
a *Grace Notes* course

History of the Christian Church

By Philip Schaff

VOLUME 1. First Period – Apostolic Christianity¹

Chapter 2: Jesus Christ

¹ Editor: Warren Doud

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VOL 1: Chapter 2. Jesus Christ

1.14 Sources and Literature

A. Sources.

Christ himself wrote nothing, but furnished endless material for books and songs of gratitude and praise. The living Church of the redeemed is his book. He founded a religion of the living spirit, not of a written code, like the Mosaic law. (His letter to King Abgarus of Edessa, in Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, I. 13, is a worthless fabrication.) Yet his words and deeds are recorded by as honest and reliable witnesses as ever put pen to paper.

I. Authentic Christian Sources.

(1) The four CANONICAL GOSPELS. Whatever their origin and date, they exhibit essentially the same divine-human life and character of Christ, which stands out in sharp contrast with the fictitious Christ of the Apocryphal Gospels, and cannot possibly have been invented, least of all by illiterate Galileans. They would never have thought of writing books without the inspiration of their Master.

(2) THE ACTS OF LUKE, THE APOSTOLIC EPISTLES, AND THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN. They presuppose, independently of the written Gospels, the main facts of the gospel-history, especially the crucifixion and the resurrection, and abound in allusions to these facts. Four of the Pauline Epistles (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians) are admitted as genuine by the most extreme of liberal critics (Baur and the Tübingen School), and from them alone a great part of the life of Christ might be reconstructed.

II. Apocryphal Gospels.

The Apocryphal Gospels are very numerous (about 50), some of them only known by name, others in fragments, and date from the second and later centuries. They are partly heretical (Gnostic and Ebionite) perversions or mutilations of the real history, partly innocent compositions of fancy, or religious novels intended to link together the disconnected periods of Christ's biography, to

satisfy the curiosity concerning his relations, his childhood, his last days, and to promote the glorification of the Virgin Mary. They may be divided into four classes: (1) Heretical Gospels (as the *Evangelium Cerinthi*, *Ev. Marcionis*, *Ev. Judae Ischariotae*, *Ev. secundum Hebraeos*, etc.); (2) Gospels of Joseph and Mary, and the birth of Christ (*Protevangelium Jacobi*, *Evang. Pseudo-Mathaei sive liber de Ortu Beatae Mariae et Infantia Salvatoris*, *Evang. de Nativitate Mariae*, *Historia Josephi Fabri lignarii*, etc.); (3) Gospels of the childhood of Jesus from the flight to Egypt till his eighth or twelfth year (*Evang. Thomae*, of Gnostic origin, *Evang. Infantiae Arabicum*, etc.); (4) Gospels of the passion and the mysterious triduum in Hades (*Evang. Nicodemi*, including the *Gesta or Acta Pilati* and the *Descensus ad Inferos*, *Epistola Pilati*, a report of Christ's passion to the emperor Tiberius, *Paradosis Pilati*, *Epistolae Herodis ad Pilatum* and *Pilati ad Herodem*, *Responsum Tiberii ad Pilatum*, *Narratio Josephi Arimathiensis*, etc.). It is quite probable that Pilate sent an account of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus to his master in Rome (as Justin Martyr and Tertullian confidentially assert), but the various documents bearing his name are obviously spurious, including the one recently published by Geo. Sluter (*The Acta Pilati*, Shelbyville, Ind. 1879), who professes to give a translation from the supposed authentic Latin copy in the Vatican Library.

These apocryphal productions have no historical, but considerable apologetic value; for they furnish by their contrast with the genuine Gospels a very strong negative testimony to the historical truthfulness of the Evangelists, as a shadow presupposes the light, a counterfeit the real coin, and a caricature the original picture. They have contributed largely to Mediæval art (e.g., the ox and the ass in the history of the nativity), and to the traditional Mariology and Mariolatry of the Greek and Roman churches, and have supplied Mohammed with his scanty knowledge of Jesus and Mary.

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See the collections of the apocryphal Gospels by FABRICIUS (*Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, Hamburg, 1703, 2d ed. 1719), THILO (*Cod. Apocr. N. Ti.*, Lips. 1832), TISCHENDORF (*Evangelia Apocrypha*, Lips. 1853), W. WRIGHT (*Contributions to the Apocr. Lit. of the N. T. from Syrian MSS. in the British Museum*, Lond. 1865), B. HARRIS COWPER (*The Apocryphal Gospels, translated*, London, 1867), and ALEX. WALKER (Engl. transl. in Roberts & Donaldson's "Ante-Nicene Library," vol. xvi., Edinb. 1870; vol. viii. of Am. ed., N. Y. 1886).

Comp. the dissertations of TISCHENDORF: *De Evang. apocr. origine et usu (Hagae, 1851)*, and *Pilati circa Christum judicio quid lucis offeratur ex Actis Pilati* (Lips. 1855). RUD. HOFMANN: *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen (Leipz. 1851)*, and his art., *Apokryphen des N. T.*, in Herzog & Plitt, "R. Encykl.," vol. i. (1877), p. 511. G. BRUNET: *Les évangiles apocryphes*, Paris, 1863. MICHEL NICOLAS: *Études sur les évangiles apocryphes*, PARIS, 1866. LIPSIUS: *Die Pilatus-Acten*, Kiel, 1871; *Die edessenische Abgar-Sage*, 1880; GOSPELS, APOCR., IN SMITH & WACE, I. 700 SQQ.; HOLTZMANN *Einl. in's N. T.*, pp. 534-'54.

III. Jewish Sources.

The Old Testament Scriptures are, in type and prophecy, a preparatory history of Christ, and become fully intelligible only in Him who came "to fulfill the law and the prophets."

The Apocryphal and post-Christian Jewish writings give us a full view of the outward framework of society and religion in which the life of Christ moved, and in this way they illustrate and confirm the Gospel accounts.

IV. Josephus:

The famous testimony of the Jewish historian JOSEPHUS (d. after A.D. 103) deserves special consideration. In his *Antiqu. Jud.*, 1. xviii. cap. 3, § 3, he gives the following striking summary of the life of Jesus:

"Now there rose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works (παραδόξων

ἔργων ποιητής), a teacher of such men as receive the truth with gladness. He carried away with him many of the Jews and also many of the Greeks. He was the Christ (ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν). And after Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, his first adherents did not forsake him. For he appeared to them alive again the third day (ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν); the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things (ἄλλα μυρία θαυμάσια) concerning him. And the tribe of those called Christians, after him, is not extinct to this day."

This testimony is first quoted by Eusebius, twice, without a misgiving (*Hist. Eccl.*, I. 11; and *Demonstr. Evang.*, III. 5), and was considered genuine down to the 16th century, but has been disputed ever since. We have added the most doubtful words in Greek.

The following are the arguments for the genuineness:

(1) The testimony is found in all the MSS. of Josephus.

But these MSS. were written by Christians, and we have none older than from the 11th century.

(2) It agrees with the style of Josephus.

(3) It is extremely improbable that Josephus, in writing a history of the Jews coming down to A.D. 66, should have ignored Jesus; all the more since he makes favorable mention of John the Baptist (*Antiqu.*, XVIII. 5, 2), and of the martyrdom of James "the Brother of Jesus called the Christ" (*Antiqu.* XX 9, 1: τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ). Both passages are generally accepted as genuine, unless the words τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ should be an interpolation.

Against this may be said that Josephus may have had prudential reasons for ignoring Christianity altogether.

Arguments against the genuineness:

(1) The passage interrupts the connection.

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But not necessarily. Josephus had just recorded a calamity which befell the Jews under Pontius Pilate, in consequence of a sedition, and he may have regarded the crucifixion of Jesus as an additional calamity. He then goes on (§ 4 and 5) to record another calamity, the expulsion of the Jews from Rome under Tiberius.

(2) It betrays a Christian, and is utterly inconsistent with the known profession of Josephus as a Jewish priest of the sect of the Pharisees. We would rather expect him to have represented Jesus as an impostor, or as an enthusiast.

But it may be urged, on the other hand, that Josephus, with all his great literary merits, is also known as a vain and utterly unprincipled man, as a renegade and sycophant who glorified and betrayed his nation, who served as a Jewish general in the revolt against Rome, and then, after having been taken prisoner, flattered the Roman conquerors, by whom he was richly rewarded. History furnishes many examples of similar inconsistencies. Remember Pontius Pilate who regarded Christ as innocent, and yet condemned him to death, the striking testimonies of Rousseau and Napoleon I. to the divinity of Christ, and also the concessions of Renan, which contradict his position.

(3) It is strange that the testimony should not have been quoted by such men as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, or any other writer before Eusebius (d. 340), especially by Origen, who expressly refers to the passages of Josephus on John the Baptist and James (*Contra Cels.*, I. 35, 47). Even Chrysostom (d. 407), who repeatedly mentions Josephus, seems to have been ignorant of this testimony.

In view of these conflicting reasons, there are different opinions:

(1) The passage is entirely genuine. This old view is defended by Hauteville, Oberthür, Bretschneider, Böhmert, Whiston, Schoedel

(1840), Böttger (*Das Zeugnis des Jos.*, Dresden, 1863).

(2) It is wholly interpolated by a Christian hand. Bekker (in his ed. of Jos., 1855), Hase (1865 and 1876), Keim (1867), Schürer (1874).

(3) It is partly genuine, partly interpolated. Josephus probably wrote Χριστὸς οὗτος ἐλέγετο (as in the passage on James), but not ἦν and all other Christian sentences were added by a transcriber before Eusebius, for apologetic purposes. So Paulus, Heinichen, Gieseler (I. § 24, p. 81, 4th Germ. ed.), Weizsäcker, Renan, Farrar. In the introduction to his *Vie de Jésus* (p. xii.), Renan says: "*Je crois le passage sur Jésus authentique. Il est parfaitement dans le goût de Joseph, et si cet historien a fait mention de Jésus, c'est bien comme cela qu'il a dû en parler. On sent seulement qu'une main chrétienne a retouché le morceau, y a ajouté quelques mots sans lesquels il eût été presque blasphématoire, a peut-être retranché ou modifié quelques expressions.*"

(4) It is radically changed from a Jewish calumny into its present Christian form. Josephus originally described Jesus as a pseudo-Messiah, a magician, and seducer of the people, who was justly crucified. So Paret and Ewald (*Gesch. Christus'*, p. 183, 3d ed.).

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Josephus must have taken some notice of the greatest event in Jewish history (as he certainly did of John the Baptist and of James), but that his statement—whether non-committal or hostile—was skillfully enlarged or altered by a Christian hand, and thereby deprived of its historical value.

In other respects, the writings of Josephus contain, indirectly, much valuable testimony to the truth of the gospel history. His *History of the Jewish War is undesignedly a striking commentary on the predictions of our Saviour concerning the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem; the great distress and affliction of the Jewish people at that time; the famine, pestilence, and earthquake; the rise of*

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false prophets and impostors, and the flight of his disciples at the approach of these calamities. All these coincidences have been traced out in full by the learned Dr. Lardner, in his Collection of Ancient Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to the Truth of the Christian Religion, first published 1764-'67, also in vol. vi. of his Works, ed. by Kippis, Lond. 1838.

V. Heathen Testimonies:

Heathen testimonies are few and meager. This fact must be accounted for by the mysterious origin, the short duration and the unworldly character of the life and work of Christ, which was exclusively devoted to the kingdom of heaven, and was enacted in a retired country and among a people despised by the proud Greeks and Romans.

The oldest heathen testimony is probably in the Syriac letter of MARA, a philosopher, to his son Serapion, about A.D. 74, first published by Cureton, in *Spicilegium Syriacum*, Lond. 1855, and translated by Pratten in the "Ante-Nicene Library," Edinb. vol. xxiv. (1872), 104-114. Here Christ is compared to Socrates and Pythagoras, and called "the wise king of the Jews," who were justly punished for murdering him. Ewald (*l. c.* p. 180) calls this testimony "very remarkable for its simplicity and originality as well as its antiquity."

Roman authors of the 1st and 2d centuries make only brief and incidental mention of Christ as the founder of the Christian religion, and of his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius. TACITUS, *Annales*, I. xv. cap. 44, notices him in connection with his account of the conflagration at Rome and the Neronian persecution, in the words: "*Auctor nominis ejus [Christiani] Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat,*" and calls the Christian religion an *exitiabilis superstitio*. Comp. his equally contemptuous misrepresentation of the Jews in *Hist.*, v. c. 3-5. Other notices are found in SUETONIUS: *Vita Claudii*, c. 25; *Vita Neronis*, c. 16; PLINIUS, jun.: *Epist.*, X. 97, 98; LUCIAN: *De morte Peregr.*, c. 11; LAMPRIIDIUS: *Vita Alexandri Severi*, c. 29, 43.

The heathen opponents of Christianity, LUCIAN, CELSUS, PORPHYRY, JULIAN THE APOSTATE, etc., presuppose the principal facts of the gospel-history, even the miracles of Jesus, but they mostly derive them, like the Jewish adversaries, from evil spirits. Comp. my book on the *Person of Christ*, Appendix, and Dr. NATH. LARDNER'S *Credibility, and Collection of Testimonies*.

B. Biographical and Critical.

The numerous Harmonies of the Gospel began already A.D. 170, with TATIAN'S τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων (on which Ephraem Syrus, in the fourth century, wrote a commentary, published in Latin from an Armenian version in the Armenian convent at Venice, 1876). The first biographies of Christ were ascetic or poetic, and partly legendary. See Hase, *Leben Jesu*, § 17-19. *The critical period began with the infidel and infamous attacks of Reimarus, Bahrdt, and Venturini, and the noble apologetic works of Hess, Herder, and Reinhard. But a still greater activity was stimulated by the Leben Jesu of Strauss, 1835 and again by Renan's Vie de Jésus, 1863.*

J. J. HESS (Antistes at Zürich, d. 1828): *Lebensgeschichte Jesu*. Zürich, 1774; 8th ed. 1823, 3 vols. Translated into Dutch and Danish. He introduced the psychological and pragmatic treatment.

F. V. RIENHARD (d. 1812): *Versuch über den Plan Jesu*. Wittenberg, 1781; 5th ed. by Heubner, 1830. English translation, N. York, 1831. Reinhard proved the originality and superiority of the plan of Christ above all the conceptions of previous sages and benefactors of the race.

J. G. HERDER (d. 1803): *Vom Erlöser der Menschen nach unsern 3 ersten Evang. Riga, 1796. The same: Von Gottes Sohn, der Welt Heiland, nach Joh. Evang. Riga, 1797.*

H. E. G. PAULUS (Prof. in Heidelberg, d. 1851): *Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristenthums*. Heidelb. 1828, 2 vols. Represents the "vulgar" rationalism superseded afterwards by the speculative rationalism of Strauss.

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C. ULLMANN (d. 1865): *Die Sündlosigkeit Jesu*. Hamb. 1828; 7th ed. 1864. Eng. translation (of 7th ed.) by *Sophia Taylor*, Edinb. 1870. The best work on the sinlessness of Jesus. Comp. also his essay (against Strauss), *Historisch oder Mythisch?* Gotha, 1838.

KARL HASE: *Das Leben Jesu*. Leipz. 1829; 5th ed. 1865. *The same: Geschichte Jesu*. Leipz. 1876.

SCHLEIERMACHER (d. 1834): *Vorlesungen über das Leben Jesu, herausgeg. von Rütenik*. Berlin, 1864. *The lectures were delivered 1832, and published from imperfect manuscripts. "Eine Stimme aus vergangenen Tagen."* Comp. the critique of D. F. Strauss in *Der Christus des Glaubens und der Jesus der Geschichte*. Berlin, 1865.

D. F. STRAUSS (d. 1874): *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet*. Tübingen, 1835-'36; 4th ed. 1840, 2 vols. French transl. by *Emile Littré*, Par. 1856 (2d ed.); Engl. transl. by *Miss Marian Evans* (better known under the assumed name *George Eliot*), Lond. 1846, in 3 vols., republ. in N. York, 1850. *The same: Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet*. Leipz. 1864; 3d ed. 1875. In both these famous works Strauss represents the mythical theory. It has been popularized in the third volume of *The Bible for Learners* by OORT and HOOYKAAS, Engl. transl., Boston ed. 1879.

A. NEANDER (d. 1850): *Das Leben Jesu*. Hamb. 1837; 5th ed. 1852. A positive refutation of Strauss. *The same* in English by *McClintock and Blumenthal*, N. York, 1848.

JOH. NEP. SEPP (R. C.): *Das Leben Jesu Christi*. Regensb. 1843 sqq. 2d ed. 1865, 6 vols. Much legendary matter.

JORDAN BUCHER (R. C.): *Das Leben Jesu Christi*. Stuttgart, 1859.

A. EBRARD: *Wissenschaftliche Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte*. Erl. 1842; 3d ed. 1868. Against Strauss, Bruno Bauer, etc. Condensed English translation, Edinb. 1869.

J. P. LANGE: *Das Leben Jesu*. Heidelb. 1844-'47, 3 parts in 5 vols. Engl. transl. by *Marcus Dods* and others, in 6 vols., Edinb. 1864. Rich and suggestive.

J. J. VAN OOSTERZEE: *Leven van Jesus*. First publ. in 1846-'51, 3 vols. 2d ed. 1863-'65. Comp. his *Christologie*, Rotterdam, 1855-'61, 3 vols., which describe the Son of God before his incarnation, the Son of God in the flesh, and the Son of God in glory. The third part is translated into German by F. Meyering: *Das Bild Christi nach der Schrift* Hamburg, 1864.

CHR. FR. SCHMID: *Biblische Theologie des N. Testaments*. Ed. by *Weizsäcker*. Stuttgart, 1853 (3d ed. 1854), 2 vols. The first volume contains the life and doctrine of Christ. The English translation by G. H. VENABLES (Edinb. 1870) is an abridgment.

H. EWALD: *Geschichte Christus' und seiner Zeit*. Gött. 1854; 3d ed. 1867 (vol. v. of his *Hist. of Israel*). Transl. into Engl. by *O. Glover*, Cambridge, 1865.

J. YOUNG: *The Christ of History*. Lond. and N. York, 1855. 5th ed., 1868.

P. LICHTENSTEIN: *Lebensgeschichte Jesu in chronolog. Uebersicht*. Erlangen, 1856.

C. J. RIGGENBACH: *Vorlesungen über das Leben Jesu*. Basel, 1858.

M. BAUMGARTEN: *Die Geschichte Jesu für das Verständniss der Gegenwart*. Braunschweig, 1859.

W. F. GESS: *Christi Person und Werk nach Christi Selbstzeugniss und den Zeugnissen der Apostel*. Basel, 1878, in several parts. (This supersedes his first work on the same subject, publ. 1856.)

HORACE BUSHNELL (d. 1878): *The Character of Jesus: forbidding his possible classification with men*. N. York, 1861. (A reprint of the tenth chapter of his work on, "Nature and the Supernatural," N. York, 1859.) It is the best and most useful product of his genius.

C. J. ELLICOTT (Bishop): *Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, being the Hulsean Lect. for 1859*. 5th ed. Lond. 1869; republ. in Boston, 1862.

SAMUEL J. ANDREWS: *The Life of our Lord upon the earth, considered in its historical, chronological, and geographical relations*. N. York, 1863; 4th ed. 1879

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ERNEST RENAN: *Vie de Jésus*. Par. 1863, and often publ. since (13th ed. 1867) and in several translations. Strauss popularized and Frenchified. The legendary theory. Eloquent, fascinating, superficial, and contradictory.

DANIEL SCHENKEL: *Das Charakterbild Jesu*. Wiesbaden, 1864; 4th ed. revised 1873. English transl. by W. H. Furness. Boston, 1867, 2 vols. By the same: *Das Christusbild der Apostel und der nachapostolischen Zeit*. Leipz. 1879. See also his art., *Jesus Christus*, in Schenkel's "Bibel-Lexikon," III. 257 sqq. Semi-mythical theory. Comp. the sharp critique of Strauss on the *Charakterbild: Die Halben und die Ganzen*. Berlin, 1865.

PHILIP SCHAFF: *The Person of Christ: the Perfection of his Humanity viewed as a Proof of his Divinity. With a Collection of Impartial Testimonies*. Boston and N. York, 1865; 12th ed., revised, New York, 1882. The same work in German, Gotha, 1865; revised ed., N. York (Am. Tract Soc.), 1871; in Dutch by Cordes, with an introduction by J. J. van Oosterzee, Groningen, 1866; in French by Prof. Sardinoux, Toulouse, 1866, and in other languages. By the same: *Die Christusfrage*. N. York and Berlin, 1871.

Ecce Homo: A Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ. [By Prof. J. R. SEELEY, of Cambridge.] Lond. 1864, and several editions and translations. It gave rise also to works on *Ecce Deus, Ecce Deus Homo*, and a number of reviews and essays (one by Gladstone).

CHARLES HARDWICK (d. 1859): *Christ and other Masters*. Lond., 4th ed., 1875. (An extension of the work of Reinhard; Christ compared with the founders of the Eastern religions.)

E. H. PLUMPTRE: *Christ and Christendom*. Boyle Lectures. Lond. 1866

E. DE PRESSENSÉ: *Jésus Christ, son temps, sa vie, son oeuvre*. Paris, 1866. (*Against Renan*.) The same transl. into English by Annie Harwood (Lond., 7th ed. 1879), and into German by Fabarius (Halle, 1866).

F. DELITZSCH: *Jesus und Hillel*. Erlangen, 1867; 3rd ed. revised, 1879.

THEOD. KEIM (Prof. in Zürich, and then in Giessen, d. 1879); *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara*. Zürich, 1867-'72, 3 vols. Also an abridgment in one volume, 1873, 2d ed. 1875. (This 2d ed. has important additions, particularly a critical Appendix.) The large work is translated into English by *Geldart* and *Ransom*. Lond. (Williams & Norgate), 1873-'82, 6 vols. By the same author: *Der geschichtliche Christus*. Zürich, 3d ed. 1866. Keim attempts to reconstruct a historical Christ from the Synoptical Gospels, especially Matthew, but without John.

WM. HANNA: *The Life of our Lord*. Edinb. 1868-'69, 6 vols.

Bishop DUPANLOUP (R. C.): *Histoire de notre Sauveur Jésus Christ*. Paris, 1870.

FR. W. FARRAR (Canon of Westminster): *The Life of Christ*. Lond. and N. York, 1874, 2 vols. (in many editions, one with illustrations).

C. GEIKIE: *The Life and Words of Christ*. Lond. and N. York, 1878, 2 vols. (Illustrated. Several editions.)

BERNHARD WEISS (Prof. in Berlin): *Das Leben Jesu*. Berlin, 1882, 2 vols., 3d ed. 1888. English transl. Edinb. 1885, 3 vols.

ALFRED EDERSHEIM: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. London and N. Y. 1884, 2 vols. Strictly orthodox. Valuable for rabbinical illustrations.,

W. BEYSLAG: *Das Leben Jesu*. Halle, 1885-'86, 2 vols.; 2d ed. 1888.

The works of PAULUS, STRAUSS, AND RENAN (ALSO JOSEPH SALVADOR, a learned Jew in France, author of *Jésus Christ et sa doctrine*, Par. 1838) represent the various phases of rationalism and destructive criticism, but have called forth also a copious and valuable apologetic literature. See the bibliography in Hase's *Leben Jesu*, 5th ed. p. 44 sqq., and in his *Geschichte Jesu*, p. 124 sqq. SCHLEIERMACHER, GFRÖRER, WEISSE, EWALD, SCHENKEL, HASE, AND KEIM occupy, in various degrees and with many differences, a middle position. The great Schleiermacher almost perished in the sea of scepticism, but, like Peter, he caught

the saving arm of Jesus extended to him (Matt. 14:30, 31). Hase is very valuable for the bibliography and suggestive sketches, Ewald and Keim for independent research and careful use of Josephus and the contemporary history. Keim rejects, Ewald accepts, the Gospel of John as authentic; both admit the sinless perfection of Jesus, and Keim, from his purely critical and synoptical standpoint, goes so far as to say (vol. iii. 662) that Christ, in his gigantic elevation above his own and succeeding ages, "makes the impression of mysterious loneliness, superhuman miracle, divine creation (*den Eindruck geheimnissvoller Einsamkeit, übermenschlichen Wunders, göttlicher Schöpfung*)." Weiss and Beyschlag mark a still greater advance, and triumphantly defend the genuineness of John's Gospel, but make concessions to criticism in minor details.

C. Chronological.

KEPLER: *De Jesu Christi Servatoris nostri vero anno natalicio. Frankf. 1606. De vero anno quo aeternus Dei Filius humanam naturam in utero benedicite Virginis Mariæ assumpsit.* Frcf. 1614.

J. A. BENDEL: *Ordo Temporum.* Stuttgart, 1741, and 1770.

HENR. SANLEMENTE: *De Vulgaris Aerae Emendatione libri quatuor.*

C. IDELER: *Handbuch der Chronologie.* Berlin, 1825–226, 2 vols. By the same: *Lehrbuch der Chronologie,* 1831.

FR. MÜNTER: *Der Stern der Weisen.* Kopenhagen, 1827.

K. WIESELER: *Chronolog. Synopse der vier Evangelien.* Hamb. 1843. Eng. trans. by Venables, 2d ed., 1877. Supplemented by his *Beiträge zur richtigen Würdigung der Evangelien.* Gotha, 1869.

HENRY BROWNE: *Ordo Saeclorum.* London, 1844. Comp. his art. *Chronology,* in the 3d ed. of Kitto's "Cycl. of Bib. Lit."

SAM. F. JARVIS (historiographer of the Prot. Episc. Ch. in the U. S., d. 1851): A

Chronological Introduction to the History of the Church. N. York, 1845.

G. SEYFFARTH: *Chronologia sacra, Untersuchungen über das Geburtsjahr des Herrn.* Leipzig, 1846.

RUD. ANGER: *Der Stern der Weisen und das Geburtsjahr Christi.* Leipz. 1847. By the same. *Zur Chronologie des Lehramtes Christi.* Leipz. 1848.

HENRY F. CLINTON: *Fasti Romani.* Oxford, 1845–'50, 2 vols.

THOMAS LEWIN: *Essay on the Chronology of the New Testament.* Oxford, 1854. The same: *Fasti Sacri* (from B.C. 70 to A.D. 70). Lond. 1865.

F. PIPER: *Das Datum der Geburt Christi,* in his "Evangel. Kalender" for 1856, pp. 41 sqq.

HENRI LUTTEROTH: *Le recensement de Quirinius en Judée.* Paris, 1865 (134 pp.).

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1.15 The Founder of Christianity

When “the fullness of the time” was come, God sent forth his only-begotten Son, “the Desire of all nations,” to redeem the world from the curse of sin, and to establish an everlasting kingdom of truth, love, and peace for all who should believe on his name.

In JESUS CHRIST a preparatory history both divine and human comes to its close. In him culminate all the previous revelations of God to Jews and Gentiles; and in him are fulfilled the deepest desires and efforts of both Gentiles and Jews for redemption. In his divine nature, as Logos, he is, according to St. John, the eternal Son of the Father, and the agent in the creation and preservation of the world, and in all those preparatory manifestations of God, which were completed in the incarnation. In his human nature, as Jesus of Nazareth, he is the ripe fruit of the religious growth of humanity, with an earthly ancestry, which St. Matthew (the evangelist of Israel) traces to Abraham, the patriarch of the Jews, and St. Luke (the evangelist of the Gentiles), to Adam, the father of all men. In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and in him also is realized the ideal of human virtue and piety. He is the eternal Truth, and the divine Life itself, personally joined with our nature; he is our Lord and our God; yet at the same time flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. In him is solved the problem of religion, the reconciliation and fellowship of man with God; and we must expect no clearer revelation of God, nor any higher religious attainment of man, than is already guaranteed and actualized in his person.

But as Jesus Christ thus closes all previous history, so, on the other hand, he begins an

endless future. He is the author of a new creation, the second Adam, the father of regenerate humanity, the head of the church, “which is his body, the fullness of him, that filleth all in all.” He is the pure fountain of that stream of light and life, which has since flowed unbroken through nations and ages, and will continue to flow, till the earth shall be full of his praise, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The universal diffusion and absolute dominion of the spirit and life of Christ will be also the completion of the human race, the end of history, and the beginning of a glorious eternity.

It is the great and difficult task of the biographer of Jesus to show how he, by external and internal development, under the conditions of a particular people, age, and country, came to be in fact what he was in idea and destination, and what he will continue to be for the faith of Christendom, the God-Man and Saviour of the world. Being divine from eternity, he could not become God; but as man he was subject to the laws of human life and gradual growth. “He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” Though he was the Son of God, “yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” There is no conflict between the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the ideal Christ of faith. The full understanding of his truly human life, by its very perfection and elevation above all other men before and after him, will necessarily lead to an admission of his own testimony concerning his divinity.

JESUS CHRIST came into the world under Caesar Augustus, the first Roman emperor, before the death of king Herod the Great, four years before the traditional date of our Dionysian era. He was born at Bethlehem of Judaea, in the royal line of David, from Mary, “the wedded Maid and Virgin Mother.” The world was at peace, and the gates of Janus were closed for only the second time in the

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history of Rome. There is a poetic and moral fitness in this coincidence: it secured a hearing for the gentle message of peace which might have been drowned in the passions of war and the clamor of arms. Angels from heaven proclaimed the good tidings of his birth with songs of praise; Jewish shepherds from the neighboring fields, and heathen sages from the far east greeted the newborn king and Saviour with the homage of believing hearts. Heaven and earth gathered in joyful adoration around the Christ-child, and the blessing of this event is renewed from year to year among high and low, rich and poor, old and young, throughout the civilized world.

The idea of a perfect childhood, sinless and holy, yet truly human and natural, had never entered the mind of poet or historian before; and when the legendary fancy of the Apocryphal Gospels attempted to fill out the chaste silence of the Evangelists, it painted an unnatural prodigy of a child to whom wild animals, trees, and dumb idols bowed, and who changed balls of clay into flying birds for the amusement of his playmates.

The youth of Jesus is veiled in mystery. We know only one, but a very significant fact. When a boy of twelve years he astonished the doctors in the temple by his questions and answers, without repelling them by immodesty and premature wisdom, and filled his parents with reverence and awe by his absorption in the things of his heavenly Father, and yet was subject and obedient to them in all things. Here, too, there is a clear line of distinction between the supernatural miracle of history and the unnatural prodigy of apocryphal fiction, which represents Jesus as returning most learned answers to perplexing questions of the doctors about astronomy, medicine, physics, metaphysics, and hyperphysics.

The external condition and surroundings of his youth are in sharp contrast with the amazing result of his public life. He grew up quietly and unnoticed in a retired Galilean

mountain village of proverbial insignificance, and in a lowly carpenter-shop, far away from the city of Jerusalem, from schools and libraries, with no means of instruction save those which were open to the humblest Jew—the care of godly parents, the beauties of nature, the services of the synagogue, the secret communion of the soul with God, and the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which recorded in type and prophecy his own character and mission. All attempts to derive his doctrine from any of the existing schools and sects have utterly failed. He never referred to the traditions of the elders except to oppose them.

From the Pharisees and Sadducees he differed alike, and provoked their deadly hostility. With the Essenes he never came in contact. He was independent of human learning and literature, of schools and parties. He taught the world as one who owed nothing to the world. He came down from heaven and spoke out of the fullness of his personal intercourse with the great Jehovah. He was no scholar, no artist, no orator; yet was he wiser than all sages, he spoke as never man spoke, and made an impression on his age and all ages after him such as no man ever made or can make. Hence the natural surprise of his countrymen as expressed in the question: "From whence hath this man these things?" "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

He began his public ministry in the thirtieth year of his age, after the Messianic inauguration by the baptism of John, and after the Messianic probation in the wilderness—the counterpart of the temptation of the first Adam in Paradise. That ministry lasted only three years—and yet in these three years is condensed the deepest meaning of the history of religion. No great life ever passed so swiftly, so quietly, so humbly, so far removed from the noise and commotion of the world; and no great life after its close excited such universal and lasting interest. He was aware of this contrast: he predicted his deepest humiliation even to the death on the cross,

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and the subsequent irresistible attraction of this cross, which may be witnessed from day to day wherever his name is known. He who could say, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto myself," knew more of the course of history and of the human heart than all the sages and legislators before and after him.

He chose twelve apostles for the Jews and seventy disciples for the Gentiles, not from among the scholars and leaders, but from among the illiterate fishermen of Galilee. He had no home, no earthly possessions, no friends among the mighty and the rich. A few pious women from time to time filled his purse; and this purse was in the hands of a thief and a traitor. He associated with publicans and sinners, to raise the up to a higher and nobler life, and began his reformation among the lower classes, which were despised and neglected by the proud hierarchy of the day. He never courted the favor of the great, but incurred their hatred and persecution. He never flattered the prejudices of the age, but rebuked sin and vice among the high and the low, aiming his severest words at the blind leaders of the blind, the self-righteous hypocrites who sat on Moses' seat. He never encouraged the carnal Messianic hopes of the people, but withdrew when they wished to make him a king, and declared before the representative of the Roman empire that his kingdom was not of this world. He announced to his disciples his own martyrdom, and promised to them in this life only the same baptism of blood. He went about in Palestine, often weary of travel, but never weary of his work of love, doing good to the souls and bodies of men, speaking words of spirit and life, and working miracles of power and mercy.

He taught the purest doctrine, as a direct revelation of his heavenly Father, from his own intuition and experience, and with a power and authority which commanded unconditional trust and obedience. He rose above the prejudices of party and sect, above the superstitions of his age and nation. He

addressed the naked heart of man and touched the quick of the conscience. He announced the founding of a spiritual kingdom which should grow from the smallest seed to a mighty tree, and, working like leaven from within, should gradually pervade all nations and countries. This colossal idea, the like of which had never entered the imagination of men, he held fast even in the darkest hour of humiliation, before the tribunal of the Jewish high-priest and the Roman governor, and when suspended as a malefactor on the cross; and the truth of this idea is illustrated by every page of church history and in every mission station on earth.

The miracles or signs which accompanied his teaching are supernatural, but not unnatural, exhibitions of his power over man and nature; no violations of law, but manifestations of a higher law, the superiority of mind over matter, the superiority of spirit over mind, the superiority of divine grace over human nature. They are all of the highest moral and of a profoundly symbolical significance, prompted by pure benevolence, and intended for the good of men; in striking contrast with deceptive juggler works and the useless and absurd miracles of apocryphal fiction. They were performed without any ostentation, with such simplicity and ease as to be called simply his "works." They were the practical proof of his doctrine and the natural reflex of his wonderful person. The absence of wonderful works in such a wonderful man would be the greatest wonder.

His doctrine and miracles were sealed by the purest and holiest life in private and public. He could challenge his bitterest opponents with the question: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" well knowing that they could not point to a single spot.

At last he completed his active obedience by the passive obedience of suffering in cheerful resignation to the holy will of God. Hated and persecuted by the Jewish hierarchy, betrayed

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into their hands by Judas, accused by false witnesses, condemned by the Sanhedrin, rejected by the people, denied by Peter, but declared innocent by the representative of the Roman law and justice, surrounded by his weeping mother and faithful disciples, revealing in those dark hours by word and silence the gentleness of a lamb and the dignity of a God, praying for his murderers, dispensing to the penitent thief a place in paradise, committing his soul to his heavenly Father he died, with the exclamation: "It is finished!" He died before he had reached the prime of manhood.

The Saviour of the world a youth! He died the shameful death of the cross, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, a free self-sacrifice of infinite love, to reconcile the world unto God. He conquered sin and death on their own ground, and thus redeemed and sanctified all who are willing to accept his benefits and to follow his example. He instituted the Lord's Supper, to perpetuate the memory of his death and the cleansing and atoning power of his blood till the end of time.

The third day he rose from the grave, the conqueror of death and hell, the prince of life and resurrection. He repeatedly appeared to his disciples; he commissioned them to preach the gospel of the resurrection to every creature; he took possession of his heavenly throne, and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit he established the church, which he has ever since protected, nourished, and comforted, and with which he has promised to abide, till he shall come again in glory to judge the quick and the dead.

This is a meager outline of the story which the evangelists tell us with childlike simplicity, and yet with more general and lasting effect than could be produced by the highest art of historical composition. They modestly abstained from adding their own impressions to the record of the words and acts of the Master whose "glory they beheld,

the glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Who would not shrink from the attempt to describe the moral character of Jesus, or, having attempted it, be not dissatisfied with the result? Who can empty the ocean into a bucket? Who (we may ask with Lavater) "can paint the glory of the rising sun with a charcoal?" No artist's ideal comes up to the reality in this case, though his ideals may surpass every other reality. The better and holier a man is, the more he feels his need of pardon, and how far he falls short of his own imperfect standard of excellence.

But Jesus, with the same nature as ours and tempted as we are, never yielded to temptation; never had cause for regretting any thought, word, or action; he never needed pardon, or conversion, or reform; he never fell out of harmony with his heavenly Father. His whole life was one unbroken act of self-consecration to the glory of God and the eternal welfare of his fellow-men. A catalogue of virtues and graces, however complete, would give us but a mechanical view. It is the spotless purity and sinlessness of Jesus as acknowledged by friend and foe; it is the even harmony and symmetry of all graces, of love to God and love to man, of dignity and humility of strength and tenderness, of greatness and simplicity, of self-control and submission, of active and passive virtue; it is, in one word, the absolute perfection which raises his character high above the reach of all other men and makes it an exception to a universal rule, a moral miracle in history. It is idle to institute comparisons with saints and sages, ancient or modern. Even the infidel Rousseau was forced to exclaim: "If Socrates lived and died like a sage, Jesus lived and died like a God." Here is more than the starry heaven above us, and the moral law within us, which filled the soul of Kant with ever-growing reverence and awe. Here is the holy of holies of humanity, here is the very gate of heaven.

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Going so far in admitting the human perfection of Christ—and how can the historian do otherwise?—we are driven a step farther, to the acknowledgment of his amazing claims, which must either be true, or else destroy all foundation for admiration and reverence in which he is universally held. It is impossible to construct a life of Christ without admitting its supernatural and miraculous character.

The divinity of Christ, and his whole mission as Redeemer, is an article of faith, and, as such, above logical or mathematical demonstration. The incarnation or the union of the infinite divinity and finite humanity in one person is indeed the mystery of mysteries. “What can be more glorious than God? What more vile than flesh? What more wonderful than God in the flesh?” Yet aside from all dogmatizing which lies outside of the province of the historian, the divinity of Christ has a self-evidencing power which forces itself irresistibly upon the reflecting mind and historical inquirer; while the denial of it makes his person an inexplicable enigma. It is inseparable from his own express testimony respecting himself, as it appears in every Gospel, with but a slight difference of degree between the Synoptists and St. John. Only ponder over it! He claims to be the long-promised Messiah who fulfilled the law and the prophets, the founder and lawgiver of a new and universal kingdom, the light of the world, the teacher of all nations and ages, from whose authority there is no appeal. He claims to have come into this world for the purpose to save the world from sin—which no merely human being can possibly do. He claims the power to forgive sins on earth; he frequently exercised that power, and it was for the sins of mankind, as he foretold, that he shed his own blood.

He invites all men to follow him, and promises peace and life eternal to every one that believes in him. He claims pre-existence before Abraham and the world, divine names, attributes, and worship. He disposes from the

cross of places in Paradise. In directing his disciples to baptize all nations, he coordinates himself with the eternal Father and the Divine Spirit, and promises to be with them to the consummation of the world and to come again in glory as the Judge of all men. He, the humblest and meekest of men, makes these astounding pretensions in the most easy and natural way; he never falters, never apologizes, never explains; he proclaims them as self-evident truths. We read them again and again, and never feel any incongruity nor think of arrogance and presumption.

And yet this testimony, if not true, must be downright blasphemy or madness. The former hypothesis cannot stand a moment before the moral purity and dignity of Jesus, revealed in his every word and work, and acknowledged by universal consent. Self-deception in a matter so momentous, and with an intellect in all respects so clear and so sound, is equally out of the question.

How could He be an enthusiast or a madman who never lost the even balance of his mind, who sailed serenely over all the troubles and persecutions, as the sun above the clouds, who always returned the wisest answer to tempting questions, who calmly and deliberately predicted his death on the cross, his resurrection on the third day, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the founding of his Church, the destruction of Jerusalem—predictions which have been literally fulfilled? A character so original, so complete, so uniformly consistent, so perfect, so human and yet so high above all human greatness, can be neither a fraud nor a fiction. The poet, as has been well said, would in this case be greater than the hero. It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus.

We are shut up then to the recognition of the divinity of Christ; and reason itself must bow in silent awe before the tremendous word: “I and the Father are one!” and respond with skeptical Thomas: “My Lord and my God!”

This conclusion is confirmed by the effects of the manifestation of Jesus, which far

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transcend all merely human capacity and power. The history of Christianity, with its countless fruits of a higher and purer life of truth and love than was ever known before or is now known outside of its influence, is a continuous commentary on the life of Christ, and testifies on every page to the inspiration of his holy example. His power is felt on every Lord's Day from ten thousand pulpits, in the palaces of kings and the huts of beggars, in universities and colleges, in every school where the sermon on the Mount is read, in prisons, in almshouses, in orphan asylums, as well as in happy homes, in learned works and simple tracts in endless succession. If this history of ours has any value at all, it is a new evidence that Christ is the light and life of a fallen world.

And there is no sign that his power is waning. His kingdom is more widely spread than ever before, and has the fairest prospect of final triumph in all the earth. Napoleon at St. Helena is reported to have been struck with the reflection that millions are now ready to die for the crucified Nazarene who founded a spiritual empire by love, while no one would die for Alexander, or Caesar, or himself, who founded temporal empires by force. He saw in this contrast a convincing argument for the divinity of Christ, saying: "I know men, and I tell you, Christ was not a man. Everything about Christ astonishes me. His spirit overwhelms and confounds me. There is no comparison between him and any other being. He stands single and alone." And Goethe, another commanding genius, of very different character, but equally above suspicion of partiality for religion, looking in the last years of his life over the vast field of history, was constrained to confess that "if ever the Divine appeared on earth, it was in the Person of Christ," and that "the human mind, no matter how far it may advance in every other department, will never transcend the height and moral culture of Christianity as it shines and glows in the Gospels."

The rationalistic, mythical, and legendary attempts to explain the life of Christ on purely

human and natural grounds, and to resolve the miraculous elements either into common events, or into innocent fictions, spit on the rock of Christ's character and testimony. The ablest of the infidel biographers of Jesus now profess the profoundest regard for his character, and laud him as the greatest sage and saint that ever appeared on earth. But, by rejecting his testimony concerning his divine origin and mission, they turn him into a liar; and, by rejecting the miracle of the resurrection, they make the great fact of Christianity a stream without a source, a house without a foundation, an effect without a cause. Denying the physical miracles, they expect us to believe even greater psychological miracles; yea, they substitute for the supernatural miracle of history an unnatural prodigy and incredible absurdity of their imagination. They moreover refute and supersede each other. The history of error in the nineteenth century is a history of self-destruction. A hypothesis was scarcely matured before another was invented and substituted, to meet the same fate in its turn; while the old truth and faith of Christendom remains unshaken, and marches on in its peaceful conquest against sin and error Truly, Jesus Christ, the Christ of the Gospels, the Christ of history, the crucified and risen Christ, the divine-human Christ, is the most real, the most certain, the most blessed of all facts. And this fact is an ever-present and growing power which pervades the church and conquers the world, and is its own best evidence, as the sun shining in the heavens. This fact is the only solution of the terrible mystery of sin and death, the only inspiration to a holy life of love to God and man, the only guide to happiness and peace. Systems of human wisdom will come and go, kingdoms and empires will rise and fall, but for all time to come Christ will remain "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

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1.16 Chronology of the Life of Christ

THE DEATH OF HEROD.

(1) According to Matthew 2:1 (Comp. Luke 1:5, 26), Christ was born “in the days of king Herod” I. or the Great, who died, according to Josephus, at Jericho, A.U. 750, just before the Passover, being nearly seventy years of age, after a reign of thirty-seven years. This date has been verified by the astronomical calculation of the eclipse of the moon, which took place March 13, A.U. 750, a few days before Herod’s death. Allowing two months or more for the events between the birth of Christ and the murder of the Innocents by Herod, the Nativity must be put back at least to February or January, A.U. 750 (or B.C. 4), if not earlier.

Some infer from the slaughter of the male children in Bethlehem, “from two years old and under,” that Christ must have been born two years before Herod’s death; but he counted from the time when the star was first seen by the Magi (Matt. 2:7), and wished to make sure of his object. There is no good reason to doubt the fact itself, and the flight of the holy family to Egypt, which is inseparably connected with it.

Although the horrible deed is ignored by Josephus, it is in keeping with the well-known cruelty of Herod, who from jealousy murdered Hyrcanus, the grandfather of his favorite wife, Mariamne; then Mariamne herself, to whom he was passionately attached; her two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, and, only five days before his death, his oldest son, Antipater; and who ordered all the nobles assembled around him in his last moments to be executed after his decease, so that at least his death might be attended by universal mourning. For such a monster the murder of one or two dozen infants in a little town was a very small matter, which might easily have been overlooked, or, owing to its connection with the Messiah, purposely ignored by the Jewish historian. But a confused remembrance of it is preserved in the anecdote related by

Macrobius (a Roman grammarian and probably a heathen, about A.D. 410), that Augustus, on hearing of Herod’s murder of “boys under two years” and of his own son, remarked “that it was better to be Herod’s swine than his son.” The cruel persecution of Herod and the flight into Egypt were a significant sign of the experience of the early church, and a source of comfort in every period of martyrdom.

THE STAR OF THE MAGI

(2) Another chronological hint of Matthew 2:1–4, 9, which has been verified by astronomy, is the Star of the Wise Men, which appeared before the death of Herod, and which would naturally attract the attention of the astrological sages of the East, in connection with the expectation of the advent of a great king among the Jews. Such a belief naturally arose from Balaam’s prophecy of “the star that was to rise out of Jacob” (Num. 24:17), and from the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel, and widely prevailed in the East since the dispersion of the Jews.

The older interpretation of that star made it either a passing meteor, or a strictly miraculous phenomenon, which lies beyond astronomical calculation, and was perhaps visible to the Magi alone. But Providence usually works through natural agencies, and that God did so in this case is made at least very probable by a remarkable discovery in astronomy. The great and devout Kepler observed in the years 1603 and 1604 a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which was made more rare and luminous by the addition of Mars in the month of March, 1604. In the autumn of the same year (Oct. 10) he observed near the planets Saturn, Jupiter and Mars a new (fixed) star of uncommon brilliancy, which appeared “in triumphal pomp, like some all-powerful monarch on a visit to the metropolis of his realm.” It was blazing and glittering “like the most beautiful and glorious torch ever seen when driven by a strong wind,” and seemed to him to be “an exceedingly wonderful work of God.” His

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genius perceived that this phenomenon must lead to the determination of the year of Christ's birth, and by careful calculation he ascertained that a similar conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, with the later addition of Mars, and probably some, extraordinary star, took place repeatedly A.U. 747 and 748 in the sign of the Pisces.

It is worthy of note that Jewish astrologers ascribe a special signification to the conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the sign of the Pisces, and connect it with the advent of the Messiah.

The discovery of Kepler was almost forgotten till the nineteenth century, when it was independently confirmed by several eminent astronomers, Schubert of Petersburg, Ideler and Encke of Berlin, and Pritchard of London. It is pronounced by Pritchard to be "as certain as any celestial phenomenon of ancient date." It certainly makes the pilgrimage of the Magi to Jerusalem and Bethlehem more intelligible. "The star of astrology has thus become a torch of chronology" (as Ideler says), and an argument for the truthfulness of the first Gospel.

It is objected that Matthew seems to mean a single star (ἀστὴρ, comp. Matt. 2:9) rather than a combination of stars (ἄστρον). Hence Dr. Wieseler supplements the calculation of Kepler and Ideler by calling to aid a single comet which appeared from February to April, A.U. 750, according to the Chinese astronomical tables, which Pingré and Humboldt acknowledge as historical. But this is rather far-fetched and hardly necessary; for that extraordinary star described by Kepler, or Jupiter at its most luminous appearance, as described by Pritchard, in that memorable conjunction, would sufficiently answer the description of a single star by Matthew, which must at all events not be pressed too literally; for the language of Scripture on the heavenly bodies is not scientific, but phenomenal and popular. God condescended to the astrological faith of the Magi, and probably made also an internal revelation to them

before, as well as after the appearance of the star (comp. 2:12).

If we accept the result of these calculations of astronomers we are brought to within two years of the year of the Nativity, namely, between A.U. 748 (Kepler) and 750 (Wieseler). The difference arises, of course, from the uncertainty of the time of departure and the length of the journey of the Magi.

As this astronomical argument is often very carelessly and erroneously stated, and as the works of Kepler and Ideler are not easy of access, at least in America (I found them in the Astor Library), I may be permitted to state the case more at length. John Kepler wrote three treatises on the year of Christ's birth, two in Latin (1606 and 1614), one in German (1613), in which he discusses with remarkable learning the various passages and facts bearing on that subject. They are reprinted in Dr. Ch. Frisch's edition of his Opera Omnia (Frcf. et Erlang. 1858-'70, 8 vols.), vol. IV. pp. 175 sqq.; 201 sqq.; 279 sqq. His astronomical observations on the constellation which led him to this investigation are fully described in his treatises De Stella Nova in Pede Serpentarii (Opera, vol. II. 575 sqq.), and Phenomenon singulare seu Mercurius in Sole (ibid. II. 801 sqq.). Prof. Ideler, who was himself an astronomer and chronologist, in his Handbuch der mathemat. und technischen Chronologie (Berlin, 1826, vol. III. 400 sqq.), gives the following clear summary of Kepler's and of his own observations:

"It is usually supposed that the star of the Magi was, if not a fiction of the imagination, some meteor which arose accidentally, or ad hoc. We will belong neither to the unbelievers nor the hyper-believers (weder zu den Ungläubigen noch zu den Uebergläubigen), and regard this starry phenomenon with Kepler to be real and well ascertainable by calculation, namely, as a conjunction of the Planets Jupiter and Saturn. That Matthew speaks only of a star (ἀστὴρ), not a constellation (ἄστρον), need not trouble us,

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for the two words are not unfrequently confounded. The just named great astronomer, who was well acquainted with the astrology of his and former times, and who used it occasionally as a means for commending astronomy to the attention and respect of the laity, first conceived this idea when he observed the conjunction of the two planets mentioned at the close of the year 1603. It took place Dec. 17.

In the spring following Mars joined their company, and in autumn 1604 still another star, one of those fixed star-like bodies (einer jener fixstern-artigen Körper) which grow to a considerable degree of brightness, and then gradually disappear without leaving a trace behind. This star stood near the two planets at the eastern foot of Serpentarius (Schlangenträger), and appeared when last seen as a star of the first magnitude with uncommon splendor. From month to month it waned in brightness, and at the end of 1605 was withdrawn from the eyes which at that time could not yet be aided by good optical instruments. Kepler wrote a special work on this *Stella nova in pede Serpentarii* (Prague, 1606), and there he first set forth the view that the star of the Magi consisted in a conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and some other extraordinary star, the nature of which he does not explain more fully."

Ideler then goes on to report (p. 404) that Kepler, with the imperfect tables at his disposal, discovered the same conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn A.U. 747 in June, August and December, in the sign of the Pisces; in the next year, February and March, Mars was added, and probably another extraordinary star, which must have excited the astrologers of Chaldea to the highest degree. They probably saw the new star first, and then the constellation.

Dr. Münter, bishop of Seeland, in 1821 directed new attention to this remarkable discovery, and also to the rabbinical commentary of Abarbanel on Daniel, according to which the Jewish astrologers

expected a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the sign of the Pisces before the advent of the Messiah, and asked the astronomers to reinvestigate this point. Since then Schubert of Petersburg (1823), Ideler and Encke of Berlin (1826 and 1830), and more recently Pritchard of London, have verified Kepler's calculations.

Ideler describes the result of his calculation (vol. II. 405) thus: "I have made the calculation with every care.... The results are sufficiently remarkable. Both planets [Jupiter and Saturn] came in conjunction for the first time A.U. 747, May 20, in the 20th degree of Pisces. They stood then on the heaven before sunrise and were only one degree apart. Jupiter passed Saturn to the north. In the middle of September both came in opposition to the sun at midnight in the south. The difference in longitude was one degree and a half. Both were retrograde and again approached each other. On the 27th of October a second conjunction took place in the sixteenth degree of the Pisces, and on the 12th of November, when Jupiter moved again eastward, a third in the fifteenth degree of the same sign. In the last two constellations also the difference in longitude was only about one degree, so that to a weak eye both planets might appear as one star. If the Jewish astrologers attached great expectations to a conjunction of the two upper planets in the sign of the Pisces, this one must above all have appeared to them as most significant."

In his shorter *Lehrbuch der Chronologie*, which appeared Berlin 1831 in one vol., pp. 424-431, Ideler gives substantially the same account somewhat abridged, but with slight changes of the figures on the basis of a new calculation with still better tables made by the celebrated astronomer Encke, who puts the first conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn A.U. 747, May 29th, the second Sept. 30th, the third Dec. 5th. See the full table of Encke, p. 429.

We supplement this account by an extract from an article on the Star of the Wise Men,

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by the Rev. Charles Pritchard, M.A., Hon. Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society, who made a fresh calculation of the constellation in A.U. 747, from May to December, and published the results in *Memoirs of Royal Ast. Society*, vol. xxv., and in Smith's "Bible Dictionary," p. 3108, Am. ed., where he says: "At that time [end of Sept., B.C. 7] there can be no doubt Jupiter would present to astronomers, especially in so clear an atmosphere, a magnificent spectacle. It was then at its most brilliant apparition, for it was at its nearest approach both to the sun and to the earth. Not far from it would be seen its duller and much less conspicuous companion, Saturn.

This glorious spectacle continued almost unaltered for several days, when the planets again slowly separated, then came to a halt, when, by reassuming a direct motion, Jupiter again approached to a conjunction for a third time with Saturn, just as the Magi may be supposed to have entered the Holy City. And, to complete the fascination of the tale, about an hour and a half after sunset, the two planets might be seen from Jerusalem, hanging as it were in the meridian, and suspended over Bethlehem in the distance. These celestial phenomena thus described are, it will be seen, beyond the reach of question, and at the first impression they assuredly appear to fulfil the conditions of the Star of the Magi." If Pritchard, nevertheless, rejects the identity of the constellation with the single star of Matthew, it is because of a too literal understanding of Matthew's language, that the star προῆγεν αὐτούς and ἐστάθη ἐπάνω, which would make it miraculous in either case.

THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF TIBERIUS.

(3) Luke 3:1, 23, gives us an important and evidently careful indication of the reigning powers at the time when John the Baptist and Christ entered upon their public ministry, which, according to Levitical custom, was at the age of thirty. John the Baptist began his ministry "in the fifteenth year of the reign of

Tiberius,"² and Jesus, who was only about six months younger than John (comp. Luke 1:5, 26), was baptized and began to teach when he was "about thirty years of age." Tiberius began to reign jointly with Augustus, as "collega imperii," A.U. 764 (or, at all events, in the beginning of 765), and independently, Aug. 19, A.U. 767 (A.D. 14); consequently, the fifteenth year of his reign was either A.U. 779, if we count from the joint reign (as Luke probably did, using the more general term ἡγεμονία rather than μοναρχία or βασιλεία or 782, if we reckon from the independent reign (as was the usual Roman method).

Now, if we reckon back thirty years from A.U. 779 or 782, we come to A.U. 749 or 752 as the year of John's birth, which preceded that of Christ about six months. The former date (749) is undoubtedly to be preferred, and agrees with Luke's own statement that Christ was born under Herod (Luke 1:5, 26).

Dionysius probably (for we have no certainty on the subject) calculated from the independent reign of Tiberius; but even that would not bring us to 754, and would involve Luke in contradiction with Matthew and with himself.

The other dates in Luke 3:1 generally agree with this result, but are less definite. Pontius Pilate was ten years governor of Judaea, from A.D. 26 to 36. Herod Antipas was deposed by Caligula, A.D. 39. Philip, his brother, died A.D. 34. Consequently, Christ must have died before A.D. 34, at an age of thirty-three, if we allow three years for his public ministry.

THE CENSUS OF QUIRINIUS.

(4) The Census of Quirinius Luke 2:2. Luke gives us another chronological date by the incidental remark that Christ was born about the time of that census or enrolment, which was ordered by Caesar Augustus, and which was "the first [enrolment] made when Quirinius (Cyrenius) was governor of Syria." He mentions this fact as the reason for the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. The journey of Mary makes no difficulty, for (aside from the intrinsic propriety of his

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company for protection) all women over twelve years of age (and slaves also) were subject in the Roman empire to a head-tax, as well as men over fourteen, till the age of sixty-five. There is some significance in the coincidence of the birth of the King of Israel with the deepest humiliation of Israel, and its incorporation in the great historical empire of Rome.

But the statement of Luke seems to be in direct conflict with the fact that the governorship and census of Quirinius began A.D. 6, i.e., ten years after the birth of Christ. Hence many artificial interpretations. But this difficulty is now, if not entirely removed, at least greatly diminished by archaeological and philological research independent of theology. It has been proved almost to a demonstration by Bergmann, Mommsen, and especially by Zumpt, that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria—first, A.U. 750 to 753, or B.C. 4 to 1 (when there happens to be a gap in our list of governors of Syria), and again, A.U. 760–765 (A.D. 6–11). This double legation is based upon a passage in Tacitus, and confirmed by an old monumental inscription discovered between the Villa Hadriani and the Via Tiburtina. Hence Luke might very properly call the census about the time of Christ's birth "the first" (πρώτη) under Quirinius, to distinguish it from the second and better known, which he himself mentions in his second treatise on the history of the origin of Christianity (Acts 5:37). Perhaps the experience of Quirinius as the superintendent of the first census was the reason why he was sent to Syria a second time for the same purpose.

There still remain, however, three difficulties not easily solved: (a) Quirinius cannot have been governor of Syria before autumn A.U. 750 (B.C. 4), several months after Herod's death (which occurred in March, 750), and consequently after Christ's birth; for we know from coins that Quintilius Varus was governor from A.U. 748 to 750 (B.C. 6–4), and left his post after the death of Herod. (b) A census during the first governorship of

Quirinius is nowhere mentioned but in Luke. (c) A Syrian governor could not well carry out a census in Judaea during the lifetime of Herod, before it was made a Roman province (i.e., A.U. 759).

In reply to these objections we may say: (a) Luke did not intend to give an exact, but only an approximate chronological statement, and may have connected the census with the well-known name of Quirinius because he completed it, although it was begun under a previous administration. (b) Augustus ordered several census populi between A.U. 726 and 767, partly for taxation, partly for military and statistical purposes; and, as a good statesman and financier, he himself prepared a *rationarium* or *breviarium totius imperii*, that is, a list of all the resources of the empire, which was read, after his death, in the Senate. (c) Herod was only a tributary king (*rex socius*), who could exercise no act of sovereignty without authority from the emperor. Judaea was subject to taxation from the time of Pompey, and it seems not to have ceased with the accession of Herod. Moreover, towards the end of his life he lost the favor of Augustus, who wrote him in anger that "whereas of old he had used him as his friend, he would now use him as his subject."

It cannot, indeed, be proven by direct testimony of Josephus or the Roman historians, that Augustus issued a decree for a universal census, embracing all the Provinces ("that all the world," i.e., the Roman world, "should be taxed," Luke 2:1), but it is in itself by no means improbable, and was necessary to enable him to prepare his *breviarium totius imperii*. In the nature of the case, it would take several years to carry out such a decree, and its execution in the provinces would be modified according to national customs. Zumpt assumes that Sentius Saturninus, who was sent as governor to Syria A.U. 746 (B.C. 9), and remained there till 749 (B.C. 6), began a census in Judaea with a view to substitute a head tax in money for the former customary tribute in produce; that his successor,

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Quintilius Varus (B.C. 6–4), continued it, and that Quirinius (B.C. 4) completed the census. This would explain the confident statement of Tertullian, which he must have derived from some good source, that enrolments were held under Augustus by Sentius Saturninus in Judaea. Another, but less probable view is that Quirinius was sent to the East as special commissioner for the census during the administration of his predecessor. In either case Luke might call the census “the first” under Quirinius, considering that he finished the census for personal taxation or registration according to the Jewish custom of family registers, and that afterwards he alone executed the second census for the taxation of property according to the Roman fashion.

The problem is not quite solved; but the establishment of the fact that Quirinius was prominently connected with the Roman government in the East about the time of the Nativity, is a considerable step towards the solution, and encourages the hope of a still better solution in the future.

THE FORTY-SIX YEARS OF THE BUILDING OF HEROD’S TEMPLE.

(5) St. John, 2:20, furnishes us a date in the remark of the Jews, in the first year of Christ’s ministry: “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?”

We learn from Josephus that Herod began the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the eighteenth year of his reign, i.e., A.U. 732, if we reckon from his appointment by the Romans (714), or A.U. 735, if we reckon from the death of Antigonus and the conquest of Jerusalem (717). The latter is the correct view; otherwise Josephus would contradict himself, since, in another passage, he dates the building from the fifteenth year of Herod’s reign.² Adding forty-six years to 735, we have the year A.U. 781 (A.D. 27) for the first year of Christ’s ministry; and deducting thirty and a half or thirty-one years from 781, we come back to A.U. 750 (B.C. 4) as the year of the Nativity.

I. THE TIME OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

(6) Christ was crucified under the consulate of the two Gemini (i.e., C. Rubellius Geminus and C. Fufius Geminus), who were consuls A.U. 782 to 783 (A.D. 28 to 29). This statement is made by Tertullian, in connection with an elaborate calculation of the time of Christ’s birth and passion from the seventy weeks of Daniel. He may possibly have derived it from some public record in Rome. He erred in identifying the year of Christ’s passion with the first year of his ministry (the 15th year of Tiberius, Luke 3:1). Allowing, as we must, two or three years for his public ministry, and thirty-three years for his life, we reach the year 750 or 749 as the year of the Nativity.

Thus we arrive from these various incidental notices of three Evangelists, and the statement of Tertullian essentially at the same conclusion, which contributes its share towards establishing the credibility of the gospel history against the mythical theory. Yet in the absence of a precise date, and in view of uncertainties in calculation, there is still room for difference of opinion between the years A.U. 747 (B.C. 7), as the earliest, and A.U. 750 (B.C. 4), as the latest, possible date for the year of Christ’s birth. The French Benedictines, Sanclemente, Münter, Wurm, Ebrard, Jarvis, Alford, Jos. A. Alexander, Zumpt, Keim, decide for A.U. 747; Kepler (reckoning from the conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars in that year), Lardner, Ideler, Ewald, for 748; Petavius, Ussher, Tillemont, Browne, Angus, Robinson, Andrews, McClellan, for 749; Bengel, Wieseler, Lange, Lichtenstein, Anger, Greswell, Ellicott, Plumptre, Merivale, for 750.

II. THE DAY OF THE NATIVITY

The only indication of the season of our Saviour’s birth is the fact that the Shepherds were watching their flocks in the field at that time, Luke 2:8. This fact points to any other season rather than winter, and is therefore not favorable to the traditional date, though not conclusive against it. The time of

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pasturing in Palestine (which has but two seasons, the dry and the wet, or summer and winter) begins, according to the Talmudists, in March, and lasts till November, when the herds are brought in from the fields, and kept under shelter till the close of February. But this refers chiefly to pastures in the wilderness, far away from towns and villages, and admits of frequent exceptions in the close neighborhood of towns, according to the character of the season. A succession of bright days in December and January is of frequent occurrence in the East, as in Western countries. Tobler, an experienced traveller in the Holy Land, says that in Bethlehem the weather about Christmas is favorable to the feeding of flocks and often most beautiful. On the other hand strong and cold winds often prevail in April, and explain the fire mentioned John 18:18.

No certain conclusion can be drawn from the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, and to Egypt; nor from the journey of the Magi. As a rule February is the best time for travelling in Egypt, March the best in the Sinaitic Peninsula, April and May, and next to it autumn, the best in Palestine; but necessity knows no rule.

The ancient tradition is of no account here, as it varied down to the fourth century. Clement of Alexandria relates that some regarded the 25th Pachon. (i.e. May 20), others the 24th or 25th Pharmuthi (April 19 or 20), as the day of Nativity.

(1) The traditional 25th of December is defended by Jerome, Chrysostom, Baronius, Lamy, Ussher, Petavius, Bengel (Ideler), Seyffarth and Jarvis. It has no historical authority beyond the fourth century, when the Christmas festival was introduced first in Rome (before A.D. 360), on the basis of several Roman festivals (the Saturnalia, Sigillaria, Juvenalia, Brumalia, or Dies natalis Invicti Solis), which were held in the latter part of December in commemoration of the golden age of liberty and equality, and in honor of the sun, who in the winter solstice is,

as it were, born anew and begins his conquering march.

This phenomenon in nature was regarded as an appropriate symbol of the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness dispelling the long night of sin and error. For the same reason the summer solstice (June 24) was afterwards selected for the festival of John the Baptist, as the fittest reminder of his own humble self-estimate that he must decrease, while Christ must increase (John 3:30). Accordingly the 25th of March was chosen for the commemoration of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, and the 24th of September for that of the conception of Elizabeth.

(2) the 6th of January has in its favor an older tradition (according to Epiphanius and Cassianus), and is sustained by Eusebius. It was celebrated in the East from the third century as the feast of the Epiphany, in commemoration of the Nativity as well as of Christ's baptism, and afterwards of his manifestation to the Gentiles (represented by the Magi).

(3) Other writers have selected some day in February (Hug, Wieseler, Ellicott), or March (Paulus, Winer), or April (Greswell), or August (Lewin), or September (Lightfoot, who assumes, on chronological grounds, that Christ was born on the feast of Tabernacles, as he died on the Passover and sent the Spirit on Pentecost), or October (Newcome). Lardner puts the birth between the middle of August and the middle of November; Browne December 8; Lichtenstein in summer; Robinson leaves it altogether uncertain.

III. THE DURATION OF CHRIST'S LIFE

This is now generally confined to thirty-two or three years. The difference of one or two years arises from the different views on the length of his public ministry. Christ died and rose again in the full vigor of early manhood and so continues to live in the memory of the church. The decline and weakness of old age is inconsistent with his position as the Renovator and Saviour of mankind.

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Irenæus, otherwise (as a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John) the most trustworthy witness of apostolic traditions among the fathers, held the untenable opinion that Christ attained to the ripe age of forty or fifty years and taught over ten years (beginning with the thirtieth), and that he thus passed through all the stages of human life, to save and sanctify "old men" as well as "infants and children and boys and youths." He appeals for this view to tradition dating from St. John,² and supports it by an unwarranted inference from the loose conjecture of the Jews when, surprised at the claim of Jesus to have existed before Abraham was born, they asked him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" A similar inference from another passage, where the Jews speak of the "forty-six years" since the temple of Herod began to be constructed, while Christ spoke of the temple his body (John 2:20), is of course still less conclusive.

IV. DURATION OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

It began with the baptism by John and ended with the crucifixion. About the length of the intervening time there are (besides the isolated and decidedly erroneous view of Irenæus) three theories, allowing respectively one, two, or three years and a few months, and designated as the bipaschal, tripaschal, and quadripaschal schemes, according to the number of Passovers. The Synoptists mention only the last Passover during the public ministry of our Lord, at which he was crucified, but they intimate that he was in Judæa more than once. John certainly mentions three Passovers, two of which (the first and the last) Christ did attend, and perhaps a fourth, which he also attended.

(1) The bipaschal scheme confines the public ministry to one year and a few weeks or months. This was first held by the Gnostic sect of the Valentinians (who connected it with their fancy about thirty aeons), and by several fathers, Clement of Alexandria,

Tertullian, and perhaps by Origen and Augustine (who express themselves doubtfully). The chief argument of the fathers and those harmonists who follow them, is derived from the prophecy of "the acceptable year of the Lord," as quoted by Christ, and from the typical meaning of the paschal lamb, which must be of "one year" and without blemish. Far more important is the argument drawn by some modern critics from the silence of the synoptic Gospels concerning the other Passovers. But this silence is not in itself conclusive, and must yield to the positive testimony of John, which cannot be conformed to the bipaschal scheme. Moreover, it is simply impossible to crowd the events of Christ's life, the training of the Twelve, and the development of the hostility of the Jews, into one short year.

(2) The choice therefore lies between the tripaschal and the quadripaschal schemes. The decision depends chiefly on the interpretation of the unnamed "feast of the Jews," John 5:1, whether it was a Passover, or another feast; and this again depends much (though not exclusively) on a difference of reading (the feast, or a feast). The parable of the barren fig-tree, which represents the Jewish people, has been used as an argument in favor of a three years' ministry: "Behold, these three year I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none." The three years are certainly significant; but according to Jewish reckoning two and a half years would be called three years. More remote is the reference to the prophetic announcement of Daniel 9:27: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." The tripaschal theory is more easily reconciled with the synoptical Gospels, while the quadripaschal theory leaves more room for arranging the discourses and miracles of our Lord, and has been adopted by the majority of harmonists. But even if we extend the public ministry to three years, it presents a disproportion between duration and effect without a

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parallel in history and inexplicable on purely natural grounds. In the language of an impartial historian, "the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the wellspring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life."

V. THE DATE OF THE LORD'S DEATH

The day of the week on which Christ suffered on the cross was a Friday, during the week of the Passover, in the month of Nisan, which was the first of the twelve lunar months of the Jewish year, and included the vernal equinox. But the question is whether this Friday was the 14th, or the 15th of Nisan, that is, the day before the feast or the first day of the feast, which lasted a week. The Synoptic Gospels clearly decide for the 15th, for they all say (independently) that our Lord partook of the paschal supper on the legal day, called the "first day of unleavened bread,"³ that is on the evening of the 14th, or rather at the beginning of the 15th (the paschal lambs being slain "between the two evenings," i.e. before and after sunset, between 3 and 5 P.M. of the 14th). John, on the other hand, seems at first sight to point to the 14th, so that the death of our Lord would very nearly have coincided with the slaying of the paschal lamb. But the three or four passages which look in that direction can, and, on closer examination, must be harmonized with the Synoptic statement, which admits only of one natural interpretation. It seems strange, indeed, that the Jewish priests should have matured their bloody counsel in the solemn night of the Passover, and urged a crucifixion on a great festival, but it agrees with the satanic wickedness of their crime. Moreover it is on the other hand equally difficult to explain that they, together with the people, should have remained about the cross till late in the afternoon of the fourteenth, when, according to the law, they were to kill the paschal lamb and prepare for the feast; and that Nicodemus

and Joseph of Arimathaea, with the pious women, should have buried the body of Jesus and so incurred defilement at that solemn hour.

The view here advocated is strengthened by astronomical calculation, which shows that in A.D. 30, the probable year of the crucifixion, the 15th of Nisan actually fell on a Friday (April 7); and this was the case only once more between the years A.D. 28 and 36, except perhaps also in 33. Consequently Christ must have been Crucified A.D. 30.

1.17 The Land and the People

Jesus spent his life in Palestine. It is a country of about the size of Maryland, smaller than Switzerland, and not half as large as Scotland, but favored with a healthy climate, beautiful scenery, and great variety and fertility of soil, capable of producing fruits of all lands from the snowy north to the tropical south; isolated from other countries by desert, mountain and sea, yet lying in the centre of the three continents of the eastern hemisphere and bordering on the Mediterranean highway of the historic nations of antiquity, and therefore providentially adapted to develop not only the particularism of Judaism, but also the universalism of Christianity. From little Phoenicia the world has derived the alphabet, from little Greece philosophy and art, from little Palestine the best of all—the true religion and the cosmopolitan Bible.

Jesus could not have been born at any other time than in the reign of Caesar Augustus, after the Jewish religion, the Greek civilization, and the Roman government had reached their maturity; nor in any other land than Palestine, the classical soil of revelation, nor among any other people than the Jews, who were predestinated and educated for centuries to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah and the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. In his infancy, a fugitive from the wrath of Herod, He passed through the Desert (probably by the short route along the Mediterranean coast) to Egypt and back

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again; and often may his mother have spoken to him of their brief sojourn in “the land of bondage,” out of which Jehovah had led his people, by the mighty arm of Moses, across the Red Sea and through “the great and terrible wilderness” into the land of promise.

During his forty days of fasting “in the wilderness” he was, perhaps, on Mount Sinai communing with the spirits of Moses and Elijah, and preparing himself in the awfully eloquent silence of that region for the personal conflict with the Tempter of the human race, and for the new legislation of liberty from the Mount of Beatitudes. Thus the three lands of the Bible, Egypt, the cradle of Israel, the Desert, its school and playground, and Canaan, its final home, were touched and consecrated by “those blessed feet which, eighteen centuries ago, were nailed for our advantage on the bitter cross.”

He travelled on his mission of love through Judaea, Samaria, Galilee, and Peraea; he came as far north as mount Hermon, and once he crossed beyond the land of Israel to the Phoenician border and healed the demonized daughter of that heathen mother to whom he said, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt.”

We can easily follow him from place to place, on foot or on horseback, twenty or thirty miles a day, over green fields and barren rocks, over hill and dale, among flowers and thistles, under olive and fig-trees, pitching our tent for the night’s rest, ignoring the comforts of modern civilization, but delighting in the unfading beauties of God’s nature, reminded at every step of his wonderful dealings with his people, and singing the psalms of his servants of old.

We may kneel at his manger in Bethlehem, the town of Judaea where Jacob buried his beloved Rachel, and a pillar, now a white mosque, marks her grave; where Ruth was rewarded for her filial devotion, and children may still be seen gleaning after the reapers in the grain fields, as she did in the field of Boaz; where his ancestor, the poet-king, was born

and called from his father’s flocks to the throne of Israel; where shepherds are still watching the sheep as in that solemn night when the angelic host thrilled their hearts with the heavenly anthem of glory to God, and peace on earth to men of his good pleasure; where the sages from the far East offered their sacrifices in the name of future generations of heathen converts; where Christian gratitude has erected the oldest church in Christendom, the “Church of the Nativity,” and inscribed on the solid rock in the “Holy Crypt,” in letters of silver, the simple but pregnant inscription: “Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.” When all the surroundings correspond with the Scripture narrative, it is of small account whether the traditional grotto of the Nativity is the identical spot—though pointed out as such it would seem already in the middle of the second century.

We accompany him in a three days’ journey from Bethlehem to Nazareth, his proper home, where he spent thirty silent years of his life in quiet preparation for his public work, unknown in his divine character to his neighbors and even the members of his own household (John 7:5), except his saintly parents. Nazareth is still there, a secluded, but charmingly located mountain village, with narrow, crooked and dirty streets, with primitive stone houses where men, donkeys and camels are huddled together, surrounded by cactus hedges and fruitful gardens of vines, olive, fig, and pomegranates, and favorably distinguished from the wretched villages of modern Palestine by comparative industry, thrift, and female beauty; the never failing “Virgin’s Fountain,” whither Jesus must often have accompanied his mother for the daily supply of water, is still there near the Greek Church of the Annunciation, and is the evening rendezvous of the women and maidens, with their water-jars gracefully poised on the head or shoulder, and a row of silver coins adorning their forehead; and behind the village still rises the hill, fragrant with heather and thyme, from which he may

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often have cast his eye eastward to Gilboa, where Jonathan fell, and to the graceful, cone-like Tabor—the Righi of Palestine—northward to the lofty Mount Hermon—the Mont Blanc of Palestine—southward to the fertile plain of Esdraëlon—the classic battleground of Israel—and westward to the ridge of Carmel, the coast of Tyre and Sidon and the blue waters of the Mediterranean sea—the future highway of his gospel of peace to mankind.

There he could feast upon the rich memories of David and Jonathan, Elijah and Elisha, and gather images of beauty for his lessons of wisdom. We can afford to smile at the silly superstition which points out the kitchen of the Virgin Mary beneath the Latin Church of the Annunciation, the suspended column where she received the angel’s message, the carpenter shop of Joseph and Jesus, the synagogue in which he preached on the acceptable year of the Lord, the stone table at which he ate with his disciples, the Mount of Precipitation two miles off, and the stupendous monstrosity of the removal of the dwelling-house of Mary by angels in the air across the sea to Loretto in Italy! These are childish fables, in striking contrast with the modest silence of the Gospels, and neutralized by the rival traditions of Greek and Latin monks; but nature in its beauty is still the same as Jesus saw and interpreted it in his incomparable parables, which point from nature to nature’s God and from visible symbols to eternal truths.

Jesus was inaugurated into his public ministry by his baptism in the fast-flowing river Jordan, which connects the Old and New Covenant. The traditional spot, a few miles from Jericho, is still visited by thousands of Christian pilgrims from all parts of the world at the Easter season, who repeat the spectacle of the multitudinous baptisms of John, when the people came “from Jerusalem and all Judaea and all the region round about the Jordan” to confess their sins and to receive his water-baptism of repentance.

The ruins of Jacob’s well still mark the spot where Jesus sat down weary of travel, but not of his work of mercy, and opened to the poor woman of Samaria the well of the water of life and instructed her in the true spiritual worship of God; and the surrounding landscape, Mount Gerizim, and Mount Ebal, the town of Shechem, the grain-fields whitening to the harvest, all illustrate and confirm the narrative in the fourth chapter of John; while the fossil remnant of the Samaritans at Nablus (the modern Shechem) still perpetuates the memory of the paschal sacrifice according to the Mosaic prescription, and their traditional hatred of the Jews.

We proceed northward to Galilee where Jesus spent the most popular part of his public ministry and spoke so many of his undying words of wisdom and love to the astonished multitudes. That province was once thickly covered with forests, cultivated fields, plants and trees of different climes, prosperous villages and an industrious population.

The rejection of the Messiah and the Moslem invasion have long since turned that paradise of nature into a desolate wilderness, yet could not efface the holy memories and the illustrations of the gospel history. There is the lake with its clear blue waters, once whitened with ships sailing from shore to shore, and the scene of a naval battle between the Romans and the Jews, now utterly forsaken, but still abounding in fish, and subject to sudden violent storms, such as the one which Jesus commanded to cease; there are the hills from which he proclaimed the Sermon on the Mount, the Magna Carta of his kingdom, and to which he often retired for prayer; there on the western shore is the plain of Gennesaret, which still exhibits its natural fertility by the luxuriant growth of briars and thistles and the bright red magnolias overtopping them; there is the dirty city of Tiberias, built by Herod Antipas, where Jewish rabbis still scrupulously search the letter of the Scriptures without finding Christ in them; a few wretched Moslem huts called Mejdél still indicate the birth-place of Mary Magdalene,

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whose penitential tears and resurrection joys are a precious legacy of Christendom.

Although the cities of Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazim, “where most of his mighty works were done,” have utterly disappeared from the face of the earth, and their very sites are disputed among scholars, thus verifying to the letter the fearful prophecy of the Son of Man, yet the ruins of Tell Hum and Kerazeh bear their eloquent testimony to the judgment of God for neglected privileges, and the broken columns and friezes with a pot of manna at Tell Hum are probably the remains of the very synagogue which the good Roman centurion built for the people of Capernaum, and in which Christ delivered his wonderful discourse on the bread of life from heaven Cæsarea Philippi, formerly and now called Baniyas (or Paneas, Paneion, from the heathen sanctuary of Pan), at the foot of Hermon, marks the northern termination of the Holy Land and of the travels of the Lord, and the boundary-line between the Jews and the Gentiles; and that Swiss-like, picturesque landscape, the most beautiful in Palestine, in full view of the fresh, gushing source of the Jordan, and at the foot of the snow-crowned monarch of Syrian mountains seated on a throne of rocks, seems to give additional force to Peter’s fundamental confession and Christ’s prophecy of his Church universal built upon the immovable rock of his eternal divinity.

The closing scenes of the earthly life of our Lord and the beginning of his heavenly life took place in Jerusalem and the immediate neighborhood, where every spot calls to mind the most important events that ever occurred or can occur in this world. Jerusalem, often besieged and destroyed, and as often rebuilt “on her own heap,” is indeed no more the Jerusalem of Herod, which lies buried many feet beneath the rubbish and filth of centuries; even the site of Calvary is disputed, and superstition has sadly disfigured and obscured the historic associations. “Christ is not there, He is risen.”

There is no more melancholy sight in the world than the present Jerusalem as contrasted with its former glory, and with the teeming life of Western cities; and yet so many are the sacred memories clustering around it and perfuming the very air, that even Rome must yield the palm of interest to the city which witnessed the crucifixion and the resurrection. The Herodian temple on Mount Moriah, once the gathering place of pious Jews from all the earth, and enriched with treasures of gold and silver which excited the avarice of the conquerors, has wholly disappeared, and “not one stone is left upon another,” in literal fulfillment of Christ’s prophecy; but the massive foundations of Solomon’s structure around the temple area still bear the marks of the Phœnician workmen; the “wall of wailing” is moistened with the tears of the Jews who assemble there every Friday to mourn over the sins and misfortunes of their forefathers; and if we look down from Mount Olivet upon Mount Moriah and the Moslem Dome of the Rock, the city even now presents one of the most imposing as well as most profoundly affecting sights on earth.

The brook Kedron, which Jesus crossed in that solemn night after the last Passover, and Gethsemane with its venerable olive-trees and reminiscences of the agony, and Mount Olivet from which he rose to heaven, are still there, and behind it the remnant of Bethany, that home of peace and holy friendship which sheltered him the last nights before the crucifixion. Standing on that mountain with its magnificent view, or at the turning point of the road from Jericho and Bethany, and looking over Mount Moriah and the holy city, we fully understand why the Saviour wept and exclaimed, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!”

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Thus the Land and the Book illustrate and confirm each other. The Book is still full of life and omnipresent in the civilized world; the Land is groaning under the irreformable despotism of the “unspeakable” Turk, which acts like a blast of the Sirocco from the desert. Palestine lies under the curse of God. It is at best a venerable ruin “in all the imploring beauty of decay,” yet not without hope of some future resurrection in God’s own good time. But in its very desolation it furnishes evidence for the truth of the Bible. It is “a fifth Gospel,” engraven upon rocks.

THE PEOPLE.

Is there a better argument for Christianity than the Jews? Is there a more patent and a more stubborn fact in history than that intense and unchangeable Semitic nationality with its equally intense religiosity? Is it not truly symbolized by the bush in the desert ever burning and never consumed?

Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, Titus, Hadrian exerted their despotic power for the extermination of the Jews; Hadrian’s edict forbade circumcision and all the rites of their religion; the intolerance of Christian rulers treated them for ages with a sort of revengeful cruelty, as if every Jew were personally responsible for the crime of the crucifixion. And, behold, the race still lives as tenaciously as ever, unchanged and unchangeable in its national traits, an omnipresent power in Christendom.

It still produces, in its old age, remarkable men of commanding influence for good or evil in the commercial, political, and literary world; we need only recall such names as Spinoza, Rothschild, Disraeli, Mendelssohn, Heine, Neander. If we read the accounts of the historians and satirists of imperial Rome about the Jews in their filthy quarter across the Tiber, we are struck by the identity of that people with their descendants in the ghettos of modern Rome, Frankfurt, and New York.

Then they excited as much as they do now the mingled contempt and wonder of the world; they were as remarkable then for contrasts of

intellectual beauty and striking ugliness, wretched poverty and princely wealth; they liked onions and garlic, and dealt in old clothes, broken glass, and sulphur matches, but knew how to push themselves from poverty and filth into wealth and influence; they were rigid monotheists and scrupulous legalists who would strain out a gnat and swallow a camel; then as now they were temperate, sober, industrious, well regulated and affectionate in their domestic relations, and careful for the religious education of their children.

The majority were then, as they are now, carnal descendants of Jacob, the Supplanter, a small minority spiritual children of Abraham, the friend of God and father of the faithful. Out of this gifted race have come, at the time of Jesus and often since, the bitterest foes and the warmest friends of Christianity.

Among that peculiar people Jesus spent his earthly life, a Jew of the Jews, yet in the highest sense the Son of Man, the second Adam, the representative Head and Regenerator of the whole race. For thirty years of reserve and preparation he hid his divine glory and restrained his own desire to do good, quietly waiting till the voice of prophecy after centuries of silence announced, in the wilderness of Judaea and on the banks of the Jordan, the coming of the kingdom of God, and startled the conscience of the people with the call to repent.

For three years he mingled freely with his countrymen. Occasionally he met and healed Gentiles also, who were numerous in Galilee; he praised their faith the like of which he had not found in Israel, and prophesied that many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. He conversed with a woman of Samaria, to the surprise of his disciples, on the sublimest theme, and rebuked the national prejudice of the Jews by holding up a good Samaritan as a model for imitation. It

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was on the occasion of a visit from some "Greeks," shortly before the crucifixion, that he uttered the remarkable prophecy of the universal attraction of his cross. But these were exceptions. His mission, before the resurrection, was to the lost sheep of Israel.

He associated with all ranks of Jewish society, attracting the good and repelling the bad, rebuking vice and relieving misery, but most of his time he spent among the middle classes who constituted the bone and sinew of the nation, the farmers and workingmen of Galilee, who are described to us as an industrious, brave and courageous race, taking the lead in seditious political movements, and holding out to the last moment in the defense of Jerusalem. At the same time they were looked upon by the stricter Jews of Judaea as semi-heathens and semi-barbarians; hence the question, "Can any good come out of Nazareth," and "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." He selected his apostles from plain, honest, unsophisticated fishermen, who became fishers of men and teachers of future ages. In Judaea he came in contact with the religious leaders, and it was proper that he should close his ministry and establish his church in the capital of the nation.

He moved among the people as a Rabbi (my Lord) or a Teacher, and under this name he is usually addressed. The Rabbis were the intellectual and moral leaders of the nation, theologians, lawyers, and preachers, the expounders of the law, the keepers of the conscience, the regulators of the daily life and conduct; they were classed with Moses and the prophets, and claimed equal reverence.

They stood higher than the priests who owed their position to the accident of birth, and not to personal merit. They coveted the chief seats in the synagogues and at feasts; they loved to be greeted in the markets and to be called of men, "Rabbi, Rabbi." Hence our Lord's warning: "Be not ye called 'Rabbi': for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." They taught in the temple, in the

synagogue, and in the school-house (Bethhamidrash), and introduced their pupils, sitting on the floor at their feet, by asking and answering questions, into the intricacies of Jewish casuistry. They accumulated those oral traditions which were afterwards embodied in the Talmud, that huge repository of Jewish wisdom and folly. They performed official acts gratuitously. They derived their support from an honorable trade or free gifts of their pupils, or they married into rich families. Rabbi Hillel warned against making gain of the crown (of the law), but also against excess of labor, saying, "Who is too much given to trade, will not become wise." In the book of Jesus Son of Sirach (which was written about 200 B.C.) a trade is represented as incompatible with the vocation of a student and teacher, but the prevailing sentiment at the time of Christ favored a combination of intellectual and physical labor as beneficial to health and character. One-third of the day should be given to study, one-third to prayer, one-third to work. "Love manual labor," was the motto of Shemaja, a teacher of Hillel. "He who does not teach his son a trade," said Rabbi Jehuda, "is much the same as if he taught him to be a robber." "There is no trade," says the Talmud. "which can be dispensed with; but happy is he who has in his parents the example of a trade of the more excellent sort."

Jesus himself was not only the son of a carpenter, but during his youth he worked at that trade himself. When he entered upon his public ministry the zeal for God's house claimed all his time and strength, and his modest wants were more than supplied by a few grateful disciples from Galilee, so that something was left for the benefit of the poor.³ St. Paul learned the trade of tent making, which was congenial to his native Cilicia, and derived from it his support even as an apostle, that he might relieve his congregations and maintain a noble independence.

Jesus availed himself of the usual places of public instruction in the synagogue and the

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temple, but preached also out of doors, on the mountain, at the sea-side, and wherever the people assembled to hear him. "I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spoke I nothing." Paul likewise taught in the synagogue wherever he had an opportunity on his missionary journeys. The familiar mode of teaching was by disputation, by asking and answering questions on knotty points of the law, by parables and sententious sayings, which easily lodged in the memory; the Rabbi sat on a chair, the pupils stood or sat on the floor at his feet.

Knowledge of the Law of God was general among the Jews and considered the most important possession. They remembered the commandments better than their own name. Instruction began in early childhood in the family and was carried on in the school and the synagogue. Timothy learned the sacred Scriptures on the knees of his mother and grandmother. Josephus boasts, at the expense of his superiors, that when only fourteen years of age he had such an exact knowledge of the law that he was consulted by the high priest and the first men of Jerusalem.

Schoolmasters were appointed in every town, and children were taught to read in their sixth or seventh year, but writing was probably a rare accomplishment.

The synagogue was the local, the temple the national centre of religious and social life; the former on the weekly Sabbath (and also on Monday and Thursday), the latter on the Passover and the other annual festivals. Every town had a synagogue, large cities had many, especially Alexandria and Jerusalem. The worship was very simple: it consisted of prayers, singing, the reading of sections from the Law and the Prophets in Hebrew, followed by a commentary and homily in the vernacular Aramaic. There was a certain democratic liberty of prophesying, especially outside of Jerusalem. Any Jew of age could read the Scripture lessons and make

comments on invitation of the ruler of the synagogue.

This custom suggested to Jesus the most natural way of opening his public ministry. When he returned from his baptism to Nazareth, "he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the roll of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the roll and found the place where it was written (61:1, 2) 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, 'To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.' And all bare witness unto him, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

On the great festivals he visited from his twelfth year the capital of the nation where the Jewish religion unfolded all its splendor and attraction. Large caravans with trains of camels and asses loaded with provisions and rich offerings to the temple, were set in motion from the North and the South, the East and the West for the holy city, "the joy of the whole earth;" and these yearly pilgrimages, singing the beautiful Pilgrim Psalms (Ps. 120 to 134), contributed immensely to the preservation and promotion of the common faith, as the Moslem pilgrimages to Mecca keep up the life of Islam. We may greatly reduce the enormous figures of Josephus, who on one single Passover reckoned the number of strangers and residents in Jerusalem at 2,700,000 and the number of slaughtered lambs at 256,500, but there still remains the fact of the vast extent and solemnity of the occasion. Even now in her decay, Jerusalem

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(like other Oriental cities) presents a striking picturesque appearance at Easter, when Christian pilgrims from the far West mingle with the many-colored Arabs, Turks, Greeks, Latins, Spanish and Polish Jews, and crowd to suffocate the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. How much more grand and dazzling must this cosmopolitan spectacle have been when the priests (whose number Josephus estimates at 20,000) with the brodered tunic, the fine linen girdle, the showy turban, the high priests with the ephod of blue and purple and scarlet, the breastplate and the mitre, the Levites with their pointed caps, the Pharisees with their broad phylacteries and fringes, the Essenes in white dresses and with prophetic mien, Roman soldiers with proud bearing, Herodian courtiers in oriental pomposity, contrasted with beggars and cripples in rags, when pilgrims innumerable, Jews and proselytes from all parts of the empire, "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabians," all wearing their national costume and speaking a Babel of tongues, surged through the streets, and pressed up to Mount Moriah, where "the glorious temple reared her pile, far off appearing like a mount of alabaster, topped with golden spires" and where on the fourteenth day of the first month columns of sacrificial smoke arose from tens of thousands of paschal lambs, in historical commemoration of the great deliverance from the land of bondage, and in typical prefiguration of the still greater redemption from the slavery of sin and death. To the outside observer the Jews at that time were the most religious people on earth, and in some sense this is true. Never was a nation so ruled by the written law of God; never did a nation so carefully and scrupulously study its sacred books, and pay greater reverence to its priests and teachers. The leaders of the nation looked with horror and contempt

upon the unclean, uncircumcised Gentiles, and confirmed the people in their spiritual pride and conceit. No wonder that the Romans charged the Jews with the *odium generis humani*.

Yet, after all, this intense religiosity was but a shadow of true religion. It was a praying corpse rather than a living body. Alas! the Christian Church in some ages and sections presents a similar sad spectacle of the deceptive form of godliness without its power. The rabbinical learning and piety bore the same relation to the living oracles of God as sophistic scholasticism to Scriptural theology, and Jesuitical casuistry to Christian ethics. The Rabbis spent all their energies in "fencing" the law so as to make it inaccessible. They analyzed it to death. They surrounded it with so many hair-splitting distinctions and refinements that the people could not see the forest for the trees or the roof for the tiles, and mistook the shell for the kernel. Thus they made void the Word of God by the traditions of men. A slavish formalism and mechanical ritualism was substituted for spiritual piety, an ostentatious sanctimoniousness for holiness of character, scrupulous casuistry for genuine morality, the killing letter for the life-giving spirit, and the temple of God was turned into a house of merchandise.

The profanation and perversion of the spiritual into the carnal, and of the inward into the outward, invaded even the holy of holies of the religion of Israel, the Messianic promises and hopes which run like a golden thread from the protevangelium in paradise lost to the voice of John the Baptist pointing to the Lamb of God. The idea of a spiritual Messiah who should crush the serpent's head and redeem Israel from the bondage of sin, was changed into the conception of a political deliverer who should re-establish the throne of David in Jerusalem, and from that centre rule over the Gentiles to the ends of the earth. The Jews of that time could not separate David's Son, as they called the Messiah, from David's sword, scepter and crown. Even the

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apostles were affected by this false notion, and hoped to secure the chief places of honor in that great revolution; hence they could not understand the Master when he spoke to them of his approaching passion and death.

The state of public opinion concerning the Messianic expectations as set forth in the Gospels is fully confirmed by the preceding and contemporary Jewish literature, as the Sibylline Books (about B.C. 140), the remarkable Book of Enoch (of uncertain date, probably from B.C. 130–30), the Psalter of Solomon (B.C. 63–48), the Assumption of Moses, Philo and Josephus, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and the Fourth Book of Esdras. In all of them the Messianic kingdom, or the kingdom of God, is represented as an earthly paradise of the Jews, as a kingdom of this world, with Jerusalem for its capital. It was this popular idol of a pseudo-Messiah with which Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world; well knowing that if he could convert him to this carnal creed, and induce him to abuse his miraculous power for selfish gratification, vain ostentation, and secular ambition, he would most effectually defeat the scheme of redemption. The same political aspiration was a powerful lever of the rebellion against the Roman yoke which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, and it revived again in the rebellion of Bar-Cocheba only to end in a similar disaster.

Such was the Jewish religion at the time of Christ. He was the only teacher in Israel who saw through the hypocritical mask to the rotten heart. None of the great Rabbis, no Hillel, no Shammai, no Gamaliel attempted or even conceived of a reformation; on the contrary, they heaped tradition upon tradition and accumulated the Talmudic rubbish of twelve large folios and 2947 leaves, which represents the anti-Christian petrification of Judaism; while the four Gospels have regenerated humanity and are the life and the light of the civilized world to this day.

Jesus, while moving within the outward forms of the Jewish religion of his age, was far above it and revealed a new world of ideas. He, too, honored the law of God, but by unfolding its deepest spiritual meaning and fulfilling it in precept and example. Himself a Rabbi, he taught as one having direct authority from God, and not as the scribes. How he arraigned those hypocrites seated on Moses' seat, those blind leaders of the blind, who lay heavy burdens on men's shoulders without touching them with their finger; who shut the kingdom of heaven against men, and will not enter themselves; who tithe the mint and the anise and the cumin, and leave undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel; who are like unto whited sepulchers which outwardly appear beautiful indeed, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. But while he thus stung the pride of the leaders, he cheered and elevated the humble and lowly. He blessed little children, he encouraged the poor, he invited the weary, he fed the hungry he healed the sick, he converted publicans and sinners, and laid the foundation strong and deep, in God's eternal love, for a new society and a new humanity. It was one of the sublimest as well as loveliest moments in the life of Jesus when the disciples asked him, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? and when he called a little child, set him in the midst of them and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." And that other moment when he thanked his heavenly Father for revealing unto babes the things of the kingdom which were hid from the wise, and invited all that labor and are heavy laden to come to him for rest.²

He knew from the beginning that he was the Messiah of God and the King of Israel. This

consciousness reached its maturity at his baptism when he received the Holy Spirit without measure. To this conviction he clung unwaveringly, even in those dark hours of the apparent failure of his cause, after Judas had betrayed him, after Peter, the confessor and rock-apostle, had denied him, and everybody had forsaken him. He solemnly affirmed his Messiahship before the tribunal of the Jewish high priest; he assured the heathen representative of the Roman empire that he was a king, though not of this world, and when hanging on the cross he assigned to the dying robber a place in his kingdom.

But before that time and in the days of his greatest popularity he carefully avoided every publication and demonstration which might have encouraged the prevailing idea of a political Messiah and an uprising of the people. He chose for himself the humblest of the Messianic titles which represents his condescension to our common lot, while at the same time it implies his unique position as the representative head of the human family, as the ideal, the perfect, the universal, the archetypal Man. He calls himself habitually "the Son of Man" who "hath not where to lay his head," who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," who "hath power to forgive sins," who "came to seek and to save that which was lost."

When Peter made the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi, Christ accepted it, but immediately warned him of his approaching passion and death, from which the disciple shrunk in dismay. And with the certain expectation of his crucifixion, but also of his triumphant resurrection on the third day, he entered in calm and sublime fortitude on his last journey to Jerusalem which "killeth the prophets," and nailed him to the cross as a false Messiah and blasphemer. But in the infinite wisdom and mercy of God the greatest crime in history was turned into the greatest blessing to mankind.

We must conclude then that the life and work of Christ, while admirably adapted to the condition and wants of his age and people, and receiving illustration and confirmation from his environment, cannot be explained from any contemporary or preceding intellectual or moral resources. He learned nothing from human teachers. His wisdom was not of this world. He needed no visions and revelations like the prophets and apostles. He came directly from his great Father in heaven, and when he spoke of heaven he spoke of his familiar home. He spoke from the fullness of God dwelling in him. And his words were verified by deeds. Example is stronger than precept. The wisest sayings remain powerless until they are incarnate in a living person. It is the life which is the light of men. In purity of doctrine and holiness of character combined in perfect harmony, Jesus stands alone, unapproached and unapproachable. He breathed a fresh life from heaven into his and all subsequent ages. He is the author of a new moral creation.

JESUS AND HILLEL.—The infinite elevation of Christ above the men of his time and nation, and his deadly conflict with the Pharisees and scribes are so evident that it seems preposterous and absurd to draw a parallel between him and Hillel or any other Rabbi. And yet this has been done by some modern Jewish Rabbis, as Geiger, Grätz, Friedlander, who boldly affirm, without a shadow of historical proof, that Jesus was a Pharisee, a pupil of Hillel, and indebted to him for his highest moral principles. By this left-handed compliment they mean to depreciate his originality.

Hillel and Shammai are the most distinguished among the Jewish Rabbis. They were contemporary founders of two rival schools of rabbinical theology (as Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus of two schools of scholastic theology). It is strange that Josephus does not mention them, unless he refers to them under the Hellenized names of Sameas and Pollion; but these names agree better with Shemaja and Abtalion, two

celebrated Pharisees and teachers of Hillel and Shammai; moreover he designates Sameas as a disciple of Pollion. . The Talmudic tradition has obscured their history and embellished it with many fables.

Hillel I. or the Great, was a descendant of the royal family of David, and born at Babylon. He removed to Jerusalem in great poverty, and died about A.D. 10. He is said to have lived 120 years, like Moses, 40 years without learning, 40 years as a student, 40 years as a teacher. He was the grandfather of the wise Gamaliel in whose family the presidency of the Sanhedrin was hereditary for several generations. By his burning zeal for knowledge, and his pure, gentle and amiable character, he attained the highest renown.

He is said to have understood all languages, even the unknown tongues of mountains, hills, valleys, trees, wild and tame beasts, and demons. He was called "the gentle, the holy, the scholar of Ezra." There was a proverb: "Man should be always as meek as Hillel, and not quick-tempered as Shammai." He differed from Rabbi Shammai by a milder interpretation of the law, but on some points, as the mighty question whether it was right or wrong to eat an egg laid on a Sabbath day, he took the more rigid view. A Talmudic tract is called Beza, The Egg, after this famous dispute. What a distance from him who said: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: so then the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Many wise sayings, though partly obscure and of doubtful interpretation, are attributed to Hillel in the tract Pirke Aboth (which is embodied in the Mishna and enumerates, in ch. 1, the pillars of the legal traditions from Moses down to the destruction of Jerusalem). The following are the best:

"Be a disciple of Aaron, peace-loving and peace-making; love men, and draw them to the law."

"Whoever abuses a good name (or, is ambitious of aggrandizing his name) destroys it."

"Whoever does not increase his knowledge diminishes it."

"Separate not thyself from the congregation, and have no confidence in thyself till the day of thy death."

"If I do not care for my soul, who will do it for me? If I care only for my own soul, what am I? If not now, when then?"

"Judge not thy neighbor till thou art in his situation."

"Say not, I will repent when I have leisure, lest that leisure should never be thine."

"The passionate man will never be a teacher."

"In the place where there is not a man, be thou a man."

Yet his haughty Pharisaism is clearly seen in this utterance: "No uneducated man easily avoids sin; no common person is pious." The enemies of Christ in the Sanhedrin said the same (John 7:49): "This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed." Some of his teachings are of doubtful morality, e.g. his decision that, in view of a vague expression in Deut. 24:1, a man might put away his wife "even if she cooked his dinner badly." This is, however, softened down by modern Rabbis so as to mean: "if she brings discredit on his home."

Once a heathen came to Rabbi Shammai and promised to become a proselyte if he could teach him the whole law while he stood on one leg. Shammai got angry and drove him away with a stick. The heathen went with the same request to Rabbi Hillel, who never lost his temper, received him courteously and gave him, while standing on one leg, the following effective answer:

"Do not to thy neighbor what is disagreeable to thee. This is the whole Law; all the rest is commentary: go and do that."

This is the wisest word of Hillel and the chief ground of a comparison with Jesus. But

1. It is only the negative expression of the positive precept of the gospel, "Thou shalt

love thy neighbor as thyself," and of the golden rule, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do ye also to them" (Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31). There is a great difference between not doing any harm, and doing good. The former is consistent with selfishness and every sin which does not injure our neighbor. The Saviour, by presenting God's benevolence (Matt. 7:11) as the guide of duty, directs us to do to our neighbor all the good we can, and he himself set the highest example of self-denying love by sacrificing his life for sinners.

2. It is disconnected from the greater law of supreme love to God, without which true love to our neighbor is impossible. "On these two commandments," combined and inseparable, "hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).
3. Similar sayings are found long before Hillel, not only in the Pentateuch and the Book of Tobith (4:15: ὁ μισεῖς μηδενὶ ποιήσης, "Do that to no man which thou hatest"), but substantially even among the heathen (Confucius, Buddha, Herodotus, Isocrates, Seneca, Quintilian), but always either in the negative form, or with reference to a particular case or class; e.g. Isocrates, Ad Demonic. c. 4: "Be such towards your parents as thou shalt pray thy children shall be towards thyself;" and the same In Aeginet. c. 23: "That you would be such judges to me as you would desire to obtain for yourselves." See Wetstein on Matt. 7:12 (Nov. Test. I. 341 sq.). Parallels to this and other biblical maxims have been gathered in considerable number from the Talmud and the classics by Lightfoot, Grotius, Wetstein, Deutsch, Spiess, Ramage; but what are they all compared with the Sermon on the Mount? Moreover, si duo idem dicunt, non est idem. As to the rabbinical parallels, we must remember that they were not committed to writing before the second century, and that,

Delitzsch says (Ein Tag in Capernaum, p. 137), "not a few sayings of Christ, circulated by Jewish Christians, reappeared anonymously or under false names in the Talmuds and Midrashim."

4. No amount of detached words of wisdom constitute an organic system of ethics any, more than a heap of marble blocks constitute a palace or temple; and the best system of ethics is unable to produce a holy life, and is worthless without it.

We may admit without hesitation that Hillel was "the greatest and best of all Pharisees" (Ewald), but he was far inferior to John the Baptist; and to compare him with Christ is sheer blindness or folly. Ewald calls such comparison "utterly perverse" (grundverkehrt, v. 48). Farrar remarks that the distance between Hillel and Jesus is "a distance absolutely immeasurable, and the resemblance of his teaching to that of Jesus is the resemblance of a glow-worm to the sun" (II. 455). "The fundamental tendencies of both," says Delitzsch (p. 23), "are as widely apart as he and earth. That of Hillel is legalistic, casuistic, and nationally contracted; that of Jesus is universally religious, moral and human. Hillel lives and moves in the externals, Jesus in the spirit of the law." He was not even a reformer, as Geiger and Friedlander would make him, for what they adduce as proofs are mere trifles of interpretation, and involve no new principle or idea.

Viewed as a mere human teacher, the absolute originality of Jesus consists in this, "that his words have touched the hearts of all men in all ages, and have regenerated the moral life of the world" (Farrar, II. 454). But Jesus is far more than a Rabbi, more than a sage and saint, more than a reformer, more than a benefactor; he is the author of the true religion, the prophet, priest and king, the renovator, the Saviour of men, the founder of a spiritual kingdom as vast as the race and as long as eternity.

1.18 Apocryphal Tradition

We add some notes of minor interest connected with the history of Christ outside of the only authentic record in the Gospel.

I. THE APOCRYPHAL SAYINGS OF OUR LORD.—The canonical Gospels contain all that is necessary for us to know about the words and deeds of our Lord, although many more might have been recorded (John 20:30; 21:25). Their early composition and reception in the church precluded the possibility of a successful rivalry of oral tradition. The extra-biblical sayings of our Lord are mere fragments, few in number, and with one exception rather unimportant, or simply variations of genuine words.

- (1) "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Quoted by Paul, Acts 20:35. Comp. Luke 6:30, 31; also Clement of Rome, Ad Cor. c. 2, ἥδιον δίδόντες ἢ λαμβάνοντες, "more gladly giving than receiving." This is unquestionably authentic, pregnant with rich meaning, and shining out like a lone star all the more brilliantly. It is true in the highest sense of the love of God and Christ. The somewhat similar sentences of Aristotle, Seneca, and Epicurus, as quoted by Plutarch (see the passages in Wetstein on Acts 20:35), savor of aristocratic pride, and are neutralized by the opposite heathen maxim of mean selfishness: "Foolish is the giver, happy the receiver."
- (2) "And on the same day Jesus saw a man working at his craft on the Sabbath-day, and He said unto him, 'O man, if thou knowest what thou doest, then art thou blessed; but if thou knowest not, then art thou accursed, and art a transgressor of the Law.'" An addition to Luke 6:4, in Codex D. or Bezae (in the University library at Cambridge), which contains several remarkable additions. See Tischendorf's apparatus in ed. VIII. Luc. 6:4, and Scrivener, Introd. to Criticism of the N. T. p. 8. ἐπικατάρατος

is used John 7:49 (text. rec.) by the Pharisees of the people who know not the law (also Gal. 3:10, 13 in quotations from the O. T.); παραβάτης τοῦ νόμου by Paul (Rom. 2:25, 27; Gal. 2:18) and James (2:9, 11). Plumptre regards the narrative as authentic, and remarks that "it brings out with a marvellous force the distinction between the conscious transgression of a law recognized as still binding, and the assertion of a higher law as superseding the lower." Comp. also the remarks of Hofmann, l. c. p. 318.

- (3) "But ye seek (or, in the imperative, seek ye, ζητεῖτε) to increase from little, and (not) from greater to be less." An addition in Codex D. to Matt 20:28. See Tischendorf. Comp. Luke 14:11; John 5:44. Westcott regards this as a genuine fragment. Nicholson inserts "not," with the Curetonian Syriac, D; all other authorities omit it. Juvencus has incorporated the passage in his poetic Hist. Evang. III. 613 sqq., quoted by Hofmann, p. 319.
- (4) "Be ye trustworthy money-changers, or, proved bankers (τραπεζίται δόκιμοι); i.e. expert in distinguishing the genuine coin from the counterfeit. Quoted by Clement of Alexandria (several times), Origen (in Joann. xix.), Eusebius, Epiphanius, Cyril of Alexandria, and many others. Comp. 1 Thess. 5:21: "Prove all things, hold fast the good," and the parable of the talents, Matt. 25:27. Delitzsch, who with many others regards this maxim as genuine, gives it the meaning: Exchange the less valuable for the more valuable, esteem sacred coin higher than common coin, and highest of all the one precious pearl of the gospel. (Ein Tag in Capernaum, p. 136.) Renan likewise adopts it as historical, but explains it in an Ebionite and monastic sense as an advice of voluntary poverty. "Be ye good bankers (soyez de bons banquiers), that is to

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- say: Make good investments for the kingdom of God, by giving your goods to the poor, according to the ancient proverb (Prov. 19:17): 'He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord' " (Vie de Jésus, ch. XI. p. 180, 5th Par. ed.).
- (5) "The Son of God says, (?) 'Let us resist all iniquity, and hold it in abhorrence.' " From the Epistle of Barnabas, c. 4. This Epistle, though incorporated in the Codex Sinaiticus, is probably not a work of the apostolic Barnabas. Westcott and Plumptre quote the passage from the Latin version, which introduces the sentence with the words: sicut dicit Filius Dei. But this seems to be a mistake for sicut decet filios Dei, "as becometh the sons of God." This is evident from the Greek original (brought to light by the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus), which reads, ὡς πρέπει υἱοῖς θεοῦ, and connects the words with the preceding sentence. See the edition of Barnabae Epistula by Gebhardt and Harnack in Patr. Apost. Op. I.14. For the sense comp. 2 Tim. 2:19: ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας, James 4:7: ἀντίστητε τῷ διαβόλῳ, Ps. 119:163: ἀδικίαν ἐμίσησα.]
- (6) "They who wish to see me, and to lay hold on my kingdom, must receive me with affliction and suffering." From the Epistle of Barnabas, c. 7, where the words are introduced by "Thus he [Jesus] saith," φησίν. But it is doubtful whether they are meant as a quotation or rather as a conclusion of the former remarks and a general reminiscence of several passages. Comp. Matt. 16:24; 20:3; Acts 14:22: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
- (7) "He that wonders [ὁ θαυμάσας, with the wonder of reverential faith] shall reign, and he that reigns shall be made to rest." From the "Gospel of the Hebrews," quoted by Clement of Alexandria (Strom. II. 9, § 45). The Alexandrian divine quotes this and the following sentence to show, as Plumptre finely says, "that in the teaching of Christ, as in that of Plato, wonder is at once the beginning and the end of knowledge."
- (8) "Look with wonder at the things that are before thee (θαύμασον τὰ παρόντα)." From Clement of Alexandria (Strom. II. 9, § 45.).
- (9) "I came to abolish sacrifices, and unless ye cease from sacrificing, the wrath [of God] will not cease from you." From the Gospel of the Ebionites (or rather Essaeian Judaizers), quoted by Epiphanius (Haer. xxx. 16). Comp. Matt. 9:13, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."
- (10) "Ask great things, and the small shall be added to you: ask heavenly things and there shall be added unto you earthly things." Quoted by Clement of Alexandria (Strom. I. 24, § 154; comp. IV. 6, § 34) and Origen (de Oratione, c. 2), with slight differences. Comp. Matt. 6:33, of which it is probably a free quotation from memory. Ambrose also quotes the sentence (Ep. xxxvi. 3): "Denique scriptum est: 'Petite magna, et parva adjicientur vobis. Petite coelestia, et terrena adjicientur.' "
- (11) "In the things wherein I find you, in them will I judge you." Quoted by Justin Martyr (Dial. c. Tryph. c. 47), and Clement of Alexandria (Quis dives, § 40). Somewhat different Nilus: "Such as I find thee, I will judge thee, saith the Lord." The parallel passages in Ezekiel 7:3, 8; 18:30; 24:14; 33:20 are not sufficient to account for this sentence. It is probably taken from an apocryphal Gospel. See Hofmann, p. 323.
- (12) "He who is nigh unto me is nigh unto the fire: he who is far from me is far from the kingdom." From Origen (Comm. in Jer. III. p. 778), and Didymus of Alexandria (in Ps. 88:8). Comp. Luke 12:49. Ignatius (Ad Smyrn. c. 4) has a

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- similar saying, but not as a quotation, "To be near the sword is to be near God" (ἔγγυς μαχαίρας ἔγγυς θεοῦ).
- (13) "If ye kept not that which is little, who will give you that which is great? For I say unto you, he that is faithful in the least is faithful also in much." From the homily of Pseudo-Clement of Rome (ch. 8). Comp. Luke 16:10–12 and Matt. 25:21, 23. Irenæus (II. 34, 3) quotes similarly, probably from memory: "Si in modico fideles non fuistis, quod magnum est quis dabit nobis?"
- (14) "Keep the flesh pure, and the seal [probably baptism] without stain that we (ye) may receive eternal life." From Pseudo-Clement, ch. 8. But as this is connected with the former sentence by ἄρα οὖν τοῦτο λέγει, it seems to be only an explanation ("he means this") not a separate quotation. See Lightfoot, St. Clement of Rome, pp. 200 and 201, and his Appendix containing the newly recovered Portions, p. 384. On the sense comp. 2 Tim. 2:19; Rom. 4:11; Eph. 1:13; 4:30.
- (15) Our Lord, being asked by Salome when His kingdom should come, and the things which he had spoken be accomplished, answered, "When the two shall be one, and the outward as the inward, and the male with the female, neither male nor female." From Clement of Alexandria, as a quotation from "the Gospel according to the Egyptians" (Strom. III. 13, § 92), and the homily of Pseudo-Clement of Rome (ch. 12). Comp. Matt. 22:30; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 7:29. The sentence has a mystical coloring which is alien to the genuine Gospels, but suited the Gnostic taste.
- (16) "For those that are infirm was I infirm, and for those that hunger did I hunger, and for those that thirst did I thirst." From Origen (in Matt. xiii. 2). Comp. Matt. 25:35, 36; 1 Cor. 9:20–22.
- (17) "Never be ye joyful, except when ye have seen your brother [dwelling] in love." Quoted from the Hebrew Gospel by Jerome (in Eph. v. 3).
- (18) "Take hold, handle me, and see that I am not a bodiless demon [i.e. spirit]." From Ignatius (Ad Smyrn. c. 3), and Jerome, who quotes it from the Nazarene Gospel (De Viris illustr. 16). Words said to have been spoken to Peter and the apostles after the resurrection. Comp. Luke 24:39; John 20:27.
- (19) "Good must needs come, but blessed is he through whom it cometh; in like manner evil must needs come, but woe to him through whom it cometh." From the "Clementine Homilies," xii. 29. For the second clause comp. Matt. 18:7; Luke 17:1.
- (20) "My mystery is for me, and for the sons of my house." From Clement of Alexandria (Strom. V. 10, § 64), the Clementine Homilies (xix. 20), and Alexander of Alexandria (Ep. ad Alex. c. 5, where the words are ascribed to the Father). Comp. Isa. 24:16 (Sept.); Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11.
- (21) "If you do not make your low things high and your crooked things straight, ye shall not enter into my kingdom." From the Acta Philippi in Tischendorf's Acta Apost. Apocr. p. 90, quoted by Ewald, Gesch. Christus,' p. 288, who calls these words a weak echo of more excellent sayings.
- (22) "I will choose these things to myself. Very excellent are those whom my Father that is in heaven hath given to me." From the Hebrew Gospel, quoted by Eusebius (Theophan. iv. 13).
- (23) "The Lord said, speaking of His kingdom, 'The days will come in which vines will spring up, each having ten thousand stocks, and on each stock ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand bunches, and on each bunch ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall give five-and-twenty measures of wine. And when

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any saint shall have laid hold on one bunch, another shall cry, I am a better bunch, take me; through me bless the Lord.' Likewise also [he said], 'that a grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand ears of corn, and each grain ten pounds of fine pure flour; and so all other fruits and seeds and each herb according to its proper nature. And that all animals, using for food what is received from the earth, shall live in peace and concord with one another, subject to men with all subjection.' " To this description Papias adds: "These things are credible to those who believe. And when Judas the traitor believed not and asked, 'How shall such products come from the Lord?' the Lord said, 'They shall see who come to me in these times.' " From the "weak-minded" Papias (quoted by Irenæus, Adv. Haer. V. 33, 3). Comp. Isa. 11:6-9.

Westcott quotes eleven other apocryphal sayings which are only loose quotations or perversions of genuine words of Christ, and may therefore be omitted. Nicholson has gathered the probable or possible fragments of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which correspond more or less to passages in the canonical Gospels.

Mohammedan tradition has preserved in the Koran and in other writings several striking words of Christ, which Hofmann, l. c. pp. 327-329, has collected. The following is the best:

"Jesus, the Son of Mary, said, 'He who longs to be rich is like a man who drinks sea-water; the more he drinks the more thirsty he becomes, and never leaves off drinking till he perishes.' "

II. PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF JESUS. None of the Evangelists, not even the beloved disciple and bosom-friend of Jesus, gives us the least hint of his countenance and stature, or of his voice, his manner, his food, his dress, his mode of daily life. In this respect our instincts of natural affection have been wisely overruled. He who is the Saviour of all and the

perfect exemplar for all should not be identified with the particular lineaments of one race or nationality or type of beauty. We should cling to the Christ in spirit and in glory rather than to the Christ in the flesh So St. Paul thought (2 Cor. 5:16; Comp. 1 Pet. 1:8).

Jesus no doubt accommodated himself in dress and general appearance to the customs of his age and people, and avoided all ostentation. He probably passed unnoticed through busy crowds. But to the closer observer he must have revealed a spiritual beauty and an overawing majesty in his countenance and personal bearing. This helps to explain the readiness with which the disciples, forsaking all things, followed him in boundless reverence and devotion. He had not the physiognomy of a sinner. He had more than the physiognomy of a saint. He reflected from his eyes and countenance the serene peace and celestial purity of a sinless soul in blessed harmony with God. His presence commanded reverence, confidence and affection.

In the absence of authentic representation, Christian art in its irrepressible desire to exhibit in visible form the fairest among the children of men, was left to its own imperfect conception of ideal beauty. The church under persecution in the first three centuries, was averse to pictorial representations of Christ, and associated with him in his state of humiliation (but not in his state of exaltation) the idea of uncomeliness, taking too literally the prophetic description of the suffering Messiah in the twenty-second Psalm and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The victorious church after Constantine, starting from the Messianic picture in the forty-fifth Psalm and the Song of Solomon, saw the same Lord in heavenly glory, "fairer than the children of men" and "altogether lovely." Yet the difference was not so great as it is sometimes represented. For even the ante-Nicene fathers (especially Clement of Alexandria), besides expressly distinguishing between the first appearance of Christ in lowliness and humility, and his second appearance in glory

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and majesty, did not mean to deny to the Saviour even in the days of his flesh a higher order of spiritual beauty, "the glory of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth," which shone through the veil of his humanity, and which at times, as on the mount of transfiguration, anticipated his future glory. "Certainly," says Jerome, "a flame of fire and starry brightness flashed from his eye, and the majesty of the God head shone in his face."

The earliest pictures of Christ, in the Catacombs, are purely symbolic, and represent him under the figures of the Lamb, the good Shepherd, the Fish. The last has reference to the Greek word *Ichthys*, which contains the initials of the words Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτὴρ, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." Real pictures of Christ in the early church would have been an offence to the Jewish, and a temptation and snare to the heathen converts.

The first formal description of the personal appearance of Christ, which, though not authentic and certainly not older than the fourth century, exerted great influence on the pictorial representations, is ascribed to the heathen PUBLIUS LENTULUS, a supposed contemporary of Pilate and "President of the people of Jerusalem" (there was no such office), in an apocryphal Latin letter to the Roman Senate, which was first discovered in a MS. copy of the writings of Anselm of Canterbury in the twelfth century, and published with slight variations by Fabricius, Carpzov, Gabler, etc. It is as follows:

"In this time appeared a man, who lives till now, a man endowed with great powers. Men call him a great prophet; his own disciples term Him the Son of God. His name is Jesus Christ. He restores the dead to life, and cures the sick of all manner of diseases. This man is of noble and well-proportioned stature, with a face full of kindness and yet firmness, so that the beholders both love Him and fear Him. His hair is of the color of wine, and golden at the root; straight, and without

lustre, but from the level of the ears curling and glossy, and divided down the centre after the fashion of the Nazarenes [Nazarites?] His forehead is even and smooth, his face without wrinkle or blemish, and glowing with delicate bloom. His countenance is frank and kind. Nose and mouth are in no way faulty. His beard is full, of the same hazel color as his hair, not long, but forked. His eyes are blue, and extremely brilliant. In reproof and rebuke he is formidable; in exhortation and teaching, gentle and amiable. He has never been seen to laugh, but oftentimes to weep, (*numquam visus est ridere, flere autem saepe*). His person is tall and erect; his hands and limbs beautiful and straight. In speaking he is deliberate and grave, and little given to loquacity. In beauty he surpasses the children of men."

Another description is found in the works of the Greek theologian, JOHN OF DAMASCUS, of the 8th century (*Epist. ad Theoph. Imp. de venerandis Imag., spurious*), and a similar one in the Church History of NICEPHORUS (I. 40), of the 14th century. They represent Christ as resembling his mother, and ascribe to him a stately person though slightly stooping, beautiful eyes, blond, long, and curly hair, pale, olive complexion, long fingers, and a look expressive of nobility, wisdom, and patience.

On the ground of these descriptions, and of the Abgar and the Veronica legends, arose a vast number of pictures of Christ, which are divided into two classes: the *Salvator* pictures, with the expression of calm serenity and dignity, without the faintest mark of grief, and the *Ecce Homo* pictures of the suffering Saviour with the crown of thorns. The greatest painters and sculptors have exhausted the resources of their genius in representations of Christ; but neither color nor chisel nor pen can do more than produce a feeble reflection of the beauty and glory of Him who is the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Among modern biographers of Christ, Dr. Sepp (Rom. Cath., *Das Leben Jesu Christi*, 1865, vol. VI. 312 sqq.) defends the legend of St. Veronica of the Herodian family, and the genuineness of the picture of the suffering Saviour with the crown of thorns which he impressed on her silken veil. He rejects the philological explanation of the legend from "the true image" (*vera eikōn* = Veronica), and derives the name from *φερηνίκη* (Berenice), the Victorious. But Bishop Hefele (*Art. Christusbilder*, in the *Cath. Kirchen-Lexikon* of Wetzer and Welte, II. 519–524) is inclined, with Grimm, to identify Veronica with the Berenice who is said to have erected a statue to Christ at Cæsarea Philippi (Euseb. VII. 18), and to see in the Veronica legend only the Latin version of the Abgar legend of the Greek Church. Dr. Hase (*Leben Jesu*, p. 79) ascribes to Christ manly beauty, firm health, and delicate, yet not very characteristic features. He quotes John 20:14 and Luke 24:16, where it is said that his friends did not recognize him, but these passages refer only to the mysterious appearances of the risen Lord. Renan (*Vie de Jésus*, ch. XXIV. p. 403) describes him in the frivolous style of a novelist, as a *doux Galiléen*, of calm and dignified attitude, as a *beau jeune homme* who made a deep impression upon women, especially Mary of Magdala; even a proud Roman lady, the wife of Pontius Pilate, when she caught a glimpse of him from the window (?), was enchanted, dreamed of him in the night and was frightened at the prospect of his death. Dr. Keim (I. 463) infers from his character, as described in the Synoptical Gospels, that he was perhaps not strikingly handsome, yet certainly noble, lovely, manly, healthy and vigorous, looking like a prophet, commanding reverence, making men, women, children, sick and poor people feel happy in his presence. Canon Farrar (I. 150) adopts the view of Jerome and Augustine, and speaks of Christ as "full of mingled majesty and tenderness in—

"That face

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than beauty's self.' "

On artistic representations of Christ see J. B. CARPZOV: *De oris et corporis J. Christi forma Pseudo-Lentuli, J. Damasceni et Nicephori proso-pographiae*. Helmst. 1777. P. E. JABLONSKI: *De origine imaginum Christi Domini*. Lugd. Batav. 1804. W. GRIMM: *Die Sage vom Ursprung der Christusbilder*. Berlin, 1843. Dr. LEGIS GLÜCKSELIG: *Christus-Archäologie; Das Buch von Jesus Christus und seinem wahren Ebenbilde*. Prag, 1863. 4to. Mrs. JAMESON and Lady EASTLAKE: *The History of our Lord as exemplified in Works of Art* (with illustrations). Lond., 2d ed. 1865. 2 vols. COWPER: *Apocr. Gospels*. Lond. 1867, pp. 217–226. HASE: *Leben Jesu*, pp. 76–80 (5th ed.), KEIM: *Gesch. Jesu von Naz.* I. 459–464. FARRAR: *Life of Christ*. Lond. 1874, I. 148–150, 312–313; II. 464.

III. THE TESTIMONY OF JOSEPHUS ON JOHN THE BAPTIST.—*Antiq. Jud.* xviii. c. 5, § 2. Whatever may be thought of the more famous passage of Christ which we have discussed in § 14 (p. 92), the passage on John is undoubtedly genuine and so accepted by most scholars. It fully and independently confirms the account of the Gospels on John's work and martyrdom, and furnishes, indirectly, an argument in favor of the historical character of their account of Christ, for whom he merely prepared the way. We give it in Whiston's translation: "Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, who was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man (*ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα*), and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body: supposing

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still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machaerus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him."

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF MARA TO CHRIST, A.D. 74. This extra-biblical notice of Christ, made known first in 1865, and referred to above (§ 14 p. 94) reads as follows (as translated from the Syriac by Cureton and Pratten):

"What are we to say, when the wise are dragged by force by hands of tyrants, and their wisdom is deprived of its freedom by slander, and they are plundered for their [superior] intelligence, without [the opportunity of making] a defence? [They are not wholly to be pitied.] For what benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death, seeing that they received [as] retribution for it famine and pestilence? Or the people of Samos by the burning of Pythagoras, seeing that in one hour the whole of their country was covered with sand? Or THE JEWS [BY THE MURDER] OF THEIR WISE KING, seeing that from that very time their kingdom was driven away [from them]? For with justice did God grant a recompense to the wisdom of [all] three of them. For the Athenians died by famine; and the people of Samos were covered by the sea without remedy; and the Jews, brought to destruction and expelled from their kingdom, are driven

away into every land. [Nay], Socrates did not die, because of Plato; nor yet Pythagoras, because of the statue of Hera; nor yet THE WISE KING, BECAUSE OF THE NEW LAWS HE ENACTED."

The nationality and position of Mara are unknown. Dr. Payne Smith supposes him to have been a Persian. He wrote from prison and wished to die, "by what kind of death concerns me not." In the beginning of his letter Mara says: "On this account, lo, I have written for thee this record, [touching] that which I have by careful observation discovered in the world. For the kind of life men lead has been carefully observed by me. I tread the path of learning, and from the study of Greek philosophy have I found out all these things, although they suffered shipwreck when the birth of life took place." The birth of life may refer to the appearance of Christianity in the world, or to Mara's own conversion. But there is no other indication that he was a Christian. The advice he gives to his son is simply to "devote himself to wisdom, the fount of all things good, the treasure that fails not."

1.19 The Resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is reported by the four Gospels, taught in the Epistles, believed throughout Christendom, and celebrated on every "Lord's Day," as an historical fact, as the crowning miracle and divine seal of his whole work, as the foundation of the hopes of believers, as the pledge of their own future resurrection. It is represented in the New Testament both as an act of the Almighty Father who raised his Son from the dead, and as an act of Christ himself, who had the power to lay down his life and to take it again.² The ascension was the proper conclusion of the resurrection: the risen life of our Lord, who is "the Resurrection and the Life," could not end in another death on earth, but must continue in eternal glory in heaven. Hence St. Paul says, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath

dominion over him. For the death that he died he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”

The Christian church rests on the resurrection of its Founder. Without this fact the church could never have been born, or if born, it would soon have died a natural death. The miracle of the resurrection and the existence of Christianity are so closely connected that they must stand or fall together. If Christ was raised from the dead, then all his other miracles are sure, and our faith is impregnable; if he was not raised, he died in vain and our faith is vain. It was only his resurrection that made his death available for our atonement, justification and salvation; without the resurrection, his death would be the grave of our hopes; we should be still unredeemed and under the power of our sins. A gospel of a dead Saviour would be a contradiction and wretched delusion. This is the reasoning of St. Paul, and its force is irresistible.

The resurrection of Christ is therefore emphatically a test question upon which depends the truth or falsehood of the Christian religion. It is either the greatest miracle or the greatest delusion which history records.

Christ had predicted both his crucifixion and his resurrection, but the former was a stumbling-block to the disciples, the latter a mystery which they could not understand till after the event. They no doubt expected that he would soon establish his Messianic kingdom on earth. Hence their utter disappointment and downheartedness after the crucifixion. The treason of one of their own number, the triumph of the hierarchy, the fickleness of the people, the death and burial of the beloved Master, had in a few hours rudely blasted their Messianic hopes and exposed them to the contempt and ridicule of their enemies. For two days they were trembling on the brink of despair. But on the third day, behold, the same disciples underwent a complete revolution from

despondency to hope, from timidity to courage, from doubt to faith, and began to proclaim the gospel of the resurrection in the face of an unbelieving world and at the peril of their lives. This revolution was not isolated, but general among them; it was not the result of an easy credulity, but brought about in spite of doubt and hesitation; it was not superficial and momentary, but radical and lasting; it affected, not only the apostles, but the whole history of the world. It reached even the leader of the persecution, Saul of Tarsus one of the clearest and strongest intellects, and converted him into the most devoted and faithful champion of this very gospel to the hour of his martyrdom.

This is a fact patent to every reader of the closing chapters of the Gospels, and is freely admitted even by the most advanced skeptics.

The question now rises whether this inner revolution in the life of the disciples, with its incalculable effects upon the fortunes of mankind, can be rationally explained without a corresponding outward revolution in the history of Christ; in other words, whether the professed faith of the disciples in the risen Christ was true and real, or a hypocritical lie, or an honest self-delusion.

There are four possible theories which have been tried again and again, and defended with as much learning and ingenuity as can be summoned to their aid. Historical questions are not like mathematical problems. No argument in favor of the resurrection will avail with those critics who start with the philosophical assumption that miracles are impossible, and still less with those who deny not only the resurrection of the body, but even the immortality of the soul. But facts are stubborn, and if a critical hypothesis can be proven to be psychologically and historically impossible and unreasonable, the result is fatal to the philosophy which underlies the critical hypothesis. It is not the business of the historian to construct a history from preconceived notions and to adjust it to his

own liking, but to reproduce it from the best evidence and to let it speak for itself.

1. The HISTORICAL view, presented by the Gospels and believed in the Christian church of every denomination and sect. The resurrection of Christ was an actual though miraculous event, in harmony with his previous history and character, and in fulfilment of his own prediction. It was a re-animation of the dead body of Jesus by a return of his soul from the spirit-world, and a rising of body and soul from the grave to a new life, which after repeated manifestations to believers during a short period of forty days entered into glory by the ascension to heaven. The object of the manifestations was not only to convince the apostles personally of the resurrection, but to make them witnesses of the resurrection and heralds of salvation to all the world.

Truth compels us to admit that there are serious difficulties in harmonizing the accounts of the evangelists, and in forming a consistent conception of the nature of Christ's, resurrection-body, hovering as it were between heaven and earth, and oscillating for forty days between a natural and a supernatural state, of the body clothed with flesh and blood and bearing the wound-prints, and yet so spiritual as to appear and disappear through closed doors and to ascend visibly to heaven. But these difficulties are not so great as those which are created by a denial of the fact itself. The former can be measurably solved, the latter cannot. We do not know all the details and circumstances which might enable us to clearly trace the order of events. But among all the variations the great central fact of the resurrection itself and its principal features "stand out all the more sure." The period of the forty days is in the nature of the case the most mysterious in the life of Christ, and transcends all ordinary Christian experience. The Christophanies resemble in some respects the theophanies of the Old Testament, which were granted only to few believers, yet for the general benefit. At all events the fact of the resurrection

furnishes the only key for the solution of the psychological problem of the sudden, radical, and permanent change in the mind and conduct of the disciples; it is the necessary link in the chain which connects their history before and after that event. Their faith in the resurrection was too clear, too strong, too steady, too effective to be explained in any other way. They showed the strength and boldness of their conviction by soon returning to Jerusalem, the post of danger, and founding there, in the very face of the hostile Sanhedrin, the mother-church of Christendom.

2. The THEORY OF FRAUD. The apostles stole and hid the body of Jesus, and deceived the world.

This infamous lie carries its refutation on its face: for if the Roman soldiers who watched the grave at the express request of the priests and Pharisees, were asleep, they could not see the thieves, nor would they have proclaimed their military crime; if they, or only some of them, were awake, they would have prevented the theft. As to the disciples, they were too timid and desponding at the time to venture on such a daring act, and too honest to cheat the world. And finally a self-invented falsehood could not give them the courage and constancy of faith for the proclamation of the resurrection at the peril of their lives. The whole theory is a wicked absurdity, an insult to the common sense and honor of mankind.

3. The SWOON-THEORY. The physical life of Jesus was not extinct, but only exhausted, and was restored by the tender care of his friends and disciples, or (as some absurdly add) by his own medical skill; and after a brief period he quietly died a natural death.

Josephus, Valerius Maximus, psychological and medical authorities have been searched and appealed to for examples of such apparent resurrections from a trance or asphyxy, especially on the third day, which is supposed to be a critical turning-point for life or putrefaction.

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But besides insuperable physical difficulties—as the wounds and loss of blood from the very heart pierced by the spear of the Roman soldier—this theory utterly fails to account for the moral effect. A brief sickly existence of Jesus in need of medical care, and terminating in his natural death and final burial, without even the glory of martyrdom which attended the crucifixion, far from restoring the faith of the apostles, would have only in the end deepened their gloom and driven them to utter despair.

4. The VISION-THEORY. Christ rose merely in the imagination of his friends, who mistook a subjective vision or dream for actual reality, and were thereby encouraged to proclaim their faith in the resurrection at the risk of death. Their wish was father to the belief, their belief was father to the fact, and the belief, once started, spread with the power of a religious epidemic from person to person and from place to place. The Christian society wrought the miracle by its intense love for Christ. Accordingly the resurrection does not belong to the history of Christ at all, but to the inner life of his disciples. It is merely the embodiment of their reviving faith.

This hypothesis was invented by a heathen adversary in the second century and soon buried out of sight, but rose to new life in the nineteenth, and spread with epidemical rapidity among skeptical critics in Germany, France, Holland and England.

The advocates of this hypothesis appeal first and chiefly to the vision of St. Paul on the way to Damascus, which occurred several years later, and is nevertheless put on a level with the former appearances to the older apostles (1 Cor. 15:8); next to supposed analogies in the history of religious enthusiasm and mysticism, such as the individual visions of St. Francis of Assisi, the Maid of Orleans, St. Theresa (who believed that she had seen Jesus in person with the eyes of the soul more distinctly than she could have seen him with the eyes of the body), Swedenborg, even Mohammed, and the collective visions of the

Montanists in Asia Minor, the Camisards in France, the spectral resurrections of the martyred Thomas à Becket of Canterbury and Savonarola of Florence in the excited imagination of their admirers, and the apparitions of the Immaculate Virgin at Lourdes.

Nobody will deny that subjective fancies and impressions are often mistaken for objective realities. But, with the exception of the case of St. Paul—which we shall consider in its proper place, and which turns out to be, even according to the admission of the leaders of skeptical criticism, a powerful argument against the mythical or visionary theory—these supposed analogies are entirely irrelevant; for, not to speak of other differences, they were isolated and passing phenomena which left no mark on history; while the faith in the resurrection of Christ has revolutionized the whole world. It must therefore be treated on its own merits as an altogether unique case.

(a) The first insuperable argument against the visionary nature, and in favor of the objective reality, of the resurrection is the empty tomb of Christ. If he did not rise, his body must either have been removed, or remained in the tomb. If removed by the disciples, they were guilty of a deliberate falsehood in preaching the resurrection, and then the vision-hypothesis gives way to the exploded theory of fraud. If removed by the enemies, then these enemies had the best evidence against the resurrection, and would not have failed to produce it and thus to expose the baselessness of the vision. The same is true, of course, if the body had remained in the tomb. The murderers of Christ would certainly not have missed such an opportunity to destroy the very foundation of the hated sect.

To escape this difficulty, Strauss removes the origin of the illusion away off to Galilee, whither the disciples fled; but this does not help the matter, for they returned in a few

weeks to Jerusalem, where we find them all assembled on the day of Pentecost.

This argument is fatal even to the highest form of the vision hypothesis, which admits a spiritual manifestation of Christ from heaven, but denies the resurrection of his body.

(b) If Christ did not really rise, then the words which he spoke to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples of Emmaus, to doubting Thomas, to Peter on the lake of Tiberias, to all the disciples on Mount Olivet, were likewise pious fictions. But who can believe that words of such dignity and majesty, so befitting the solemn moment of the departure to the throne of glory, as the commandment to preach the gospel to every creature, to baptize the nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the promise to be with his disciples always to the end of the world—a promise abundantly verified in the daily experience of the church—could proceed from dreamy and self-deluded enthusiasts or crazy fanatics any more than the Sermon on the Mount or the Sacerdotal Prayer! And who, with any spark of historical sense, can suppose that Jesus never instituted baptism, which has been performed in his name ever since the day of Pentecost, and which, like the celebration of the Lord's Supper, bears testimony to him every day as the sunlight does to the sun!

(c) If the visions of the resurrection were the product of an excited imagination, it is unaccountable that they should suddenly have ceased on the fortieth day (Acts 1:15), and not have occurred to any of the disciples afterwards, with the single exception of Paul, who expressly represents his vision of Christ as "the last." Even on the day of Pentecost Christ did not appear to them, but, according to his promise, "the other Paraclete" descended upon them; and Stephen saw Christ in heaven, not on earth.

(d) The chief objection to the vision-hypothesis is its intrinsic impossibility. It makes the most exorbitant claim upon our credulity. It requires us to believe that many

persons, singly and collectively, at different times, and in different places, from Jerusalem to Damascus, had the same vision and dreamed the same dream; that the women at the open sepulchre early in the morning, Peter and John soon afterwards, the two disciples journeying to Emmaus on the afternoon of the resurrection day, the assembled apostles on the evening in the absence of Thomas, and again on the next Lord's Day in the presence of the skeptical Thomas, seven apostles at the lake of Tiberias, on one occasion five hundred brethren at once most of whom were still alive when Paul reported the fact, then James, the brother of the Lord, who formerly did not believe in him, again all the apostles on Mount Olivet at the ascension, and at last the clear-headed, strong-minded persecutor on the way to Damascus—that all these men and women on these different occasions vainly imagined they saw and heard the self-same Jesus in bodily shape and form; and that they were by this baseless vision raised all at once from the deepest gloom in which the crucifixion of their Lord had left them, to the boldest faith and strongest hope which impelled them to proclaim the gospel of the resurrection from Jerusalem to Rome to the end of their lives! And this illusion of the early disciples created the greatest revolution not only in their own views and conduct, but among Jews and Gentiles and in the subsequent history of mankind! This illusion, we are expected to believe by these unbelievers, gave birth to the most real and most mighty of all facts, the Christian Church which has lasted these eighteen hundred years and is now spread all over the civilized world, embracing more members than ever and exercising more moral power than all the kingdoms and all other religions combined! The vision-hypothesis, instead of getting rid of the miracle, only shifts it from fact to fiction; it makes an empty delusion more powerful than the truth, or turns all history itself at last into a delusion. Before we can reason the resurrection of Christ out of

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history we must reason the apostles and Christianity itself out of existence. We must either admit the miracle, or frankly confess that we stand here before an inexplicable mystery.