yesterday, and now desired to become more intimately acquainted with Him on whom the hopes of Israel rested. When again the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the expected One, they saw in the word of their master an indirect command or a permission to separate themselves from him and to follow Jesus. They did not dare to address Jesus themselves; but when His attention was attracted by steps behind them, He turned and asked what they wanted. Full of reverence for Him whom their former master had declared stood far above him, they addressed Him with the Jewish title, Rabbi, and inquired as to His abode. They did not desire to detain Him on the way, but to seek Him out later, in order to become more intimately acquainted. But in a friendly way He invited them to come with Him at once; and as it was now four o'clock in the afternoon—according to Jewish reckoning, the tenth hour—they remained with Him during the remainder of the day. These few hours assuredly sufficed to convince them that what they had found was what their souls so longed for (John i. 37–40). Indeed, this narrative with its details, unimportant for any one else, and its exact statement as to time and hour, gives the impression of a personal experience which has been remembered and been repeated only because of the importance it had for the narrator.[1]

[1] Baur found in this nothing but an ideal representation of the effect of the Baptist's testimony on the belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the way in which it prompted the following of Him. But the disciples do not salute Him as Messiah, but as Rabbi; and it is not a command from the Baptist, but an invitation from Jesus Himself, which induces them to remain with Him. Strauss has twice seen in this a remodelling of the sending of the two disciples to Jesus, which according to the older Gospels issued from the prison, but here takes place at the Jordan. In the one case it was occasioned by the doubt of the Baptist, in the other by his testimony; in the one case the Baptist, in the other the disciples themselves, are convicted by what they saw. It is certain that no subsequent poet would let his heroes make their appearance by introducing them into a scene where nothing memorable happens, and where nothing is spoken that would yield a presentiment of their majesty. We can only understand this scene if it is the evangelist himself who has here recounted in plain words the most memorable recollection of his life. It was the natal hour of the new life which he found in fellowship with Jesus.

We are well acquainted with this narrator. It was John, the younger son of a prosperous fisherman on the Lake of Gennesareth, by name Zebedee,—*i.e.* Zebadja,—and probably a native of Capernaum (Mark i. 19). Along with John and his brother James, who in the older sources is always mentioned first, and was certainly therefore the elder of the two, the father carried on a flourishing trade; he had hired servants (Mark i. 20), and his connections extended as far as Jerusalem, for only this can explain how John should be known in the house of the high priest, though probably by the servants alone (John xviii. 15). In after days his mother seems to have belonged to the most faithful followers of Jesus; at least the Salome who, according to Mark, belonged to the Galilean women present at the crucifixion (Mark xv. 40), is expressly pointed out by the redactor as the mother of Zebedee's children (Matt. xxvii. 56). But this passage presents a more extended combination still, and it is this, that the two other women there mentioned are expressly alluded to by name in the parallel passage in John (xix. 25), and according to the old view, one of the two Marys is regarded as a sister of the mother of Jesus. But then it seems singular that two sisters should be called Mary, and it is much more likely, and is permitted by the expression employed, that this sister of Jesus' mother was the third of the women named by Mark, *i.e.* Salome.[1] According to this, the two sons of Zebedee were cousins of Jesus; and thus it is easily comprehensible why Jesus took them into the circle of His most intimate confidants, and on the cross commended His mother to John's filial care (xix. 27). On one occasion the two brothers were called by Jesus, sons of thunder, which probably pointed to a fiery disposition (Mark iii. 17). With the heat of unmoderated wrath, they desired to call down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village which had refused to receive their Master (Luke ix. 54); that such high-flying wishes were not strange to them, is shown by their request for the highest place beside the throne of the Messiah (Mark x. 37), which becomes more comprehensible if they were actually closely related to Him.

[1] It quite answers to John's method that he should refer to his mother only indirectly, for in speaking of himself he never declares his name, and never even mentions his brother.

His brother James, who in the evangelical history retires into the background, is shown to have played a prominent part in the Messianic community, by the fact that he drew upon himself the first enmity manifested by the Jews, and that Herod Agrippa caused him to be beheaded (Acts xii. 1 f.).

If, according to a thoroughly credible tradition (comp. p. 90 f.), John lived till towards the end of the century, he must have been very youthful at the commencement of 28 A.D. As the younger son he could more easily be spared, and so probably that child of a pious Israelitish house, who had certainly apprehended with intense ardour the Messianic movement excited by the prophet at the Jordan, joined himself in a permanent discipleship to the Baptist, with whom he was, moreover, connected on his mother's side. If John directed him to Jesus, with whom he was still more closely connected, he was now in a position to remain with Him constantly. It seems indeed as if, after that, he never quitted Him for any length of time, and so there was formed between the man of thirty-two and the youth of perhaps half that age that relation of ardent love and most intimate confidence which gives such a warm tone to the Fourth Gospel, and to which the older tradition bears witness by naming John among the closest confidants of Jesus. It was he whom Jesus loved so especially (John xix. 26, xx. 2), and to whom He granted the place of honour on His breast (xiii. 23) when lying at meal-time at His right hand. John's was a contemplative nature, whose whole force lay in the depths of his disposition, whose wealth consisted in what he could appropriate and assimilate. He was not fitted for active enterprise, and in later times does not appear to have determined on an independent mission activity. The Acts of the Apostles presents him in an unobtrusive connection with the strikingly powerful nature of Peter (iii. 11, xi. 8, 14); and his later activity in Asia Minor concerned rather the nurture, deepening, and purification of the Christianity already established there. With much more glowing love did he attach himself to Jesus, whom, doubtless, he, among all the other disciples, apprehended most deeply, whose person, with all that he found in it, soon became the animating and comforting central point of his

whole life. From this arose that impatience which would know of no other association with Jesus than the absolute devotion of discipleship (Mark ix. 38); from this that fervent enthusiasm with which, in face of the cruelties of the age of Nero, he depicted God's judgment of the enemies of Christ, and finally described in the Gospel the great decisive struggle of universal history, that between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, life and death, which was wrought out in the history of Jesus (comp. p. 105 f.). Certainly a disciple of love, as he has so often been represented, or a weak, somewhat feminine nature, this son of thunder never was. Fancy and sentiment were dominant in him; but this sentiment was an all-devouring flame, it was that fervent energy which knew of no mean between love and hate. This nature did not attain its perfect proportion till John, through faith in his Master, had found eternal life here, and till he could repose in the profundities of a religious mysticism as it had stamped itself on his view of immediate fellowship with Christ, and through Him with God.

There was another who had been with him among the slender number of John's disciples, and who came with him to Jesus; this was Andrew (John i. 35, 37, 41), the younger brother of that Simon (Symeon, comp. 2 Pet. i. 1) who was to play such a prominent part in the history of Jesus and of Christianity. They, too, came from the Lake of Gennesareth, being natives of Bethsaida (John i. 44), and sons of a certain Jonah (Matt. xvi. 17) or Joanes (John i. 42), who was presumably dead at the time when this history was enacted. For the elder brother in company with the younger pursued his fisher's calling in self-dependence, and owned a house in Capernaum (Mark i. 29). As not long before his martyr death, in the last years of Nero, he felt himself an old man (2 Pet. i. 13 f.), it follows that in 28 A.D. he was in the prime of his manhood, or at last of equal age with Jesus. He is commonly spoken of as being married; but a sketch of his life by Mark rather suggests his being then a widower, whose house was kept by his mother-in-law (i. 30 f.). In the evangelical history the younger brother retreats into the background; even what we learn of him from the Fourth Gospel is not sufficient for us to form a picture of his character;

there the picture of the elder presented by the Gospels is more distinct. Along with the sons of Zebedee he formed one of the three confidants of Jesus (Mark v. 37, ix. 2, xiii. 3, xiv. 33), and Jesus placed upon him the greatest hopes for the future of His cause (Matt. xvi. 18). His was an impetuous nature, in speech we see how determined he was, and how he surpassed the other disciples in action. Receptive of every impression, and easily excited by any impulse which affected him, he let himself be carried away into imprudent speech and action; at one time bold and presumptuous, at another, yielding without resistance to the most immediate incentive, and not considering the consequences of his actions and the range of his words. On this account he was not lacking in powerful initiative, effective influence, and love of achievement. We understand with what fervid energy such a nature would grasp the Messianic hopes of Israel,—how he afterwards boldly resolved to associate himself with Him who promised the fulfilment of all these hopes. But we also understand how difficult it must have been to reconcile himself to the slow and apparently contradictory way in which this hope was to be perfected, and how it must have been through long-continued struggles that his innate tendency to the quick apprehension of the future accomplishment was transformed into the likeness of the apostle of hope, which we meet with in his letters. Such a nature excites great expectations, but conceals at the same time great dangers. Everything depends on what the strongest impulse may be which sets this excessive energy in motion, on whether or not it contains a fixed kernel which remains unaltered even when, in its momentary behaviour, it is determined without opposition by the changing impulses from without. Only the incomparable Searcher of Hearts could foresee the development of such a nature.

An opportunity was soon to present itself. It does not seem as if Andrew at once connected himself permanently with Jesus, like his young Galilean relative. At least he is not with Jesus on the day after that evening which he passed in company with the two inseparables. He met his brother Simon. It is not clear that he sought him out; the evangelist seems rather to call it a divinely-ordained coincidence that so many of Jesus' later disciples became acquainted with

Him now on the banks of the Jordan. Simon, too, had betaken himself to the Jordan in obedience to the Baptist's summons; and we can understand what an impression was made on him by the tidings brought by his younger brother, that they had found the Messiah to whom the Baptist referred. Andrew was obliged to lead him to Jesus, in order that they might be made acquainted; and then it was that Jesus, with a glance penetrating his inmost soul, looked on him and said: "Thou art Simon, son of Jonah; thou shalt be called Peter, *i.e.* the rock" (John i. 42 f.). The evangelist is right when he beholds in this a token of more than human acumen. To the superficial observer, this nature, more than others, presented a contradictory vacillation produced by his innate rashness and his sanguine-choleric temperament. Jesus looked deep into this nature, and recognised the solid kernel which, only through sad experience of the dangers lying in his character, and through the serious work of subduing self, could be matured to an indomitable energy from which great things could be hoped. The history shows that He was not deceived in Peter.[1]

But how so? Have we not here substantially the calling of the two sets of brothers, which, according to Mark (i. 18–20), did not take place till a much later date, at the side of the Lake of Gennesareth? Proceeding upon this supposition, the older criticism, in its onesided partiality for John, simply gave up the synoptical account as unhistorical. But the

[1] It is quite unnecessary to refer the designation of rock to the special destiny which Jesus gave the disciple on a later day as the Rock of His Church, in which there was a manifest allusion to the title of honour bestowed on him, because that denoted the quality in virtue of which he could become this. Therefore there is no ground for assuming that this is an anticipation of Matt. xvi. 18. Simon was evidently not to bear this name immediately, but only when deserving of it. Apart from this allusion, Jesus Himself, according to all the Gospels, nowhere called him anything but Simon (Mark xiv. 37; Matt. xvii. 25; Luke xxii. 31; John xxi. 15–17). He was not distinguished by this title of honour till he had proved himself to be the rock of the congregation; Paul names him everywhere Peter or Cephas, and preponderatingly in our Gospels he is called Peter or Simon Peter, in cases where they do not intentionally keep to the personal name in order to preserve the historical colouring. It was because this became his apostolic name proper that Mark was led to think it had been given at the call of the apostles (iii. 16), although, as we have seen, it had no such significance for him as marking an epoch in his life. This idea is corrected in the course of our narrative.

opposition offered to this by modern criticism is perfectly justifiable—viz. that this report is incomparably the older, and in the case of Mark especially, goes back to Peter himself. Conversely, according to it, the account in the Fourth Gospel is absolutely unhistorical, and yet nowhere is there a comprehensible motive for this anticipation and remodelling of the synoptical narrative. It is not apparent how this could contribute to the glorifying of Jesus, for it is incomparably grander if Jesus, with a single word, wins those, till then unknown to Him, than if they were guided either by the Baptist or by one another.[1]

A truly historical examination will ask first of all whether both accounts may not be authentic, *i.e.* representations of distinct incidents in the life of the disciple. But then it is apparent that the synoptical call of the disciples, by which the four brothers were summoned to permanent association with Jesus, with a view to their after activity in His service, is perfectly incomprehensible if we suppose that no manner of relation had commenced between them and Jesus; it rather assumes an acquaintanceship with these men and their acknowledgment of His Messiahship. But what this narrative treats of is precisely the commencement of this acquaintance, and the first establishment of this conviction. The narrative says

[1] Renan, indeed, regarded it as credible that John, irritated by the lowly part he played in the older Gospels, desired for once to push himself into the foreground. Later critics assume that the great Gentile Christian of the second century wished to supplant Peter, because of his zeal for the law, in the primacy of the apostles, by thrusting forward the loved disciple, whom he made bearer of his liberal views. According to Strauss, he scattered the apostolic triumvirate in Jerusalem, hostile to Paul (Gal. ii. 9), to which another James belonged, not the Zebedean James, unfortunately silenced by death. But then John is not represented here as being the first called; he shares that position with the otherwise unknown Andrew. Why then is Peter placed also after his younger brother? Why is no mention made of James? Why is this same Peter, the disregard of whom is in question, especially distinguished from among the three at this very moment by the anticipation of the appellation? If such motives really lay at the foundation of the evangelist's representation, he had no need to transpose the call of the apostles from the Sea of Galilee to the Jordan, thus breaking completely, but without reason, with the whole of the older tradition, while the same end could have been attained better, and with less trouble, by a slight alteration in the older narrative. Strauss' supposition, that he wished to make the connection of the apostle with the trade of fisherman forgotten (comp. *Orig. c. Cels.* i. 62), only betrays his utter incapacity to enter into the spirit of the ancient Church, and into the ideas of the Judaism in which it originated.

nothing of Peter having from that hour remained permanently with Jesus. Indeed, how could he do so, for Jesus did not require it; and for him, who had a house and trade to leave, this was not so easy as for the two younger brothers, who had, moreover, already quitted their home in order to participate in the Baptist's ministry? Neither is it said of Andrew that he at once associated himself permanently with Jesus and broke off his connection with the Baptist; but we conclude this regarding John from his beginning his narrative of Jesus at this point, and from his recounting so much concerning it, of which Mark seems to have learned nothing from Peter. Mark's history commences at the moment when Peter entered into permanent companionship with Jesus, but that of John at the point when his relation to Jesus was begun, which had really been decided the very first day, and when he, along with others of his after co-disciples, first became acquainted with their Master and attained to belief in His Messiahship. Where is there any contradiction in this, unless there is an arbitrary identification of things that are totally distinct?

The greatest stumbling-block to modern criticism is just this fact of the Fourth Gospel representing the after disciples as having attained now to belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, while, according to a current idea founded on a view of Mark's communications about the day at Cæsarea Philippi, which is contradicted by the entire historical connection of his report, this knowledge did not break on the disciples till a later period. Of course, only the continuation of the narrative can show us whether this idea is really compatible with the manifest historical facts. But it is still incomprehensible what can have moved the Baptist's followers to quit the great prophet and join themselves to the nameless man from Nazareth.[1] Criticism affirms, indeed, that the first disciples were disciples of John. But the question remains essentially the same, whether these Galilean fishermen were won by Him

[1] On the other hand, it is totally inexplicable why the fourth evangelist should think of antedating the faith of the disciples in the Messiah. According to the view of criticism, the popular Messianic idea had become so strange to him, that, as Baur thought, he only entered it as an antiquarian notice, while there was certainly much more than this required for a complete knowledge of Jesus. Surely he would see no glorification of Jesus in the early appearance of such an imperfect knowledge of His significance. If this were so, he must have intended

by the Lake of Gennesareth or not. Belief in the great prophet existed there also; and even if the Baptist, as criticism supposes, never pointed directly to Jesus as the Messiah, yet he had proclaimed the approach of the Messianic future, and had referred to his great successor who was to bring this about. Now One came after him who almost won them to Himself by storm, and caused them to quit home and calling in order to find a higher vocation in His companionship. Whom could these men regard this successor of the Baptist as being, for whom they were to give up more than they had done—according to criticism—for God's prophet? They certainly never imagined that this plain Rabbi from Nazareth was the Messiah as they pictured Him from Old Testament. But the purport of their Messianic belief was, that He and no other was the Chosen of Jehovah, who, through God's miraculous power, would one day reach that position of honour from which alone He would be able to fulfil all the hopes of the nation, and so to prove Himself the Messiah; this, and this alone, can have been the meaning of their acknowledgment of the Messiah. Assuredly this was faith's first beginnings, which, in face of the apparent and evermore acutely felt non-fulfilment of the presuppositions with which this belief was connected, had to pass through severe trials and manifold developments. But may it not have been in reliance on that word of the prophet, and when first impressed by Jesus' forcible personality, that these clothed themselves in the hopeful acknowledgment, "We have found the Messiah"?

We may suppose with considerable certainty, that these sunny days, brightened by the radiance of a divinely-directed finding on Jesus' side, and of a blessed discovery on the part of the first disciples of the object of their most glorious hopes, is no picture drawn by the evangelist's fancy, but is historically true. They were soon to come to an end. Jesus took His departure for His home to visit His father's house once more, and to take leave of it before the hour of His public appearance arrived. He was naturally enough accompanied by His

to represent this as the faith of a novice, elevated at Cæsarea Philippi to a higher stage, but which evidently and avowedly did not happen (John vi. 69), for in that passage there is only the technical expression for the popular Messianic belief (comp. Mark i. 24).

young relative ; and Simon, who had in a higher sense, as he himself suspected, attained the end of his pilgrimage to the Jordan, joined Him also. But as He was departing, Jesus encountered another of those pious Galileans who had undertaken a pilgrimage to the Jordan, a countryman of the two sons of Jonah, named Philip from Bethsaida, whom He summoned to accompany Him (John i. 44 f.). It is pure arbitrariness, and opposed to the manifest coherence of the evangelical narrative, to hold that this meant a summons to discipleship. And, moreover, it is clear that the evangelist only introduces this notice, so indifferent in itself, and therefore the more certainly resting on historical reminiscence, because it was this Philip who brought a fresh disciple to Jesus, the winning of whom was an object of desire to the evangelist. We know not what the bond was that united him with Nathanael, *i.e.* gift of God, Theodore ; it could hardly be relationship, since, according to John, his home was in Cana (xxi. 2). We are also ignorant whether he was on his way to baptism, or more probably returning from it, when Philip met him and announced the joyful tidings that in Joseph's son from Nazareth they had found Him who was promised by the entire Scriptures (i. 46). We learn how this presented a difficulty to the man from Cana, that the Messiah should come from a neighbouring town not specially reputable, at least not so in his circle (comp. p. 211). He, nevertheless, willingly complied with the invitation to see for himself, and here again Jesus' heart-searching acumen approved itself. For, seeing Philip coming to Him, He said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (i. 47). His sober understanding plainly hesitated at allowing himself to be deceived by an enthusiastic hope. But he was an honest doubter, who, resolved to overcome his doubts, searched after truth even when it meant the refutation of all his ingenuous scruples, while the doubt which Jesus afterwards so frequently encountered in Israel was nothing but the pretext of an irrational inward dislike.

This pure soul must be gained to the Messianic faith. Nathanael was, of course, surprised that this strange man should speak of him as if they were already acquainted. But it became Jesus to show that He knew him, that He had

seen into the profoundest secrets of his heart. It was one of those moments when the Spirit of God, bestowed upon Jesus in baptism, equipped Him with more than human knowledge that He might accomplish His Father's work. This sincere Israelite had hitherto dwelt in peace under his vine and fig-tree, but a longing had never ceased to stir within him,—that hope of his nation, the much-longed-for coming of the Messianic time. He, too, had been reached by the summons of the Baptist, which sounded like the herald of the first morn of that glorious future. Do we know what flashed across his soul when, under the fig-tree, ready for departure to the Jordan, he implored God's blessing on his pilgrimage? Did he, like that grey-haired Simeon, receive a promise that he should not return thence before seeing God's Messiah? We know not, but Jesus knew, and said, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Who was He who had beheld him in that hour when alone with his God? Only the Messiah Himself could be enlightened by God as to the most secret moment of his inward life, which had actually been occupied in communion between his God and himself concerning the Messiah. Openly exulting, he cried, "Thou art Jehovah's Chosen One; Thou art the promised King of Israel" (i. 49 f.).

It is admissible for the historian so to accommodate the effect of these words of Jesus, reported in this source, as to show that it could not have been a proof of supernatural knowledge; it may possibly have represented His prophetical endowment (comp. John iv. 19), never His Messiahship. But the fact of plainly supernatural knowledge cannot be gainsaid. What is mentioned is not one isolated glance into the depths of the soul; it is past events which, along with their outward circumstances, are known to Jesus. To say that Jesus had in any way seen him accidentally beneath the fig-tree is not only contrary to the evident sense of the narrative, which manifestly assumes that Nathanael could not be seen there, but it throws a blemish on the moral purity of Jesus.[1]

[1] Such a one as Renan saw nothing striking in Jesus' occasionally, in order to win men, making use of the innocent artifice, employed too by Joan of Arc, of acting as if He possessed a knowledge of a secret, known only to Himself. But if He employed this appearance to produce faith in Nathanael, or at least, if He

Nevertheless, no divine omniscience is here attributed to Him, such as, according to the criticism, is peculiar to the Incarnate Logos of the Fourth Gospel. What Jesus says afterwards, unequivocally ascribes this miracle, like all that followed, to the divine and miraculous help which He had ever at command, whose conditions He had learnt certainly in the desert, where He accepted them in willing obedience.

On the enthusiastic confession of the vanquished doubter, Jesus showed that in this He had a proof of the divine assistance as an aid to faith, and He promised Nathanael that he should see greater things than these. Then it was that He spake that word we noticed at His baptism and after the temptation (John i. 52; comp. pp. 336, 348). The dream of the ancient forefather was fulfilled in Him (Gen. xxviii. 12). Over Him the heavens were opened, and the angels of God, the mediators of this divine assistance, ascended and descended upon the Son of man.

made no attempt to correct the false suppositions on which His faith was grounded, then He undeniably made use of immoral means for the accomplishment of His purpose. For those who will not acknowledge the fact, there is nothing left but the hypothesis of pure invention, for which no other motive can be alleged than the usual one of a glorification of Jesus. It must then be assumed, with Strauss, that the great idealist who remodelled the synoptic tradition according to his higher ideas, rechristened Zaccheus, Nathanael, put him under the branches instead of at the top of the fig-tree, and out of the repentant son of Abraham made an Israelite without guile, and all that an apostle might be delivered from his publican descent, and the natural sight of Jesus be changed to a supernatural beholding.

# CHAPTER XII.

## AT THE MARRIAGE IN CANA.

JESUS' journey took Him to the little town of Cana.[1] What was it that led Him there? Even apart from the extreme improbability of such an invitation having followed Him into the wilderness or to the Jordan, the statement in the text, which indubitably declares that He was not invited until He appeared there (John ii. 2), precludes the possibility of His having been bidden to the wedding. But His going to Nazareth and there receiving the invitation, or thence following His mother to Cana, are pure inventions. It is further to be said, that when, after an absence of six months, Jesus returned to His native province from the south, He proceeded at once to Cana (iv. 46). It is there we find His mother at a wedding in what apparently is an intimately related family (ii. 1); and still more noticeable is the after account of Jesus' proceeding to Capernaum, along with His mother and the brethren (ii. 12), although it is not said of the brothers that the marriage was the reason of their being there. It may be inferred with great likelihood from this, that Mary had removed to Cana after the death of her husband; indeed, this is confirmed by a remark made by the

[1] We have here another of those recollections in detail which testify indubitably to the historical character of the Fourth Gospel. This name occurs nowhere in the older tradition, but John knows the place so exactly that he distinguishes it—the Galilean Cana—from another locality of the same name, which, though belonging originally to the tribe of Asher (comp. Josh. xix. 28), lay so near the Phœnician frontier that it had probably been for long within the domain of aliens. Our Cana, on the contrary, was scarcely seven miles north-west from Nazareth, at the foot of the mountains which shut in, on the north, the plain of Asoschis (now el Battauf), while on the south rose the mountains of Nazareth.

inhabitants of Nazareth, quoted by Mark, to the effect that of the family only the sisters—who had probably married there—now dwelt in their original home (Mark vi. 3). It was therefore to His present home that Jesus went on His return to Galilee.

No wonder that Jesus was at once invited to the marriage by His mother's friends, and that, agreeably to the hospitality of the East, the invitation included the newly won friends who accompanied Him (John ii. 2). The narrative does not say what their number was, nor who they were. Of course, Simon had left them long before and returned to his home; but Nathanael was himself out of Cana, and perhaps may have brought his friend Philip along with him, if he had not already turned his face homewards. John only was undoubtedly present at the marriage, about which he narrates an event memorable to him. Besides, he only recounted Jesus' first acquaintance with the above-named men, because specially memorable sayings of Jesus were connected with it; but this does not preclude the possibility of others having joined themselves to the tiny caravan, journeying northwards, or of some of them having appeared with Jesus in Cana. The current notion of the marriage feast having lasted for several days is shown to be perfectly inadmissible by the fact that the evangelist recollects how it took place on the third day after the departure from the Jordan; from the most southerly end, Cana could easily be reached in two or three days. According to Jewish custom, the wedding took place in the house of the bridegroom (comp. ii. 9), who provided everything necessary; that this was not done in a niggardly way, is shown by the fact of a special master of the ceremonies being in command of the servants (ii. 8); and the number and size of the waterpots, which were placed there on account of the Jewish cleansings (ii. 6), may be supposed fitted for the requirements of a large number of guests.

In the course of the feast, the wine began to fail, and the mother of Jesus, whose friendly eye had quickly observed the imminent embarrassment, communicated the fact to her Son. It is incomprehensible how this should generally be regarded as containing indirectly a demand for aid by means of a miracle. This is really to assume that Mary had already

experienced some such manifestations of her Son's miraculous power as are so liberally imputed to Him by the apocryphal Gospels in their absurd miracles of the infancy, while the Gospel expressly alludes to this event at the marriage as the first of His miracles (ii. 11). Everything miraculous which the mother had experienced at His birth pointed to her Son's high destiny, but not perhaps to a higher nature in virtue of which He had at command an unlimited miraculous power. Even if she had already heard of the occurrences at His baptism, or of the testimony borne by the Baptist and the experiences of His disciples, which is highly improbable, the utmost she could have looked forward to was a speedy declaration of His Messianic dignity. But if we enter in any degree into the form and purport of the Messianic expectation at that period, we see how far she would be from supposing that this would occur through a miracle performed at a wedding. The assumption is then unavoidable, that Mary thought of a natural remedy. It is quite comprehensible how for that reason it occurred to her to apply to her Son. There is no need whatever for reflecting how the grown-up Son, with His certain and unclouded confidence in God, had probably often quieted her anxieties in regard to the petty troubles of domestic life, and in temporal matters had shown Himself ready and able to aid. Manifestly, too, the threatened dilemma had been really brought about by the unexpected guests whom He had brought with Him; it was therefore a likely expedient to call upon Him indirectly for assistance by telling Him about it. Since He was surrounded by friends who, like Nathanael, had connections in the place, He could soon find ways and means for this. From the first, Jesus apprehended it otherwise. He saw in the well-reasoned summons of His mother a sign that the opportunity was to be granted Him of showing what He had just promised to the disciples (i. 52). We know, however, from the history of the temptation, that He could not aid where natural need or human desire impelled Him to do so, but that He was obliged to wait until a divine intimation bade Him help, and He was made fit to perform the miraculous action. On this account He had to set aside the well-meant inference of His mother; but He did it with the firm conviction that the hour was to

come when He would be permitted to aid.[1] Even His mother saw in this utterance only a delay in assistance. But how far she was from thinking of directly divine miraculous aid, is shown by her directing the servants to obey Him. For a miracle of divine omnipotence human helpers are not necessary (ii. 3–5).

According to the narrative of the evangelist, when Jesus knew that His hour was come, He commanded the servants to fill afresh the waterpots of stone, which had been emptied after the purification of the hands and vessels before dinner; and when they had done so, He bade them take some of it for the governor of the feast to taste. Now it was that wine was discovered in the pitchers; and the governor of the feast, amazed at its delicious flavour, called the bridegroom, and gave expression to his astonishment that, contrary to custom, he should have kept the best wine to the last, when the guests were hardly in a condition to appreciate it properly (ii. 7–10). That playful observation, uttered in pleasant surprise, neither assumes that the guests in the wedding hall were already intoxicated, nor must it be judged of and found wanting according to the customs of refined luxury; it only serves to establish the costliness of Jesus' gift. Such it was to the bridegroom, even if he learnt as little as the wedding company of the actual state of the case. It was by no means Jesus' way to produce a sensation by His miracles. Even the servants knew right well that they had filled the jar with water; how it happened that the steward found precious wine in it, they knew not. What the evangelist expressly reports is only that Jesus' lately-gained followers had their faith strengthened by the abundant blessing of God which was bestowed upon their Master (ii. 11). It is clear that Jesus did not appear at this wedding as in any way a public character, but simply as an intimate neighbour's son who

[1] It is also incomprehensible how a certain severity can be found in this, which it is thought to justify by the perfectly preposterous assumption of its being a correction of unfounded maternal vanity. Even the much criticized speech to His mother is no other than that with which Jesus on the cross began His last loving words (xix. 26, comp. xx. 15), and cannot be judged of according to our taste as to language. Jesus only says that His hour did not depend on human persuasion, but on the divine resolve as to His actions, which now, as at other times, will be directly made known to Him.

brought his friends along with him. The story was therefore enacted before the commencement of His public ministry proper, and so it is perfectly explicable why it did not pass into the tradition of the older evangelists.[1]

The narrator leaves no doubt as to how he would have the miracle apprehended. He speaks of the water which became wine; he expressly establishes the fact that it was water the servants drew, and exquisite wine that the master of the feast found in the jars (ii. 9 f.). He designedly precludes any artificial limitation of the "luxury miracle" over which Strauss was at one time sorely troubled. For the intentional prominence given to the number and size of the vessels according to measure (ii. 6), and the emphasis laid on their being filled to the brim (ii. 7), plainly assumes that *all* the water had become wine, not only what had been drawn out; and Jesus' uncircumscribed command to draw (ii. 8), assumes that the water in *all* the pitchers had been changed. There is certainly no need for troubling oneself and others with the notion of a "change in substance," or for insisting upon such a wine having originated here as was usually produced by human art from the fruit of the vine, since water which, through a miraculous act, had taken on the taste and the effect of wine, had in the popular estimation become wine.[2] There is certainly no question here of this

[1] Just as little as this tells against the historicity of the narrative, can there now be any mention of the small criticisms with which the narrative was formerly tortured in order to gain some kind of pretext for getting rid of the miracle which formed its central point. It is actually the criticism which most frequently declared it to be fiction, that has fully acknowledged the harmonious connection of the whole.

[2] It does not in any way tell against this when an endeavour like Neander's is made to render the conception of this event more vivid, which, being miraculous, does, by reason of its very nature, shun representation, and to do so by remembering how it is the power of God which daily produces wine from the natural juice of the vine, or communicates greater powers to the healing waters, so much so, that even the ancients spoke of waters which flowed from the earth resembling wine in their intoxicating powers. But these analogies must not be misused in order to make the miracle appear as something half natural by means of the conception, so open to contradiction, of an "accelerated natural process," which was discovered by the faint-hearted supranaturalism of Olshausen. For the difference remains in this, that what in those analogies is brought about by natural causes involving the gradation of a natural process of development, is in this case accomplished by a directly divine act, independent of these conditions.

operation being thought of as proceeding from Jesus' divine omniscience. For the narrative is expressly introduced as a first confirmation of the words by which Jesus promised His disciples that they should behold the miraculous help of God, ever at His disposal (John i. 52). Every attempt to substitute for the miracle an entirely natural incident, which had first taken the character of a miracle in the evangelist's conception or in later legend, has been wrecked on the evangelist's statement regarding the impression which it made on the disciples (ii. 11). Whether this is regarded, as by the older rationalism, as an unexpected wedding-present, or a species of mirth on Jesus' part, or is referred, as was done by Schenkel, to Jesus' genuinely humane care, Jesus is thereby always involved in a highly doubtful situation, since He must either have meant that impression to be left, which rested on a totally different view of the incident, or, at least, did not gainsay it by an explanation to the disciples. But more than all, although we were to put that impression to the account of the later idealizing view, there is no conceivable proof how such an utterly unimportant incident could in legend be extended to a miracle. If any one says that the plain simplicity of the later conception of Jesus was no longer satisfying, the only consequence would be that that history would be quickly forgotten, and not passed on into tradition; but there would be no reason for regarding it as miraculous.[1]

On the other hand, this does not preclude the possibility of an incident of original importance assuming a still higher character in the after-recollections of eye-witnesses, in which the wondrous impression of Jesus' whole life threw a radiance over isolated experiences. What still prompts the question, Did this happen? is not the miracle, as such, of divine

[1] It is only another form of the natural explanation to transfer the miracle, as is done by Ewald and Lange, more or less distinctly to the minds of the guests, who, inspired by the speeches of Jesus, believed they had drunk wine, while it was nothing but water. Moreover, this view assumes what the text gives no hint of, that Jesus had disclosed His didactic activity at the wedding; but it offers no explanation of how an incident which must frequently have happened, when Jesus, who did not withdraw Himself from society, made use of the same for the accomplishment of His highest aim, became in this one case the legend of such a unique miracle.

omnipotence, but the isolated position in which it stands in the midst of the differently constituted miracles of evangelical history, and the disproportion in degree between one such unique miracle and the result following the strengthening of the disciples' faith—which is stated by this evangelist alone. It must be added that this simple statement as to the result, however much it is opposed to the origination of the narrative in legend, which would naturally increase not only the idea of the event, but also that of its impression and result, still retains something very striking. It is absolutely incomprehensible how this miracle, which, according to the representation of the evangelist, was so striking, did not become known to the whole company, and how they could escape being powerfully impressed. The narrative itself refers immediately after this to an incident which was perfected among the narrow circle of disciples, and which, in its miraculous character, was only there appreciated. There must thus have been something in the occurrence, which had at the time given the disciples the impression of the miraculous, and which could therefore present a point of contact for that re-formation in the remembrance. That, however, could only consist in this, that in unconditioned confidence on God, after Jesus had promised a remedy, He turned to His companions for assistance; they at first saw no way of doing so, but ultimately means presented themselves for removing the difficulty which had arisen in a way humanly unforeseen, although brought about by human instrumentality. It would then only be an undoubted miracle of divine providence, which, from the first, gave the disciples the impression that the divine miraculous aid had not failed or disappointed their Master's bold confidence in God, and which, in their after memory, when the details of the incident had faded, appeared as a miracle of divine omnipotence. A thoughtful historical inquiry will be compelled to leave it to the unified impression of the history of Jesus, whether one thinks he can make a stand at a miracle of divine omnipotence, or believes he must assume in this the transposing of a miracle of divine providence, chiefly because the peculiar meaning of the incident amounts in both views to essentially the same thing.

Modern criticism supposes that this meaning can only be

discovered by regarding the whole narrative as a free didactic fiction.[1] But the impossibility of carrying out this view is shown by the very attempt to grasp the didactic ideas of the invention. Showing the most diverse sides, constantly disclosing new references, tendering the most heterogeneous motives, and yet never exhausted by one of them, never carrying out one of them absolutely—the simple narrative mocks every possibility of such an exposition. At first that bright picture of a wedding, and Jesus' sympathy for all the joys of life, appeared to form a contrast to the gloomy asceticism of the Baptist, and therefore to express the difference between Jesus and His forerunner. Thus a reference could be seen in the water of the cleansing jars to the Baptist's baptism of water, and the gift of the Messianic fulness of the Spirit might be compared with the generous wine which here flowed in torrents. But thereupon the significance became yet loftier. Now it was Judaism itself whose wine had failed, and the new wine of Christianity which had taken its place; or what for some was actual wine, was for others the spiritual wine of faith in the Son of God. According to a common idea, Jesus Himself became further the Messianic Bridegroom, who provided for His Church at the promised great Messianic marriage-supper. This led again to the Christian sacrament, where in wine the Messiah offers His blood for the acceptance of the Church; and therefore the hour to which He pointed was really the hour of His death. From the other side it seemed more advisable to point out a connection with synoptical materials, which the evangelist is, moreover, said to have redacted in a prejudiced manner; and since the words of Jesus, which alone can be thought of in this connection (Luke ii. 49, v. 39), present too few points of contact with

[1] The older view may now be looked upon as superseded, which saw here a myth analogous to the Old Testament miracles in the desert, or even to the Grecian miracles of Bacchus; and so, too, may the view which imagined a misunderstood parable. It is now thought that the narrative may be apprehended with more likelihood as a profound fiction, in which the evangelist embodied his didactic thoughts. Even this kind of explanation has long been anticipated by a certain species of apologetics, which was never satisfied with the various references it found in a narrative certainly regarded as historical,—references which must necessarily lead to mistrust of the fiction, since Jesus' history cannot be resolved into pure symbolical enigmas, which nothing but the acuteness of a modern interpreter understands how to solve.

the real purport of the narration, hold was laid upon the story of the temptation, the solemn fast-days of which should, moreover, be replaced by these joyous feast-days. Now, as then, Jesus was challenged to perform a miracle; in the former case He was to change stones into bread, in the latter, water into wine; there the devil had to stand aside, here, the mother; only, in the latter case, He afterwards did what was asked of Him, and through that refusal desired only to secure His personal lordship, and not to prove His resignation to the divine will. The more it was believed that such references had been found, and the more their number grew from one interpreter to another, the more assuredly was it supposed that the problem of the narrative had been solved; and it was overlooked how the first trait of character in each tendency-fiction is to permit an evident prominence to one compact foundation idea, or when, as in this case, it is deeply veiled, to indicate it by some word. But our evangelist, who on other occasions has always a word of Jesus ready when it is needful to point out the deeper significance of His miracles, does not give the slightest intimation here. Add to this the sure historical framework of the narration, the minute recollection of time and place, the appearance of the mother, which is accounted for by no one from the idea of the history, and the observation made by the ruler of the feast, which is taken from life, and has often proved a stumbling-block,—all these resist in the most decided way the interpreting of this narrative as pure fiction.

The evangelist leaves us in no doubt as to how he explained the significance of the history from his standpoint. Jesus was to him the Incarnate Logos, to whose originally divine glory this miracle of divine omnipotence referred (ii. 11). But certainly for the first believers that cannot have been the historical significance of this miracle, for as yet they did not suspect the appearance in Jesus of the Divine Logos. It probably consisted only in a confirmation of His Messianic calling; for such an abstract idea as the operation of Christianity, not destroying what is innate, but transfiguring it, which, besides, could only be connected with the purely formal side of the miracle, was certainly not present to Jesus. But as a contrast to the preaching of the Baptist especially, there was

a call for Him to reveal Himself as He who was come to open for His people the fountains of all the promised blessings. Thus His appearance at the marriage presented an opportunity for making Himself known as the great Dispenser of gladness and blessing, who, in the power of God, bears the richest supply of divine gifts into the misery of the earthly life. The staying of the threatened deficiency became a symbolical utterance in deeds, which the Orientals are more accustomed to understand than we sober inhabitants of the West, even apart from the probability of Jesus having spoken some word of intimation, which had passed out of memory. It is manifest, however, how perfectly the same it is for the significance of the incident, whether it was brought about through a miracle of divine providence or through one of divine omnipotence, as the evangelist was obliged to conceive of it according to his view of the significance of the occurrence. It is therefore equally clear how the fulness of the divine gift, which was at one time regarded as being provided because of the soberness of the wedding guests, and in a paltry way, at another, as care for the housekeeping of the young couple, belongs particularly to the significance of the miracle. It may therefore be constantly admitted that John's eye-witness is not prejudiced, if his declarations as to the abundance of the wine only expressed the narrator's conception of the extent of the miracle (ii. 6–8).

We do not know how long Jesus' residence in Cana lasted; but it cannot have been long before the approach of the Passover, when Jesus prepared for His journey to the feast. He employed the last remaining days in visiting Capernaum, where His mother and brethren accompanied Him, as well as some of His lately-won followers, who were, in part indeed, at home by the Lake of Gennesareth (ii. 12). Assuredly His visit would be, first of all, to the closely-related family of Zebedee; but He would seek out Simon also, in order to draw tighter their mutual bond.[1] It is incomprehensible how not only the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, but also the calling of the

[1] When criticism sees in this only an anticipation of the removal to Capernaum, mentioned in Matt. iv. 13, it forgets to explain how a removal can be deduced from a residence which is expressly limited to a few days. For us, the perfectly unimportant notice of this visit is only another proof that some

disciples, of which the evangelist relates nothing, should be placed in those "not many days." Certainly just as little now as at the marriage did Jesus appear in any way as a public character. It was in order to appear for the first time publicly that He went up to Jerusalem for the next feast of Passover, as soon as that approached (ii. 13). Nothing is said of any accompanying disciples; but it is mentioned, by the way (ii. 17), that also at the feast followers collected around Him, believing that in Him they had found the Messiah; and, after what we heard before, this is quite intelligible.

It is especially this representation in the Fourth Gospel, however, according to which Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the commencement of His public ministry, that is declared by the Tübingen criticism to be absolutely unhistorical.[1] The evangelist, it is said, could not rapidly enough confront Jesus with His enemies on a more important scene of His ministry than was presented by His remote native province. But this is to overlook the fact that the evangelist, who is always said by criticism to have represented Jesus as highly anti-Jewish, and as superior to the law, could not possibly have an interest in making Him a faithful visitor to the feast, while it is in entire correspondence with His historical position to the law as presented in the other evangelists, when now, as often in later

memorable recollection was, for the narrator, connected with it; it would probably be the first visit made by God's Chosen One to the home of the evangelist.

[1] Baur even affirmed that the evangelist made Judea the special scene of Jesus' ministry in resolute opposition to the older tradition. But this was founded partially on a misconstruction of John iv. 44, where by home Jesus cannot have meant Judea, for it was not intended to make good His leaving Judea, but why He passed from Samaria to Galilee, and partially on the fact that a large number of the events related by John happened in Jerusalem and Judea (comp. ii. 13 to iv. 3, chap. v., and nearly all that follows vii. 10). But the reason for this manifestly was that the evangelist, in accordance with his plan, represented preponderatingly the conflict between Jesus and the true unbelief which had its chief seat in Judea (comp. p. 128). Moreover, even he assumes repeatedly a longer activity in Galilee (iv. 44 f., vi. 1 f., vii. 1–4); he knows that the disciples were Galileans (i. 45, xxi. 2); represents Him as being called in Jerusalem the Galilean prophet or Messiah (vii. 41–52); and there, where Jesus is said to have had His proper sphere of action, He appears to be quite unknown (v. 13). It is true, however, that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus goes twice up to the feast besides that first visit (v. 1, vii. 10), while the older Gospels know nothing of these earlier visits.

days, He joined in the pious custom of visiting the feast, especially as He would have given great and just offence to the people if He had emancipated Himself from this. It is alleged, indeed, that this would have brought about much earlier the catastrophe, which occurred at His last visit to the feast; but that is to forget how, conversely, that catastrophe would be historically incomprehensible, if the conflict with the hierarchy, which prepared the way for His ruin, had not begun long before, for there was little reason for its being roused by the ministry of the Prophet of Galilee. To suppose it was not till the close of His Galilean ministry that He saw how His cause would meet with no decisive success so long as He kept away from the capital, is still to leave it incomprehensible how one, who was at home among the peculiar circumstances of Jewish national life, should not have seen this clearly from the first. Indeed, since His ministry was planned from the beginning in regard to the nation as a whole, He could not refrain from searching for it first and foremost where the central point of the nation's collective life was to be found; and only experience of the failure of His ministry there could induce Him to confine Himself for a time to His native province.

Thus every historical probability is in favour of the representation of the Fourth Gospel. Certainly the older Gospels seem to contradict it, in so far as there, according to the usual view, Jesus' last journey, which was to the Passover at which He met His death, is directly connected with the Galilean ministry. But the reason for this is evidently that Mark, whose scheme forms the foundation of the other two Gospels, arranged according to purely topical points of view the reminiscences of the more rich and successful Galilean ministry, at the commencement of which his voucher first entered into permanent association with Jesus; to these he added, in the same topical way, reminiscences from the last decisive time in Jerusalem.[1] It follows, however, from detached reminiscences, preserved by the older evangelists

[1] It cannot be affirmed that he directly excludes earlier visits made by Jesus to the feasts, for it is impossible that Mark xi. 11 can say that Jesus, who up to His thirtieth year must have been frequently in Jerusalem, looked about Him like a novice. From indirect intimations in Matt. xxi. 10 f., Luke xxiv. 6, it

themselves, that Jesus must have visited Jerusalem at an earlier date. Certainly, the repeatedly mentioned influx of people from Judea and Jerusalem (Mark iii. 8), with particular allusion to the scribes (iii. 22, vii. 1), may be explained by the excitement which tidings of Him would arouse in the capital, although it is hardly probable, in view of the profound contempt with which that remote province was there regarded (comp. John vii. 52), that any special notice would have been taken of this Galilean celebrity, if Jesus Himself had not given a challenge. A disciple like Joseph of Arimathea (Mark xv. 43) Jesus may possibly have gained at the feast, during the last days of His ministry; but before entering the capital He shows Himself at home in Bethany, which lay before the gates (Mark xi. 1 f.; comp. ver. 11 f., xiv. 3); and the ordering of the Last Supper (xiv. 13–15) presupposes acquaintanceships in Jerusalem which cannot possibly have been formed in those last days, for Jesus, along with His entire following of disciples, reckoned upon the upper chamber of their acquaintance. Perfectly decisive, however, is that mournful farewell in which Jesus reminded the inhabitants of the capital of His *often repeated* endeavours on their behalf, which had all been unavailing (Matt. xxiii. 37).[1] Later critics assist themselves by applying the word to a longer residence before the last Passover; but this at once interrupts the synoptic scheme, and concedes one important point to the Fourth Gospel.

This question is closely connected with that concerning the

seems as if the other two evangelists, proceeding upon his representation, had thought of it as if Jesus had then come to Jerusalem for the first time during His public ministry.

[1] How invincible this word is found by criticism to be, is best shown by the unheard-of distortion of palpable meaning attempted by Baur, as well as by the directly adventurous experiments by which Strauss sought to throw doubt on its dependence upon the oldest groundwork of evangelical traditions (comp. Luke xiii. 34). Baur thought that by "children of Jerusalem," which, according to a well-known Hebrew custom, applied to the inhabitants, might be understood a simple reference to the whole people. Strauss supposed that this word contained a citation from a book entitled *The Wisdom of God*, in which God was represented as speaking. This supposition rested upon a wantonly misconstrued passage (comp. Luke xi. 49), because it was in the same speech which in the case of Matthew (who makes no mention of what undoubtedly was a secondary expression), *but not in the case of Luke*, contains that word to Jerusalem.

chronology. If Jesus began His public ministry, even in a limited degree, at a Passover, and also died during a feast of Passover, then His ministry must have embraced at least two complete years, for *one* Passover, at all events, occurred between (John vi. 4). The older Gospels were frequently apprehended by the Church Fathers as showing that the ministry had lasted for one year only, and thus they interpreted the prophecy in Isaiah (lxi. 2; comp. Luke iv. 19), which is also by Jesus applied to Himself; we have seen already how Luke perhaps wished to characterize the fifteenth year of Tiberius as this year (Luke iii. 1). But Luke's view cannot have much influence with us, for he may simply have drawn it from Mark's representation, and his narrative was by no means chronological, but detached traditions were arranged according to topical points of view (comp. p. 46 f.). In his case, the appearance of a one-year's ministry only arises from the fact of the Passion alone being fixed chronologically, because of the way in which it is connected with a feast of Passover; and therefore it looks as if no other feast of the same kind occurred during Jesus' public life. On the other hand, during the course of this year, as represented by Mark, we find a narration which assumes that the ears of corn were then ripe (Mark ii. 23), and which must therefore have occurred at the time of the Passover. Besides this, there is a narrative given by the first evangelist, which must be referred to the culminating point of Jesus' ministry, and the incidents of which took place in the month Adar, and therefore not long before a feast of Passover (Matt. xvii. 24).[1] It is not possible, however, to comprehend how it occurred to the fourth evangelist to break with the idea of a one-year's ministry, if it was really verified in the oldest tradition in spite of its pretended purely ideal tendencies. Even repeated visits in one year, if that were necessary, were provided for by ancient custom. For this reason, even those who in general regard John's Gospel as totally unhistorical, hold fast to a ministry of several years' duration. If in this point, then, the

[1] The strange mention of a Sabbath in Luke vi. 1, which is frequently referred to a Sabbath about the time of the feast of Passover, I regard as an old corruption of the text, and this for reasons connected with language and with criticism of the text. The reference in Luke xiii. 6–9, or even in xiii. 32 f., to a ministry of several years' duration, I hold to be an allegorizing misinterpretation.

Fourth Gospel proves itself to be historically more exact, it will have more authority in regard to the journey taken by Jesus, which it alone relates.

In itself, indeed, John's eclectic manner of narration offers apparently no sure guarantee that Jesus' public ministry lasted for *only* two years. The second year is certainly marked out, step by step, by the Passover in spring (vi. 4), the feast of Tabernacles in autumn (vii. 2), that of the Dedication of the Temple in winter (x. 22), and the death Passover (xi. 55); but for the first we possess only *one* certain datum in a word of Jesus', which points distinctly to the beginning of December (iv. 35). As immediately thereafter His chief activity in Galilee began, whose culminating and turning point was marked by events occurring during the time of the Passover, the space for it seems to be reduced to narrow limits. Still another journey took place during this time, although it is not said to which feast it was that Jesus went up (v. 1). If this was a Passover, or one of the two principal feasts which followed, but which it is not possible to fix, then Jesus' ministry extended over another whole year; but although the events related in chaps. v. and vi. are manifestly conjoined on account of their great importance, yet it is hardly compatible with the evangelist's way of relating (vi. 1), that they should have been separated by six or even by twelve months. We shall see besides, that, judging from palpable combinations, this journey took place at a time when Jesus looked on the result of His Galilean ministry as essentially settled. It will therefore be safest to think of that feast which alone, in the time between December and April, can be taken into account. This is the feast of Purim, held in the month Adar (March), which perhaps John did not describe more particularly, since it was unknown to his Grecian readers. The fact of its not being necessary to celebrate this feast at the central sanctuary, and there being no certain proof of great esteem for it in the time of Jesus, is no argument whatever against Jesus' going up to Jerusalem, and His doing so for other reasons than merely to attend the feast. We believe, then, that a public ministry of two years' duration must still be held, for anything else there is nothing definite to rely on; we only gain an extended period, over which the phases of the history,

which developed so rapidly and so plainly, cannot be distributed.

Nothing is more intelligible than that Jesus should choose the nearest of the three great feasts at which all Israel was collected in the capital, for appearing there publicly for the first time. It is frequently overlooked, however, that if Jesus Himself was conscious of His Messianic calling, which in reality concerned the entire nation, He could not begin in a narrow sphere a ministry such as every rabbi exercised, without placing His calling in a false light. Unlikely as it was that He should think of beginning by proclaiming Himself before all the people as the Messiah, yet He would certainly seek opportunity for at once making Himself publicly known as one whose divinely-given calling was directed to the religious centre of the national life of the people. For this end, the congregation at the feast was obviously the proper place. What occurred there, before the eyes of thousands who were collected from all quarters of the land, was certain of public attention; what was there applauded passed as legitimated. In His more contracted home, the carpenter's son found a constant obstacle in His own past life; Jesus Himself recognised it as belonging to the course of the world, that they, who had seen Him in straitened circumstances leading a life like that of others, could not easily reconcile themselves to beholding Him all at once in such a unique position, and with such a unique significance,—verily a prophet is not regarded in his own country (Mark vi. 4; John iv. 44). Even if He succeeded in finding adherents there, yet His recognition in a remote corner of the land, which in the capital was partly despised, partly suspected in regard to its orthodoxy and social customs (John vii. 41, 52), would rather be against than helpful to His recognition by the body of the people. A Galilean Messiah would from the first have to fear the opposition excited on the one side by the natural tension between the capital and the province, and on the other by the jealousy of the former regarding its position of pre-eminent culture. It was especially associated with the peculiarity of the Israelitish national life, that it, in a most unique way, was concentrated round Jerusalem, which, as the centre of culture, was at once the spot where everything had to be legitimated

that claimed to possess significance for the religious national life of Israel. The Baptist could summon the people to him at the Jordan, because he aimed first of all at the repentance and conversion of the individual. Jesus, who desired to create a new life in the nation itself, and in the theocracy of Israel, had to reach the people at what was the centre of its religious life. Of course there was no question of a legalizing by the actual leaders of the people, neither by the official leaders in the Sanhedrin nor those freely chosen in the popular Pharisaical party; Jesus could not rest His recognition upon an outward authority, and He was sufficiently acquainted with these leaders of the people to know what position they would ultimately take up towards Him. But even they owed their authority principally to the fact of their representing the spirit which dwelt in the community of Israel; and so it was desirable to obtain a public recognition which alone could prepare the way to the heart of His little province. This could be done best and most fully where the congregation was gathered in solemn assembly, and when a natural point of contact was offered Him in the religious excitement of the people.

He certainly could not know when and how an opportunity would present itself during the feast. In this case, also, He would have to wait till His Father in heaven pointed out the time and hour, the way and the means.

END OF VOLUME I.

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