

THE LAST WORD ABOUT JESUS.

BY JOHN FISKE.

THE JESUS OF HISTORY.*

Of all the great founders of religions, Jesus is at once the best known and the least known to the modern scholar. From the dogmatic point of view he is the best known, from the historic point of view he is the least known. The Jesus of dogma is in every lineament familiar to us from early childhood; but concerning the Jesus of history we possess but few facts resting upon trustworthy evidence; and in order to form a picture of him at once consistent, probable, and distinct in its outlines, it is necessary to enter upon a long and difficult investigation, in the course of which some of the most delicate apparatus of modern criticism will not fail to be required. This circumstance is sufficiently singular to require especial explanation. The case of Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, which may perhaps be cited as parallel, is in reality wholly different. Not only did Sakyamuni live five centuries earlier than Jesus, among a people that have at no time possessed the art of insuring authenticity in their records of events, and at an era which is at best but dimly discerned through the mists of fable and legend, but the work which he achieved lies wholly out of the course of European history, and it is only in recent times that his career has presented itself to us as a problem needing to be solved. Jesus, on the other hand, appeared in an age which is familiarly and in many respects minutely known to us, and among a people whose fortunes we can trace with historic certainty for at least seven centuries previous to his birth; while his life and achievements have probably had a larger share in directing the entire subsequent intellectual and moral development of Europe than those of any other man who has ever lived. Nevertheless, the details of his personal career are shrouded in an obscurity almost as dense as that which envelops the life of the remote founder of Buddhism.

* THE JESUS OF HISTORY (Anonymous). 8vo, pp. 426. London: Williams & Norgate, 1869. New York: Scribner, Welford & Co.

VIE DE JESUS, par Ernest Renan. Paris, 1867. (Thirteenth edition, revised and partly rewritten.)

This phenomenon, however, appears less strange and paradoxical when we come to examine it more closely. A little reflection will disclose to us several good reasons why the historical records of the life of Jesus should be so scanty as they are. In the first place, the activity of Jesus was private rather than public. Confined within exceedingly narrow limits, both of space and of duration, it made no impression whatever upon the politics or the literature of the time. His name does not occur in the pages of any contemporary writer, Roman, Greek, or Jewish. Doubtless the case would have been wholly different, had he, like Mohammed, lived to a ripe age, and had the exigencies of his peculiar position as the Messiah of the Jewish people brought him into relations with the empire; though whether, in such case, the success of his grand undertaking would have been as complete as it has actually been, may well be doubted.

Secondly, Jesus did not, like Mohammed and Paul, leave behind him authentic writings which might serve to throw light upon his mental development as well as upon the external facts of his career. Without the Koran and the four genuine Epistles of Paul, we should be nearly as much in the dark concerning these great men as we now are concerning the historical Jesus. We should be compelled to rely, in the one case, upon the untrustworthy gossip of Mussulman chroniclers, and in the other case upon the garbled statements of the "Acts of the Apostles," a book written with a distinct dogmatic purpose, sixty or seventy years after the occurrence of the events which it professes to record.

It is true, many of the words of Jesus, preserved by hearsay tradition through the generation immediately succeeding his death, have come down to us, probably with little alteration, in the pages of the three earlier evangelists. These are priceless data, since, as we shall see, they are almost the only materials at our command for forming even a partial conception of the character of Jesus' work. Nevertheless, even here the cautious inquirer has only too often to pause in face of the difficulty of distinguishing the authentic utterances of the great teacher from the later interpolations suggested by the dogmatic necessities of the narrators. Bitterly must the historian regret that Jesus had no philosophic disciple, like Xenophon, to record his Memorabilia. Of the various writings included in the New Testament, the Apocalypse alone (and possibly the Epistle of Jude), is from the pen of a personal acquaintance of Jesus; and besides this, the four epistles of Paul, to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, make up the sum of the writings from which we may demand contemporary testimony. Yet from these we obtain absolutely nothing of that for which we are seeking. The brief writings of Paul are occupied exclusively with the internal significance of Jesus' work. The epistle of Jude—if it be really written by Jesus' brother of that name, which is doubtful—is solely a polemic directed against the innovations of Paul. And the

Apocalypse, the work of the fiery and imaginative disciple John, is confined to a prophetic description of the Messiah's anticipated return, and tells us nothing concerning the deeds of that Messiah while on the earth.

Here we touch upon our third consideration,—the consideration which best enables us to see why the historic notices of Jesus are so meagre. Rightly considered, the statement with which we opened this article is its own explanation. The Jesus of history is so little known, just because the Jesus of dogma is so well known. Other teachers—Paul, Mohammed, Sakyamuni—have come merely as preachers of righteousness, speaking in the name of general principles with which their own personalities were not directly implicated. But Jesus, as we shall see, before the close of his life, proclaimed himself to be something more than a preacher of righteousness. He announced himself—and justly, from his own point of view—as the long-expected Messiah sent by Jehovah to liberate the Jewish race. Thus the success of his religious teachings became at once implicated with the question of his personal nature and character. After the sudden and violent termination of his career, it immediately became all-important with his followers to prove that he was really the Messiah, and to insist upon the certainty of his speedy return to the earth. Thus the first generation of disciples dogmatized about him, instead of narrating his life—a task which to them would have seemed of little profit. For them the all-absorbing object of contemplation was the immediate future rather than the immediate past. As all the earlier Christian literature informs us, for nearly a century after the death of Jesus, his followers lived in daily anticipation of his triumphant return to the earth. The end of all things being so near-at hand, no attempt was made to ensure accurate and complete memoirs for the use of a posterity which was destined, in Christian imagination, never to arrive. The first Christians wrote but little; even Papias, at the end of a century, preferring second-hand or third-hand oral tradition to the written gospels which were then beginning to come into circulation. Memoirs of the life and teachings of Jesus were called forth by the necessity of having a written standard of doctrine to which to appeal amid the growing differences of opinion which disturbed the Church. Thus the earlier gospels exhibit, though in different degrees, the indications of a modifying, sometimes of an overruling dogmatic purpose. There is, indeed, no conscious violation of historic truth, but from the varied mass of material supplied by tradition, such incidents are selected as are fit to support the views of the writers concerning the personality of Jesus. Accordingly, while the early gospels throw a strong light upon the state of Christian opinion at the dates when they were successively composed, the information which they give concerning Jesus himself is, for that very reason, often vague, uncritical, and contradictory. Still more is this true of the fourth gospel, written late in the second century, in which historic tradition is moulded in the interests of dogma until it becomes

no longer recognizable, and in the place of the human Messiah of the earlier accounts, we have a semi-divine Logos or Æon, detached from God and incarnate for a brief season in the likeness of man.

Not only was history subordinated to dogma by the writers of the gospel-narratives, but in the minds of the Fathers of the Church who assisted in determining what writings should be considered canonical, dogmatic prepossession went very much further than critical acumen. Nor is this strange when we reflect that critical discrimination in questions of literary authenticity is one of the latest acquisitions of the cultivated human mind. In the early ages of the Church, the evidence of the genuineness of any literary production was never weighed critically; writings containing doctrines acceptable to the majority of Christians, were quoted as authoritative, while writings which supplied no dogmatic want were overlooked, or perhaps condemned as apocryphal. A striking instance of this is furnished by the fortunes of the Apocryphal. Although perhaps the best authenticated work in the New Testament collection, its millenarian doctrines caused it to become unpopular as the Church gradually ceased to look for the speedy return of the Messiah, and, accordingly, as the canon assumed a definite shape, it was placed among the "Antilegomena," or doubtful books, and continued to hold a precarious position until after the time of the Protestant Reformation. On the other hand, the fourth gospel, which was quite unknown and probably did not exist at the time of the Quartodeciman controversy (A. D. 168), was accepted with little hesitation, and at the beginning of the third century is mentioned by Irenæus, Clement, and Tertullian, as the work of the Apostle John. To this uncritical spirit, leading to the neglect of such books as failed to answer the dogmatic requirements of the Church, may probably be attributed the loss of so many of the earlier gospels. It is doubtless for this reason that we do not possess the Aramæan original of the "Logia" of Matthew, or the "Memorabilia" of Mark, the companion of Peter,—two works to which Papias (A. D. 120) alludes as containing authentic reports of the utterances of Jesus.

These considerations will, we believe, sufficiently explain the curious circumstance that, while we know the Jesus of dogma so intimately, we know the Jesus of history so slightly. The literature of early Christianity enables us to trace with tolerable completeness the progress of opinion concerning the nature of Jesus, from the time of Paul's early missions to the time of the Nicene Council; but upon the actual words and deeds of Jesus it throws a very unsteady light. The dogmatic purpose everywhere obscures the historic basis.

This same dogmatic prepossession which has rendered the data for a biography of Jesus so scanty and untrustworthy, has also until comparatively recent times prevented any unbiased critical examination of such data as we actually possess. Previous to the eighteenth century any attempt to deal with the life of Jesus upon purely historical

methods would have been not only contemned as irrational, but stigmatized as impious. And even in the eighteenth century, those writers who had become wholly emancipated from ecclesiastic tradition were so destitute of all historic sympathy and so unskilled in scientific methods of criticism, that they utterly failed to comprehend the requirements of the problem. Their aims were in the main polemic, not historical. They thought more of overthrowing current dogmas than of impartially examining the earliest Christian literature with a view of eliciting its historic contents; and, accordingly, they accomplished but little. Two brilliant exceptions must, however, be noticed. Spinoza, in the seventeenth century, and Lessing, in the eighteenth, were men far in advance of their age. They are the fathers of modern historical criticism; and to Lessing in particular, with his enormous erudition and incomparable sagacity, belongs the honor of initiating that method of inquiry which, in the hands of the so-called Tübingen School, has led to such striking and valuable conclusions concerning the age and character of all the New Testament Literature. But it was long before any one could be found fit to bend the bow which Lessing and Spinoza had wielded. A succession of able scholars—Semler, Eichhorn, Paulus, Schleiermacher, Bretschneider, and De Wette,—were required to examine, with German patience and accuracy, the details of the subject, and to propound various untenable hypotheses, before such a work could be performed as that of Strauss. The "Life of Jesus," published by Strauss when only twenty-six years of age, is one of the monumental works of the nineteenth century, worthy to rank, as a historical effort, along with Niebuhr's "History of Rome," Wolf's "Prolegomena," or Bentley's "Dissertations on Phalaris." It instantly superseded and rendered antiquated everything which had preceded it; nor has any work on early Christianity been written in Germany for the past thirty years which has not been dominated by the recollection of that marvelous book. Nevertheless, the labors of another generation of scholars have carried our knowledge of the New Testament literature far beyond the point which it had reached when Strauss first wrote. At that time the dates of but few of the New Testament writings had been fixed with any approach to certainty; the age and character of the fourth gospel, the genuineness of the Pauline epistles, even the mutual relations of the three Synoptics, were still undetermined; and, as a natural result of this uncertainty, the progress of dogma during the first century was ill understood. At the present day it is impossible to read the early work of Strauss without being impressed with the necessity of obtaining positive data as to the origin and dogmatic character of the New Testament writings, before attempting to reach any conclusions as to the probable career of Jesus. These positive data we owe to the genius and diligence of the Tübingen School, and, above all, to its founder, Ferdinand Christian Baur. Beginning with the epistles of Paul, of which he distinguished four as

genuine, Baur gradually worked his way through the entire New Testament collection, detecting—with that inspired insight which only unflinching diligence can impart to original genius—the age at which each book was written, and the circumstances which called it forth. To give any account of Baur's detailed conclusions, or of the method by which he reached them, would require a volume. They are very scantily presented in Mr. Mackay's work on the "Tübingen School and its Antecedents," to which we may refer the reader desirous of further information. We can here merely say that twenty years of energetic controversy have only served to establish nearly all Baur's leading conclusions more firmly than ever. The priority of the so-called gospel of Matthew, the Pauline purpose of "Luke," the second in date of our gospels, the derivative and second-hand character of "Mark," and the unapostolic origin of the fourth gospel, are points which may for the future be regarded as completely established by circumstantial evidence. So with respect to the pseudo-Pauline epistles, Baur's work was done so thoroughly that the only question still left open for much discussion is that concerning the date and authorship of the first and second "Thessalonians,"—a point of quite inferior importance, so far as our present subject is concerned. Seldom have such vast results been achieved by the labor of a single scholar. Seldom has any historical critic possessed such a combination of analytic and of co-ordinating powers as Baur. His keen criticism and his wonderful flashes of insight, exercise upon the reader a truly poetic effect like that which is felt in contemplating the marvels of physical discovery.

The comprehensive labors of Baur were followed up by Zeller's able work on the "Acts of the Apostles," in which that book was shown to have been partly founded upon documents written by Luke, or some other companion of Paul, and expanded and modified by a much later writer with the purpose of covering up the traces of the early schism between the Pauline and the Petrine sections of the Church. Along with this, Schwegler's work on the "Post-Apostolic Times" deserves mention as clearing up many obscure points relating to the early development of dogma. Finally, the "New Life of Jesus," by Strauss, adopting and utilizing the principal discoveries of Baur and his followers, and combining all into one grand historical picture, worthily completes the task which the earlier work of the same author had inaugurated.

The reader will have noticed that, with the exception of Spinoza, every one of the names above cited in connection with the literary analysis and criticism of the New Testament is the name of a German. Until within the last decade, Germany has indeed possessed almost an absolute monopoly of the science of Biblical criticism; other countries having remained not only unfamiliar with its methods, but even grossly ignorant of its conspicuous results, save when some German treatise of more than ordinary popularity has now and then been translated.

But during the past ten years France has entered the lists; and the writings of Réville, Reuss, Nicolas, D'Eichthal, Scherer, and Colaric testify to the rapidity with which the German seed has fructified upon her soil.

None of these books, however, have achieved such wide-spread celebrity, or done so much toward interesting the general public in this class of historical inquiries, as the "Life of Jesus," by Renan. This pre-eminence of fame is partly, but not wholly, deserved. From a purely literary point of view, Renan's work doubtless merits all the celebrity it has gained. Its author writes a style such as is perhaps equaled by that of no other living Frenchman. It is by far the most readable book which has ever been written concerning the life of Jesus. And no doubt some of its popularity is due to its very faults, which, from a critical point of view, are neither few nor small. For Renan is certainly very faulty, as a historical critic, when he practically ignores the extreme meagreness of our positive knowledge of the career of Jesus, and describes scene after scene in his life as minutely and with as much confidence as if he had himself been present to witness it all. Again and again the critical reader feels prompted to ask, How do you know all this? or why, out of two or three conflicting accounts, do you quietly adopt some particular one, as if its superior authority were self-evident? But in the eye of the uncritical reader, these defects are excellences; for it is unpleasant to be kept in ignorance when we are seeking after definite knowledge, and it is disheartening to read page after page of an elaborate discussion which ends in convincing us that definite knowledge cannot be gained.

In the thirteenth edition of the "Vie de Jésus," Renan has corrected some of the most striking errors of the original work, and in particular has, with praiseworthy candor, abandoned his untenable position with regard to the age and character of the fourth gospel. As is well known, Renan, in his earlier editions, ascribed to this gospel a historical value superior to that of the synoptics, believing it to have been written by an eye-witness of the events which it relates; and from this source, accordingly, he drew the larger share of his materials. Now, if there is any one conclusion concerning the New Testament literature which must be regarded as incontrovertibly established by the labors of a whole generation of scholars, it is this, that the fourth gospel was utterly unknown until about A. D. 170, that it was written by some one who possessed very little direct knowledge of Palestine, that its purpose was rather to expound a dogma than to give an accurate record of events, and that as a guide to the comprehension of the career of Jesus it is of far less value than the three synoptic gospels. It is impossible, in a brief review like the present, to epitomize the evidence upon which this conclusion rests, which may more profitably be sought in the Rev. J. J. Tayler's work on "The Fourth Gospel," or in Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament." It

must suffice to mention that this gospel is not cited by Papias; that Justin, Marcion, and Valentinus make no allusion to it, though, since it furnishes so much that is germane to their views, they would gladly have appealed to it, had it been in existence, when those views were as yet questionable; and that, finally, in the great quartodeciman controversy, A. D. 168, the gospel is not only not mentioned, but the authority of John is cited by Polycarp in flat contradiction of the view afterwards taken by this evangelist. Still more, the assumption of Renan led at once into complicated difficulties with reference to the Apocalypse. The fourth gospel, if it does not unmistakably announce itself as the work of John, at least professes to be Johannine; and it cannot for a moment be supposed that such a book, making such claims, could have gained currency during John's lifetime without calling forth his indignant protest. For, in reality, no book in the New Testament collection would so completely have shocked the prejudices of the Johannine party. John's own views are well known to us from the Apocalypse. John was the most enthusiastic of millenarians and the most narrow and rigid of Judaizers. In his antagonism to the Pauline innovations he went farther than Peter himself. Intense hatred of Paul and his followers appears in several passages of the Apocalypse, where they are stigmatized as "Nicolaitans," "deceivers of the people," "those who say they are apostles and are not," "eaters of meat offered to idols," "fornicators," "pretended Jews," "liars," "synagogue of Satan," etc. (Chap. II.) On the other hand, the fourth gospel contains nothing millenarian or Judaical; it carries Pauline universalism to a far greater extent than Paul himself ventured to carry it, even condemning the Jews as children of darkness, and by implication contrasting them unfavorably with the Gentiles; and it contains a theory of the nature of Jesus which the Ebionitish Christians, to whom John belonged, rejected to the last.

In his present edition Renan admits the insuperable force of these objections, and abandons his theory of the apostolic origin of the fourth gospel. And as this has necessitated the omission or alteration of all such passages as rested upon the authority of that gospel, the book is to a considerable extent rewritten, and the changes are such as greatly to increase its value as a history of Jesus. Nevertheless, the author has so long been in the habit of shaping his conceptions of the career of Jesus by the aid of the fourth gospel, that it has become very difficult for him to pass freely to another point of view. He still clings to the hypothesis that there is an element of historic tradition contained in the book, drawn from memorial writings which had perhaps been handed down from John, and which were inaccessible to the synoptists. In a very interesting appendix, he collects the evidence in favor of this hypothesis, which indeed is not without plausibility, since there is every reason for supposing that the gospel was written at Ephesus, which a century before had been John's place of residence. But even

granting most of Renan's assumptions, it must still follow that the authority of this gospel is far inferior to that of the synoptics, and can in no case be very confidently appealed to.* The question is one of the first importance to the historian of early Christianity. In inquiring into the life of Jesus, the very first thing to do is to establish firmly in the mind the true relations of the fourth gospel to the first three. Until this has been done, no one is competent to write on the subject; and it is because he has done this so imperfectly that Renan's work is, from a critical point of view, so imperfectly successful.

The anonymous work entitled "The Jesus of History," which we have placed at the head of this article, is in every respect noteworthy as the first systematic attempt made in England to follow in the footsteps of German criticism in writing a life of Jesus. We know of no good reason why the book should be published anonymously; for as a historical essay it possesses extraordinary merit, and does great credit not only to its author, but to English scholarship and acumen. It is not, indeed, a book calculated to captivate the imagination of the reading public. Though written in a clear, forcible, and often elegant style, it possesses no such wonderful rhetorical charm as the work of Renan; and it will probably never find half-a-dozen readers where the "Vie de Jésus" has found a hundred. But the success of a book of this sort is not to be measured by its rhetorical excellence, or by its adaptation to the literary tastes of an uncritical and uninstructed public, but rather by the amount of critical sagacity which it brings to bear upon the elucidation of the many difficult and disputed points in the subject of which it treats. Measured by this standard, the "Jesus of History" must rank very high indeed. To say that it throws more light upon the career of Jesus than any work which has ever before been written in English would be very inadequate praise, since the English language has been singularly deficient in this branch of historical literature. We shall convey a more just idea of its merits if we say that it will bear comparison with anything which even Germany has produced, save only the works of Strauss, Baur, and Zeller.

The fitness of our author for the task which he has undertaken is shown at the outset by his choice of materials. In basing his conclusions almost exclusively upon the statements contained in the first gospel, he is upheld by every sound principle of criticism. The times and places at which our three synoptic gospels were written have been, through the labors of the Tübingen critics, determined almost to a certainty. Of the three, "Mark" is unquestionably the latest; with the exception of about twenty verses, it is entirely made up from "Matthew" and "Luke," the diverse Petrine and Pauline tendencies of which it strives to neutralize in conformity to the conciliatory disposition of the Church at Rome, at the epoch at which this gospel was written, about A. D. 130. The third gospel was also written at Rome, some fifteen years earlier. In the preface, its author describes

it as a compilation from previously existing written materials. Among these materials was certainly the first gospel, several passages of which are adopted word for word by the author of "Luke." Yet the narrative varies materially from that of the first gospel in many essential points. The arrangement of events is less natural, and, as in the "Acts of the Apostles" by the same author, there is apparent throughout the design of suppressing the old discord between Paul and the Judaizing disciples, and of representing Christianity as essentially Pauline from the outset. How far Paul was correct in his interpretation of the teachings of Jesus, it is difficult to decide. It is, no doubt, possible that the first gospel may have lent to the words of Jesus an Ebionite coloring in some instances; and that now and then the third gospel may present us with a truer account. To this supremely important point we shall by and by return. For the present it must suffice to observe that the evidences of an overruling dogmatic purpose are generally much more conspicuous in the third synoptist than in the first; and that the very loose manner in which this writer has handled his materials in the "Acts" is not calculated to inspire us with confidence in the historical accuracy of his gospel. The writer who, in spite of the direct testimony of Paul himself, could represent the apostle to the Gentiles as acting under the direction of the disciples at Jerusalem, and who puts Pauline sentiments into the mouth of Peter, would certainly have been capable of unwarrantably giving a Pauline turn to the teachings of Jesus himself. We are therefore, as a last resort, brought back to the first gospel, which we find to possess, as a historical narrative, far stronger claims upon our attention than the second and third. In all probability it had assumed nearly its present shape before A. D. 100; its origin is unmistakably Palestinian; it betrays comparatively few indications of dogmatic purpose; and there are strong reasons for believing that the speeches of Jesus recorded in it are in substance taken from the genuine "Logia" of Matthew mentioned by Papias, which must have been written as early as A. D. 60-70, before the destruction of Jerusalem. Indeed, we are inclined to agree with our author that the gospel, even in its present shape (save only a few interpolated passages), may have existed as early as A. D. 80, since it places the time of Jesus' second coming immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas the third evangelist, who wrote forty-five years after that event, is careful to tell us, "The end is *not* immediately." Moreover, it must have been written while the Paulo-Petrine controversy was still raging, as is shown by the parable of the "enemy who sowed the tares," which manifestly refers to Paul, and also by the allusions to "false prophets," (vii. 15,) to those who say, "Lord, Lord," and who "cast out demons in the name of the Lord," (vii. 21-23,) teaching men to break the commandments, (v. 17-20.) There is, therefore, good reason for believing that we have here a narrative written not much more than fifty

years after the death of Jesus, based partly upon the written memorials of an apostle, and in the main trustworthy, save where it relates occurrences of a marvelous and legendary character. Such is our author's conclusion, and in describing the career of the Jesus of history, he relies almost exclusively upon the statements contained in the first gospel. Let us now, after this long but inadequate introduction, give a brief sketch of the life of Jesus, as it is to be found in our author.

II.

Concerning the time and place of the birth of Jesus, we know next to nothing. According to uniform tradition, based upon a statement of the third gospel, he was about thirty years of age at the time when he began teaching. The same gospel states, with elaborate precision, that the public career of John the Baptist began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, or A. D. 28. In the winter of A. D. 35-36, Pontius Pilate was recalled from Judæa, so that the crucifixion could not have taken place later than in the spring of 35. Thus we have a period of about six years during which the ministry of Jesus must have begun and ended; and if the tradition with respect to his age be trustworthy, we shall not be far out of the way in supposing him to have been born somewhere between B. C. 5 and A. D. 5. He is everywhere alluded to in the gospels as Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee, where lived also his father, mother, brothers and sisters, and where very likely he was born. His parents' names are said to have been Joseph and Mary. His own name is a Hellenized form of Joshua, a name very common among the Jews. According to the first gospel (xiii. 55), he had four brothers,—Joseph and Simon; James, who was afterwards one of the heads of the church at Jerusalem, and the most formidable enemy of Paul; and Judas or Jude, who is perhaps the author of the anti-Pauline epistle commonly ascribed to him.

Of the early youth of Jesus, and of the circumstances which guided his intellectual development, we know absolutely nothing, nor have we the data requisite for forming any plausible hypothesis. He first appears in history about A. D. 29 or 30, in connection with a very remarkable person whom the third evangelist describes as his cousin, and who seems, from his mode of life, to have been in some way connected with or influenced by the Hellenizing sect of Essenes. Here we obtain our first clue to guide us in forming a consecutive theory of the development of Jesus' opinions. The sect of Essenes took its rise in the times of the Maccabees, about B. C. 170. Upon the fundamental doctrines of Judaism it had engrafted many Pythagorean notions, and was doubtless in the time of Jesus instrumental in spreading Greek ideas among the people of Galilee, where Judaism was far from being so narrow and rigid as at Jerusalem. The Essenes

attached but little importance to the Messianic expectations of the Pharisees, and mingled scarcely at all in national politics. They lived for the most part a strictly ascetic life, being indeed the legitimate predecessors of the early Christian hermits and monks. But while pre-eminent for sanctity of life, they heaped ridicule upon the entire sacrificial service of the Temple, despised the Pharisees as hypocrites, and insisted upon charity toward all men instead of the old Jewish exclusiveness.

It was once a favorite theory that both John the Baptist and Jesus were members of the Essenian brotherhood; but that theory is now generally abandoned. Whatever may have been the case with John, who is said to have lived like an anchorite in the desert, there seems to have been but little practical Essenism in Jesus, who is almost uniformly represented as cheerful and social in demeanor, and against whom it was expressly urged that he came eating and drinking, making no pretence of puritanical holiness. He was neither a puritan, like the Essenes, nor a ritualist, like the Pharisees. Besides which, both John and Jesus seem to have begun their careers by preaching the un-Essene doctrine of the speedy advent of the "kingdom of heaven," by which is meant the reign of the Messiah upon the earth. Nevertheless, though we cannot regard Jesus as actually a member of the Essenian community or sect, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that he, as well as John the Baptist, had been at some time strongly influenced by Essenian doctrines. The spiritualized conception of the "kingdom of heaven" proclaimed by him was just what would naturally and logically arise from a remodeling of the Messianic theories of the Pharisees in conformity to advanced Essenian notions. It seems highly probable that some such refined conception of the functions of the Messiah was reached by John, who, stigmatizing the Pharisees and Sadducees as a "generation of vipers," called aloud to the people to repent of their sins, in view of the speedy advent of the Messiah, and to testify to their repentance by submitting to the Essenian rite of baptism. There is no positive evidence that Jesus was ever a disciple of John; yet the account of the baptism, in spite of the legendary character of its details, seems to rest upon a historical basis; and perhaps the most plausible hypothesis which can be framed is, that Jesus received baptism at John's hands, became for a while his disciple, and acquired from him a knowledge of Essenian doctrines.

The career of John seems to have been very brief. His stern puritanism brought him soon into disgrace with the government of Galilee. He was seized by Herod, thrown into prison, and beheaded. After the brief hints given as to the intercourse between Jesus and John, we next hear of Jesus alone in the desert, where, like Sakyamuni and Mohammed, he may have brooded in solitude over his great project. Yet we do not find that he had as yet formed any distinct conception of his own Messiahship. The total neglect of chronology by our authorities

renders it impossible to trace the development of his thoughts step by step; but for some time after John's catastrophe we find him calling upon the people to repent, in view of the speedy approach of the Messiah, speaking with great and commanding personal authority, but using no language which would indicate that he was striving to do more than worthily fill the place and add to the good work of his late master. The Sermon on the Mount, which the first gospel inserts in this place, was probably never spoken as a continuous discourse; but it no doubt for the most part contains the very words of Jesus, and represents the general spirit of his teaching during this earlier portion of his career. In this is contained nearly all that has made Christianity so powerful in the domain of ethics. If all the rest of the gospel were taken away, or destroyed in the night of some future barbarian invasion, we should still here possess the secret of the wonderful impression which Jesus made upon those who heard him speak. Added to the Essenian scorn of Pharisaic formalism, and the spiritualized conception of the Messianic Kingdom, which Jesus may probably have shared with John the Baptist, we have here for the first time the distinctively Christian conception of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, which ultimately insured the success of the new religion. The special point of originality in Jesus was his conception of Deity. As Strauss well says, "he conceived of God, in a moral point of view, as being identical in character with himself in the most exalted moments of his religious life, and strengthened in turn his own religious life by this ideal. But the most exalted religious tendency in his own consciousness was exactly that comprehensive love, overpowering the evil only by the good, and which he therefore transferred to God as the fundamental tendency of His nature." From this conception of God, observes Zeller, flowed naturally all the moral teaching of Jesus; the insistence upon spiritual righteousness instead of the mere mechanical observance of Mosaic precepts; the call to be perfect even as the Father is perfect; the principle of the spiritual equality of men before God and the equal duties of all men toward each other.

How far, in addition to these vitally important lessons, Jesus may have taught doctrines of an ephemeral or visionary character, it is very difficult to decide. We are inclined to regard the third gospel as of some importance in settling this point. The author of that gospel represents Jesus as decidedly hostile to the rich. Where Matthew has "Blessed are the poor in spirit," Luke has "Blessed are ye poor." In the first gospel we read, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled;" but in the third gospel we find, "Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye will be filled;" and this assurance is immediately followed by the denunciation, "Woe to you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation! Woe to you that are full now, for ye will hunger." The parable of Dives and Lazarus illustrates concretely this view of the case, which is still further corroborated

by the account, given in both the first and the third gospels, of the young man who came to seek everlasting life. Jesus here maintains that righteousness is insufficient unless voluntary poverty be super-added. Though the young man has strictly fulfilled the greatest of the commandments—to love his neighbor as himself—he is required, as a needful proof of his sincerity, to distribute all his vast possessions among the poor. And when he naturally manifests a reluctance to perform so superfluous a sacrifice, Jesus observes that it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to share in the glories of the anticipated Messianic kingdom. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that we have here a very primitive and probably authentic tradition; and when we remember the importance which, according to the "Acts," the earliest disciples attached to the principle of communism, as illustrated in the legend of Ananias and Sapphira, we must admit strong reasons for believing that Jesus himself held views which tended toward the abolition of private property. On this point, the testimony of the third evangelist singly is of considerable weight; since at the time when he wrote, the communistic theories of the first generation of Christians had been generally abandoned, and in the absence of any dogmatic motives, he could only have inserted these particular traditions because he believed them to possess historical value. But we are not dependent on the third gospel alone. The story just cited is attested by both our authorities, and is in perfect keeping with the general views of Jesus as reported by the first evangelist. Thus his disciples are enjoined to leave all, and follow him; to take no thought for the morrow; to think no more of laying up treasures on the earth, for in the Messianic kingdom they shall have treasures in abundance, which can neither be wasted nor stolen. On making their journeys, they are to provide neither money, nor clothes, nor food, but are to live at the expense of those whom they visit; and if any town refuse to harbor them, the Messiah, on his arrival, will deal with that town more severely than Jehovah dealt with the cities of the plain. Indeed, since the end of the world was to come before the end of the generation then living (Matt. xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 51-56; vii, 29), there could be no need for acquiring property or making arrangements for the future; even marriage became unnecessary. These teachings of Jesus have a marked Essenian character, as well as his declaration that in the Messianic kingdom there was to be no more marriage, perhaps no distinction of sex (Matt. xxii. 30). The sect of Ebionites, who represented the earliest doctrine and practice of Christianity before it had been modified by Paul, differed from the Essenes in no essential respect save in the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, and the expectation of his speedy return to the earth.

How long, or with what success, Jesus continued to preach the coming of the Messiah in Galilee, it is impossible to conjecture. His fellow-townsmen of Nazareth appear to have ridiculed him in his pro-

phetical capacity; or, if we may trust the third evangelist, to have arisen against him with indignation, and made an attempt upon his life. To them he was but a carpenter, the son of a carpenter (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3), who told them disagreeable truths. Our author represents his teaching in Galilee to have produced but little result, but the gospel narratives afford no definite data for deciding this point. We believe the most probable conclusion to be that Jesus did attract many followers, and became famous throughout Galilee; for Herod is said to have regarded him as John the Baptist risen from the grave. To escape the malice of Herod, Jesus then retired to Syro-Phœnicia, and during this eventful journey, the consciousness of his own Messiahship seems for the first time to have distinctly dawned upon him (Matt. xiv. 1, 13; xv. 21; xvi. 13-20). Already, it appears, speculations were rife as to the character of this wonderful preacher. Some thought he was John the Baptist, or perhaps one of the prophets of the Assyrian period returned to the earth. Some, in accordance with a generally-received tradition, supposed him to be Elijah, who had never seen death, and had now at last returned from the regions above the firmament to announce the coming of the Messiah in the clouds. It was generally admitted, among enthusiastic hearers, that he who spake as never man spake before must have some divine commission to execute. These speculations, coming to the ears of Jesus during his preaching in Galilee, could not fail to excite in him a train of self-conscious reflections. To him also must have been presented the query as to his own proper character and functions; and, as our author acutely demonstrates, his only choice lay between a profitless life of exile in Syro-Phœnicia, and a bold return to Jewish territory in some pronounced character. The problem being thus propounded, there could hardly be a doubt as to what that character should be. Jesus knew well that he was not John the Baptist; nor, however completely he may have been dominated by his sublime enthusiasm, was it likely that he could mistake himself for an ancient prophet arisen from the lower world of shades, or for Elijah descended from the sky. But the Messiah himself he might well be. Such indeed was the almost inevitable corollary from his own conception of Messiahship. We have seen that he had, probably from the very outset, discarded the traditional notion of a political Messiah, and recognized the truth that the happiness of a people lies not so much in political autonomy as in the love of God and the sincere practice of righteousness. The people were to be freed from the bondage of sin, of meaningless formalism, of consecrated hypocrisy,—a bondage more degrading than the payment of tribute to the emperor. The true business of the Messiah, then, was to deliver his people from the former bondage; it might be left to Jehovah, in his own good time, to deliver them from the latter. Holding these views, it was hardly possible that it should not sooner or later occur to Jesus that he himself was the person destined to discharge this glorious

function, to liberate his countrymen from the thralldom of Pharisaic ritualism, and to inaugurate the real Messianic kingdom of spiritual righteousness. Had he not already preached the advent of this spiritual kingdom, and been instrumental in raising many to loftier conceptions of duty, and to a higher and purer life? And might he not now, by a grand attack upon Pharisaism in its central stronghold, destroy its prestige in the eyes of the people, and cause Israel to adopt a nobler religious and ethical doctrine? The temerity of such a purpose detracts nothing from its sublimity. And if that purpose should be accomplished, Jesus would really have performed the legitimate work of the Messiah. Thus, from his own point of view, Jesus was thoroughly consistent and rational in announcing himself as the expected Deliverer; and in the eyes of the impartial historian his course is fully justified.

“From that time,” says the first evangelist, “Jesus began to show to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death, and rise again on the third day.” Here we have, obviously, the knowledge of the writer, after the event, reflected back and attributed to Jesus. It is of course impossible that Jesus should have predicted with such definiteness his approaching death; nor is it very likely that he entertained any hope of being raised from the grave “on the third day.” To a man in that age and country, the conception of a return from the lower world of shades was not a difficult one to frame; and it may well be that Jesus’ sense of his own exalted position was sufficiently great to inspire him with the confidence that, even in case of temporary failure, Jehovah would rescue him from the grave and send him back with larger powers to carry out the purpose of his mission. But the difficulty of distinguishing between his own words and the interpretation put upon them by his disciples becomes here insuperable; and there will always be room for the hypothesis that Jesus had in view no posthumous career of his own, but only expressed his unshaken confidence in the success of his enterprise, even after and in spite of his death.

At all events, the possibility of his death must now have been often in his mind. He was undertaking a well-nigh desperate task,—to overthrow the Pharisees in Jerusalem itself. No other alternative was left him. And here we believe Mr. F. W. Newman to be singularly at fault in pronouncing this attempt of Jesus upon Jerusalem a “foolhardy” attempt. According to Mr. Newman, no man has any business to rush upon certain death, and it is only a crazy fanatic who will do so. But such “glittering generalizations” will here help us but little. The historic data show that to go to Jerusalem, even at the risk of death, was absolutely necessary to the realization of Jesus’ Messianic project. Mr. Newman certainly would not have had him drag out an inglorious and baffled existence in Syro-Phœnicia. If the

Messianic kingdom was to be fairly inaugurated, there was work to be done in Jerusalem, and Jesus must go there as one in authority, cost what it might. We believe him to have gone there in a spirit of grand and careless bravery, yet seriously and soberly and under the influence of no fanatical delusion. He knew the risks, but deliberately chose to incur them, that the will of Jehovah might be accomplished.

We next hear of Jesus traveling down to Jerusalem by way of Jericho, and entering the sacred city in his character of Messiah, attended by a great multitude. It was near the time of the Passover, when people from all parts of Galilee and Judæa were sure to be at Jerusalem, and the nature of his reception seems to indicate that he had already secured a considerable number of followers upon whose assistance he might hope to rely, though it nowhere appears that he intended to use other than purely moral weapons to insure a favorable reception. We must remember that for half a century many of the Jewish people had been constantly looking for the arrival of the Messiah, and there can be little doubt that the entry of Jesus riding upon an ass in literal fulfilment of prophecy must have wrought powerfully upon the imagination of the multitude. That the believers in him were very numerous must be inferred from the cautious, not to say timid, behavior of the rulers at Jerusalem, who are represented as desiring to arrest him, but as deterred from taking active steps through fear of the people. We are led to the same conclusion by his driving the money-changers out of the temple; an act upon which he could hardly have ventured, had not the popular enthusiasm in his favor been for the moment overwhelming. But the enthusiasm of a mob is short-lived, and needs to be fed upon the excitement of brilliant and dramatically arranged events. The calm preacher of righteousness, or even the fiery denouncer of the scribes and Pharisees, could not hope to retain undiminished authority save by the display of extraordinary powers to which, so far as we know, Jesus (like Mohammed) made no pretence. (Matt. xvi. 1-4.) The ignorant and materialistic populace could not understand the exalted conception of Messiahship which had been formed by Jesus, and as day after day elapsed without the appearance of any marvelous sign from Jehovah, their enthusiasm must naturally have cooled down. Then the Pharisees appear cautiously endeavoring to entrap him into admissions which might render him obnoxious to the Roman governor. He saw through their design, however, and foiled them by the magnificent repartee, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Nothing could more forcibly illustrate the completely non-political character of his Messianic doctrines. Nevertheless, we are told that, failing in this attempt, the chief priests suborned false witnesses to testify against him: this sabbath-breaker, this derider of Mosaic formalism, who with his Messianic pretensions excited the people against their hereditary teachers, must at all events be put out

of the way. Jesus must suffer the fate which society has too often had in store for the reformer; the fate which Socrates and Savonarola, Vanini and Bruno have suffered for being wiser than their own generation. Messianic adventurers had already given much trouble to the Roman authorities, who were not likely to scrutinize critically the peculiar claims of Jesus. And when the chief priests accused him before Pilate of professing to be "King of the Jews," this claim could in Roman apprehension bear but one interpretation. The offence was treason, punishable, save in the case of Roman citizens, by crucifixion.

Such in its main outlines is the historic career of Jesus, as constructed by our author from data furnished chiefly by the first gospel. Connected with the narrative there are many interesting topics of discussion, of which our rapidly diminishing space will allow us to select only one for comment. That one is perhaps the most important of all, namely, the question as to how far Jesus anticipated the views of Paul in admitting Gentiles to share in the privileges of the Messianic kingdom. Our author argues, with much force, that the designs of Jesus were entirely confined to the Jewish people, and that it was Paul who first, by admitting Gentiles to the Christian fold without requiring them to live like Jews, gave to Christianity the character of a universal religion. Our author reminds us that the third gospel is not to be depended upon in determining this point, since it manifestly puts Pauline sentiments into the mouth of Jesus, and in particular attributes to Jesus an acquaintance with heretical Samaria which the first gospel disclaims. He argues that the apostles were in every respect Jews, save in their belief that Jesus was the Messiah; and he pertinently asks, if James, who was the brother of Jesus, and Peter and John, who were his nearest friends, unanimously opposed Paul and stigmatized him as a liar and heretic, is it at all likely that Jesus had ever distinctly sanctioned such views as Paul maintained?

In the course of many years' reflection upon this point, we have several times been inclined to accept the narrow interpretation of Jesus' teaching here indicated; yet, on the whole, we do not believe it can ever be conclusively established. In the first place it must be remembered that if the third gospel throws a Pauline coloring over the events which it describes, the first gospel also shows a decidedly anti-Pauline bias, and the one party was as likely as the other to attribute its own views to Jesus himself. One striking instance of this tendency has been pointed out by Strauss, who has shown that the verses Matt. v. 17-20, are an interpolation. The person who teaches men to break the commandments is undoubtedly Paul, and in order to furnish a text against Paul's followers, the "Nicolaitans," Jesus is made to declare that he came not to destroy one tittle of the law, but to fulfil the whole in every particular. Such an utterance is in manifest contradiction to the spirit of Jesus' teaching, as shown in the very same chapter, and throughout a great part of the same gospel. He who taught in

his own name and not as the scribes, who proclaimed himself Lord over the Sabbath, and who manifested from first to last a more than Essenian contempt for rites and ceremonies, did not come to fulfil the law of Mosaism, but to supersede it. Nor can any inference adverse to this conclusion be drawn from the injunction to the disciples, (Matt. x. 5-7,) not to preach to Gentiles and Samaritans, but only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" for this remark is placed before the beginning of Jesus' Messianic career, and the reason assigned for the restriction is merely that the disciples will not have time even to preach to all the Jews before the coming of the Messiah, whose approach Jesus was announcing. (Matt. x. 23.)

These examples show that we must use caution in weighing the testimony even of the first gospel, and must not too hastily cite it as proof that Jesus supposed his mission to be restricted to the Jews. When we come to consider what happened a few years after the death of Jesus, we shall be still less ready to insist upon the view defended by our anonymous author. Paul, according to his own confession, persecuted the Christians unto death. Now what, in the theories or in the practice of the Jewish disciples of Jesus, could have moved Paul to such fanatic behavior? Certainly not their spiritual interpretation of Mosaism, for Paul himself belonged to the liberal school of Gamaliel, to the views of which the teachings and practices of Peter, James and John might easily be accommodated. Probably not their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, for at the riot in which Stephen was murdered and all the Hellenist disciples driven from Jerusalem, the Jewish disciples were allowed to remain in the city unmolested. (See Acts viii. 1, 14.) This marked difference of treatment indicates that Paul regarded Stephen and his friends as decidedly more heretical and obnoxious than Peter, James and John, whom, indeed, Paul's own master Gamaliel had recently (Acts v. 34) defended before the council. And this influence is fully confirmed by the account of Stephen's death, where his murderers charge him with maintaining that Jesus had founded a new religion which was destined entirely to supersede and replace Judaism. (Acts vi. 14.) The Petrine disciples never held this view of the mission of Jesus; and to this difference it is undoubtedly owing that Paul and his companions forbore to disturb them. It would thus appear that even previous to Paul's conversion, within five or six years after the death of Jesus, there was a prominent party among the disciples which held that the new religion was not a modification but an abrogation of Judaism; and their name "Hellenists" sufficiently shows either that there were Gentiles among them or that they held fellowship with Gentiles. It was this which aroused Paul to persecution, and upon his sudden conversion it was with these Hellenistic doctrines that he fraternized, taking little heed of the Petrine disciples (Galatians i. 15), who were hardly more than a Jewish sect.

Now the existence of these Hellenists at Jerusalem so soon after the death of Jesus is clear proof that he had never distinctly and irrevocably pronounced against the admission of Gentiles to the Messianic kingdom, and it makes it very probable that the downfall of Mosaism as a result of his preaching was by no means unpremeditated. While, on the other hand, the obstinacy of the Petrine party in adhering to Jewish customs shows equally that Jesus could not have unequivocally committed himself in favor of a new gospel for the Gentiles. Probably Jesus was seldom brought into direct contact with others than Jews, so that the questions concerning the admission of Gentile converts did not come up during his lifetime; and thus the way was left open for the controversy which soon broke out between the Petrine party and Paul. Nevertheless, though Jesus may never have definitely pronounced upon this point, it will hardly be denied that his teaching, even as reported in the first gospel, is in its utter condemnation of formalism far more closely allied to the Pauline than to the Petrine doctrines. In his hands Mosaism became spiritualized until it really lost its identity, and was transformed into a code fit for the whole Roman world. And we do not doubt that if any one had asked Jesus whether circumcision were an essential prerequisite for admission to the Messianic kingdom, he would have given the same answer which Paul afterwards gave. We agree with Zeller and Strauss that, "as Luther was a more liberal spirit than the Lutheran divines of the succeeding generation, and Socrates a more profound thinker than Xenophon or Antisthenes, so also Jesus must be credited with having raised himself far higher above the narrow prejudices of his nation than those of his disciples who could scarcely understand the spread of Christianity among the heathen when it had become an accomplished fact."

THE JESUS OF DOGMA.*

THE meagerness of our information concerning the historic career of Jesus stands in striking contrast to the mass of information which lies within our reach concerning the primitive character of Christologic speculation. First we have the epistles of Paul, written from twenty to thirty years after the crucifixion, which, although they tell us next to nothing about

* SAINT-PAUL, par Ernest Renan. Paris, 1869. (English translation. New York: Carleton, 1869.)

HISTOIRE DU DOGME DE LA DIVINITÉ DE JESUS-CHRIST, par Albert Réville. Paris, 1869.

THE END OF THE WORLD AND THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. Two Discourses by the Rev. W. R. Alger. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1870.

what Jesus did, nevertheless give us very plain information as to the impression which he made. Then we have the Apocalypse, written by John, A. D. 68, which exhibits the Messianic theory entertained by the earliest disciples. Next we have the epistles to the Hebrews, Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians, besides the four gospels, constituting altogether a connected chain of testimony to the progress of Christian doctrine from the destruction of Jerusalem to the time of the quartodeciman controversy (A. D. 70-170). Finally, there is the vast collection of apocryphal, heretical, and patristic literature, from the writings of Justin Martin, the pseudo-Clement, and the pseudo-Ignatius, down to the time of the Council of Nikaia, when the official theories of Christ's person assumed very nearly the shape which they have retained, within the orthodox churches of Christendom, down to the present day. As we pointed out in "The Jesus of History," while all this voluminous literature throws but an uncertain light upon the life and teachings of the founder of Christianity, it nevertheless furnishes nearly all the data which we could desire for knowing what the early Christians thought of the master of their faith. Having given a brief account of the historic career of Jesus, so far as it can now be determined, we propose here to sketch the rise and progress of Christologic doctrine, in its most striking features, during the first three centuries. Beginning with the apostolic view of the human Messiah sent to deliver Judaism from its spiritual torpor, and prepare it for the millennial kingdom, we shall briefly trace the progressive metamorphosis of this conception until it completely loses its identity in the Athanasian theory, according to which Jesus was God himself, the creator of the universe, incarnate in human flesh.

The earliest dogma held by the apostles concerning Jesus was that of his resurrection from the grave after death. It was not only the earliest, but the most essential to the success of the new religion. Christianity might have overspread the Roman Empire, and maintained its hold upon men's faith until to-day, without the dogmas of the incarnation and the Trinity; but without the dogma of the resurrection it would probably have failed at the very outset. Its lofty morality would not alone have sufficed to insure its success. For what men needed then, as indeed they still need, and will always need, was not merely a rule of life and a mirror to the heart, but also a comprehensive and satisfactory theory of things, a philosophy or theosophy. The times demanded intellectual as well as moral consolation; and the disintegration of ancient theologies needed to be repaired, that the new ethical impulse imparted by Christianity might rest upon a plausible speculative basis. The doctrine of the resurrection was but the beginning of a series of speculative innovations which prepared the way for the new religion to emancipate itself from Judaism, and achieve the conquest of the Empire. Even the faith of the apostles in the speedy return of their master the Messiah must have somewhat lost ground,

had it not been supported by their belief in his resurrection from the grave and his consequent transfer from Sheol, the gloomy land of shadows, to the regions above the sky.

The origin of the dogma of the resurrection cannot be determined with certainty. The question has, during the past century, been the subject of much discussion, upon which it is not necessary for us here to comment. Such apparent evidence as there is in favor of the old theory of Jesus' natural recovery from the effects of the crucifixion, may be found in Salvador's "Jesus-Christ et sa Doctrine;" but, as Zeller has shown, the theory is utterly unsatisfactory. The natural return of Jesus to his disciples never could have given rise to the notion of his resurrection, since the natural explanation would have been the more obvious one; besides which, if we were to adopt this hypothesis, we should be obliged to account for the fact that the historic career of Jesus ends with the crucifixion. The most probable explanation, on the whole, is the one suggested by the accounts in the gospels, that the dogma of the resurrection is due originally to the excited imagination of Mary of Magdala. The testimony of Paul may also be cited in favor of this view, since he always alludes to earlier Christophanies in just the same language which he uses in describing his own vision on the road to Damascus.

But the question as to how the belief in the resurrection of Jesus originated is of less importance than the question as to how it should have produced the effect that it did. The dogma of the resurrection has, until recent times, been so rarely treated from the historical point of view, that the student of history at firsts finds some difficulty in thoroughly realizing its import to the minds of those who first proclaimed it. We cannot hope to understand it without bearing in mind the theories of the Jews and early Christians concerning the structure of the world and the cosmic location of departed souls. Since the time of Copernicus modern Christians no longer attempt to locate heaven and hell; they are conceived merely as mysterious places remote from the earth. The theological universe no longer corresponds to that which physical science presents for our contemplation. It was quite different with the Jew. His conception of the abode of Jehovah and the angels, and of departed souls, was exceedingly simple and definite. In the Jewish theory the universe is like a sort of three-story house. The flat earth rests upon the waters, and under the earth's surface is the land of graves, called Sheol, where after death the souls of all men go, the righteous as well as the wicked, for the Jew had not arrived at the doctrine of heaven and hell. The Hebrew Sheol corresponds strictly to the Greek Hades, before the notions of Elysium and Tartarus were added to it,—a land peopled with flitting shadows, suffering no torment, but experiencing no pleasure, like those whom Dante met in one of the upper circles of his Inferno. Sheol is the first story of the cosmic house; the earth is the second. Above the earth is

the firmament or sky, which, according to the book of Genesis (chap. i. v. 6, Hebrew text), is a vast plate hammered out by the gods, and supports a great ocean like that upon which the earth rests. Rain is caused by the opening of little windows or trap-doors in the firmament, through which pours the water of this upper ocean. Upon this water rests the land of heaven, where Jehovah reigns, surrounded by hosts of angels. To this blessed land two only of the human race had ever been admitted,—Enoch and Elijah, the latter of whom had ascended in a chariot of fire, and was destined to return to earth as the herald and forerunner of the Messiah. Heaven forms the third story of the cosmic house. Between the firmament and the earth is the air, which is the habitation of evil demons ruled by Satan, the “prince of the powers of the air.”

Such was the cosmology of the ancient Jew ; and his theology was equally simple. Sheol was the destined abode of all men after death, and no theory of moral retribution was attached to the conception. The rewards and punishments known to the authors of the Pentateuch and the early Psalms are all earthly rewards and punishments. But in course of time the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortunes of the good man furnished a troublesome problem for the Jewish thinker ; and after the Babylonish Captivity, we find the doctrine of a resurrection from Sheol devised in order to meet this case. According to this doctrine—which was borrowed from the Zarathustrian theology of Persia—the Messiah on his arrival was to free from Sheol all the souls of the righteous, causing them to ascend reinvested in their bodies to a renewed and beautiful earth, while on the other hand the wicked were to be punished with tortures like those of the valley of Hinnom, or were to be immersed in liquid brimstone, like that which had rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Here we get the first announcement of a future state of retribution. The doctrine was peculiarly Pharisaic, and the Sadducees, who were strict adherents to the letter of Mosaism, rejected it to the last. By degrees this doctrine became coupled with the Messianic theories of the Pharisees. The loss of Jewish independence under the dominion of Persians, Macedonians and Romans, caused the people to look over more earnestly toward the expected time when the Messiah should appear in Jerusalem to deliver them from their oppressors. The moral doctrines of the Psalms and earlier prophets assumed an increasingly political aspect. The Jews were the righteous “under a cloud,” whose sufferings were symbolically depicted by the younger Isaiah as the afflictions of the “servant of Jehovah ;” while on the other hand, the “wicked” were the Gentile oppressors of the holy people. Accordingly the Messiah, on his arrival, was to sit in judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat, rectifying the wrongs of his chosen ones, condemning the Gentile tyrants to the torments of Gehenna, and raising from Sheol all those Jews who had lived and died during the evil times before his coming. These were to find in the Messianic

kingdom the compensation for the ills which they had suffered in their first earthly existence. Such are the main outlines of the theory found in the Book of Enoch, written about B. C. 100, and it is adopted in the Johannine Apocalypse, with little variation, save in the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, and in the transference to his second coming of all these wonderful proceedings. The manner of the Messiah's coming had been variously imagined. According to an earlier view, he was to enter Jerusalem as a King of the house of David, and therefore of human lineage. According to a later view, presented in the Book of Daniel, he was to descend from the sky, and appear among the clouds. Both these views were adopted by the disciples of Jesus, who harmonized them by referring the one to his first and the other to his second appearance.

Now to the imaginations of these earliest disciples the belief in the resurrection of Jesus presented itself as a needful guarantee of his Messiahship. Their faith, which must have been shaken by his execution and descent into Sheol, received welcome confirmation by the springing up of the belief that he had been again seen upon the face of the earth. Applying the imagery of Daniel, it became a logical conclusion that he must have ascended into the sky, whence he might shortly be expected to make his appearance, to enact the scenes foretold in prophecy. That such was the actual process of inference is shown by the legend of the Ascension in the first chapter of the "Acts," and especially by the words, "This Jesus who hath been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same manner in which ye beheld him going into heaven." In the Apocalypse, written A. D. 68, just after the death of Nero, this second coming is described as something immediately to happen, and the colors in which it is depicted show how closely allied were the Johannine notions to those of the Pharisees. The glories of the New Jerusalem are to be reserved for Jews, while for the Roman tyrants of Judæa is reserved a fearful retribution. They are to be trodden under-foot by the Messiah, like grapes in a wine-press, until the gushing blood shall rise to the height of the horse's bridle.

In the writings of Paul, the dogma of the resurrection assumes a very different aspect. Though Paul, like the older apostles, held that Jesus, as the Messiah, was to return to the earth within a few years, yet to his catholic mind this anticipated event had become divested of its narrow Jewish significance. In the eyes of Paul, the religion preached by Jesus was an abrogation of Mosaism, and the truths contained in it were a free gift to the Gentile as well as to the Jewish world. According to Paul, death came into the world as a punishment for the sin of Adam. By this he meant that, had it not been for the original transgression, all men escaping death would either have remained upon earth or have been conveyed to heaven, like Enoch and Elijah, in incorruptible bodies. But in reality as a penance for disobedience, all

men, with these two exceptions, had suffered death, and been exiled to the gloomy caverns of Sheol. The Mosaic ritual was powerless to free men from this repulsive doom, but it had nevertheless served a good purpose in keeping men's minds directed toward holiness, preparing them, as a schoolmaster would prepare his pupils, to receive the vitalizing truths of Christ. Now, at last, the Messiah or Christ had come as a second Adam, and being without sin had been raised by Jehovah out of Sheol and taken up into heaven, as testimony to men that the power of sin and death was at last defeated. The way henceforth to avoid death and escape the exile to Sheol was to live spiritually like Jesus, and with him to be dead to sensual requirements. Faith, in Paul's apprehension, was not an intellectual assent to definitely prescribed dogmas, but, as Matthew Arnold has well pointed out, it was an emotional striving after righteousness, a developing consciousness of God in the soul, such as Jesus had possessed, or in Paul's phraseology, a subjugation of the flesh by the spirit. All those who should thus seek spiritual perfection should escape the original curse. The Messiah was destined to return to the earth to establish the reign of spiritual holiness, probably during Paul's own lifetime. (1 Cor. xv. 51.) Then the true followers of Jesus should be clothed in ethereal bodies, free from the imperfections of "the flesh," and should ascend to heaven without suffering death, while the righteous dead should at the same time be released from Sheol, even as Jesus himself had been released.

To the doctrine of the resurrection, in which ethical and speculative elements are thus happily blended by Paul, the new religion doubtless owed in great part its rapid success. Into an account of the causes which favored the spreading of Christianity, it is not our purpose to enter at present. But we may note that the local religions of the ancient pagan world had partly destroyed each other by mutual intermingling, and had lost their hold upon people from the circumstance that their ethical teaching no longer corresponded to the advanced ethical feeling of the age. Polytheism, in short, was outgrown. It was outgrown both intellectually and morally. People were ceasing to believe in its doctrines, and were ceasing to respect its precepts. The learned were taking refuge in philosophy, the ignorant in mystical superstitions imported from Asia. The commanding ethical motive of ancient republican times had been patriotism—devotion to the interests of the community. But Roman dominion had destroyed patriotism as a guiding principle of life, and thus in every way the minds of men were left in a sceptical, unsatisfied state,—craving after a new theory of life, and craving after a new stimulus to right action. Obviously the only theology which could now be satisfactory to philosophy or to common-sense was some form of monotheism;—some system of doctrines which should represent all men as spiritually subjected to the will of a single God, just as they were subjected to the temporal authority of the Em-

peror. And similarly the only system of ethics which could have a chance of prevailing must be some system which should clearly prescribe the mutual duties of all men without distinction of race or locality. Thus the spiritual morality of Jesus, and his conception of God as a father and of all men as brothers, appeared at once to meet the ethical and speculative demands of the time.

Yet whatever effect these teachings might have produced, if unaided by further doctrinal elaboration, was enhanced myriadfold by the elaboration which they received at the hands of Paul. Philosophic Stoics and Epicureans had arrived at the conception of the brotherhood of men, and the Greek hymn of Kleanthes had exhibited a deep spiritual sense of the fatherhood of God. The originality of Christianity lay not so much in its enunciation of new ethical precepts as in the fact that it furnished a new ethical sanction—a commanding incentive to holiness of living. That it might accomplish this result, it was absolutely necessary that it should begin by discarding both the ritualism and the narrow theories of Judaism. The mere desire for a monotheistic creed had led many pagans, in Paul's time, to embrace Judaism, in spite of its requirements, which to Romans and Greeks were meaningless, and often disgusting; but such conversions could never have been numerous. Judaism could never have conquered the Roman world; nor is it likely that the Judaical Christianity of Peter, James, and John would have been any more successful. The doctrine of the resurrection, in particular, was not likely to prove attractive when accompanied by the picture of the Messiah treading the Gentiles in the wine-press of his righteous indignation. But here Paul showed his profound originality: The condemnation of Jewish formalism which Jesus had pronounced, Paul turned against the older apostles, who insisted upon circumcision. With marvelous flexibility of mind, Paul placed circumcision and the Mosaic injunctions about meats upon a level with the ritual observances of pagan nations, allowing each feeble brother to perform such works as might tickle his fancy, but bidding all take heed that salvation was not to be obtained after any such mechanical method, but only by devoting the whole soul to righteousness, after the example of Jesus.

This was the negative part of Paul's work. This was the knocking down of the barriers which had kept men, and would always have kept them, from entering into the kingdom of heaven. But the positive part of Paul's work is contained in his theory of the salvation of men from death through the second Adam, whom Jehovah rescued from Sheol for his sinlessness. The resurrection of Jesus was the visible token of the escape from death which might be achieved by all men who, with God's aid, should succeed in freeing themselves from the burden of sin which had encumbered all the children of Adam. The end of the world was at hand, and they who would live with Christ must figuratively die with Christ—must become dead to sin. Thus to

the pure and spiritual ethics contained in the teachings of Jesus, Paul added an incalculably powerful incentive to right action, and a theory of life calculated to satisfy the speculative necessities of the pagan or Gentile world. To the educated and sceptical Athenian, as to the critical scholar of modern times, the physical resurrection of Jesus from the grave, and his ascent through the vaulted floor of heaven, might seem foolishness or naïveté. But to the average Greek or Roman the conception presented no serious difficulty. The cosmical theories upon which the conception was founded were essentially the same among Jews and Gentiles, and indeed were but little modified until the establishment of the Copernican astronomy. The doctrine of the Messiah's second coming was also received without opposition, and for about a century men lived in continual anticipation of that event, until hope long deferred produced its usual results; the writings in which that event was predicted were gradually explained away, ignored, or stigmatized as uncanonical; and the Church ended by condemning as a heresy the very doctrine which Paul and the Judaizing apostles, who agreed in little else, had alike made the basis of their speculative teachings. Nevertheless, by the dint of allegorical interpretation, the belief has maintained an obscure existence even down to the present time; the Antiochus of the Book of Daniel and the Nero of the Apocalypse having given place to the Roman Pontiff or to the Emperor of the French.

But as the millenarism of the primitive Church gradually died out during the second century, the essential principles involved in it lost none of their hold on men's minds. As the generation contemporary with Paul died away and was gathered into Sheol, it became apparent that the original theory must be somewhat modified, and to this question the author of the second epistle to the Thessalonians addresses himself. Instead of literal preservation from death, the doctrine of a resurrection from the grave was gradually extended to the case of the new believers, who were to share in the same glorious revival with the righteous of ancient times. And thus by slow degrees the victory over death, of which the resurrection of Jesus was a symbol and a witness, became metamorphosed into the comparatively modern doctrine of the rest of the saints in heaven, while the banishment of the unrighteous to Sheol was made still more dreadful by coupling with the vague conception of a gloomy subterranean cavern the horrible imagery of the lake of fire and brimstone borrowed from the apocalyptic descriptions of Gehenna. But in this modification of the original theory, the fundamental idea of a future state of retribution was only the more distinctly emphasized; although, in course of time, the original incentive to righteousness supplied by Paul was more and more subordinated to the comparatively degrading incentive involved in the fear of damnation. There can hardly be a doubt that the definiteness and vividness of the Pauline theory of a future life contributed very largely to the

rapid spread of the Christian religion; nor can it be doubted that to the desire to be holy like Jesus, in order to escape death and live with Jesus, is due the elevating ethical influence which, even in the worst times of ecclesiastic degeneracy, Christianity has never failed to exert. Doubtless, as Lessing long ago observed, the notion of future reward and punishment needs to be eliminated in order that the incentive to holiness may be a perfectly pure one. The highest virtue is that which takes no thought of reward or punishment; but for a conception of this sort the mind of antiquity was not ready, nor is the average mind of to-day yet ready; and the sudden or premature dissolution of the Christian theory—which is fortunately impossible—would no doubt entail a moral retrogradation.

The above is by no means intended as a complete account of the religious philosophy of Paul. We have aimed only at a clear definition of the character and scope of the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, at the time when it was first elaborated. We have now to notice the influence of that doctrine upon the development of Christologic speculation.

In neither of the four genuine epistles of Paul is Jesus described as superhuman, or as differing in nature from other men, save in his freedom from sin. As Baur has shown, "the proper nature of the Pauline Christ is human. He is a man, but a spiritual man, one in whom spirit or *pneuma* was the essential principle, so that he was spirit as well as man. The principle of an ideal humanity existed before Christ in the bright form of a typical man, but was manifested to mankind in the person of Christ." Such, according to Baur, is Paul's interpretation of the Messianic idea. Paul knows nothing of the miracles, of the supernatural conception, of the incarnation, or of the Logos. The Christ whom he preaches is the man Jesus, the founder of a new and spiritual order of humanity, as Adam was the father of humanity after the flesh. The resurrection is uniformly described by him as a manifestation of the power of Jehovah, not of Jesus himself. The later conception of Christ bursting the barred gates of Sheol, and arising by his own might to heaven, finds no warrant in the expressions of Paul. Indeed it was essential to Paul's theory of the Messiah as a new Adam, that he should be human and not divine; for the escape of a divine being from Sheol could afford no precedent and furnish no assurance of the future escape of human beings. It was expressly because the man Jesus had been rescued from the grave because of his spirituality, that other men might hope, by becoming spiritual like him, to be rescued also. Accordingly Paul is careful to state that "since through man came death, through man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 21); a passage which would look like an express denial of Christ's superhuman character, were it probable that any of Paul's contemporaries had ever conceived of Jesus as other than essentially human.

But though Paul's Christology remained in this primitive stage, it contained the germs of a more advanced theory. For even Paul conceived of Jesus as a man wholly exceptional in spiritual character; or, in the phraseology of the time, as consisting to a larger extent of *pneuma* than any man who had lived before him. The question was sure to arise, whence came this *pneuma* or spiritual quality? Whether the question ever distinctly presented itself to Paul's mind cannot be determined. Probably it did not. In those writings of his which have come down to us, he shows himself careless of metaphysical considerations. He is mainly concerned with exhibiting the unsatisfactory character of Jewish Christianity, and with inculcating a spiritual morality, to which the doctrine of Christ's resurrection is made to supply a surpassingly powerful sanction. But attempts to solve the problem were not long in coming. According to a very early tradition, of which the obscured traces remain in the synoptic gospels, Jesus received the *pneuma* at the time of his baptism, when the Holy Spirit, or visible manifestation of the essence of Jehovah, descended upon him and became incarnate in him. This theory, however, was exposed to the objection that it implied a sudden and entire transformation of an ordinary man into a person inspired or possessed by the Deity. Though long maintained by the Ebionites or primitive Christians, it was very soon rejected by the great body of the Church, which asserted instead that Jesus had been inspired by the Holy Spirit from the moment of his conception. From this it was but a step to the theory that Jesus was actually begotten by or of the Holy Spirit; a notion which the Hellenic mind, accustomed to the myths of Leda, Anchises, and others, found no difficulty in entertaining. According to the Gospel of the Hebrews, as cited by Origen, the Holy Spirit was the mother of Jesus, and Joseph was his father. But according to the prevailing opinion, as represented in the first and third synoptists, the relationship was just the other way. With greater apparent plausibility, the divine *Æon* was substituted for the human father, and a myth sprang up, of which the materialistic details furnished to the opponents of the new religion an opportunity for making the most gross and exasperating insinuations. The dominance of this theory marks the era at which our first and third synoptic gospels were composed,—from sixty to ninety years after the death of Jesus. In the luxuriant mythologic growth there exhibited, we may yet trace the various successive phases of Christologic speculation but imperfectly blended. In "Matthew" and "Luke" we find the original Messianic theory exemplified in the genealogies of Jesus, in which, contrary to historic probability, (cf. Matt. xxii. 41-46,) but in accordance with a time-honored tradition, his pedigree is traced back to David; "Matthew" referring him to the royal line of Judah, while "Luke" more cautiously has recourse to an assumed younger branch. Superposed upon this primitive mythologic stratum, we find, in the same narratives, the ac-

count of the descent of the *pneuma* at the time of the baptism; and crowning the whole, there are the two accounts of the nativity which, though conflicting in nearly all their details, agree in representing the divine *pneuma* as the father of Jesus. Of these three stages of Christology, the last becomes entirely irreconcilable with the first; and nothing can better illustrate the uncritical character of the synoptists than the fact that the assumed descent of Jesus from David through his father Joseph is allowed to stand side by side with the account of the miraculous conception which completely negatives it. Of this difficulty "Matthew" is quite unconscious, and "Luke," while vaguely noticing it, (iii. 23,) proposes no solution, and appears undisturbed by the contradiction.

Thus far the Christology with which we have been dealing is predominantly Jewish, though to some extent influenced by Hellenic conceptions. None of the successive doctrines presented in Paul, "Matthew," and "Luke," assert or imply the pre-existence of Jesus. At this early period he was regarded as a human being raised to participation in certain attributes of divinity; and this was as far as the dogma could be carried by the Jewish metaphysics. But soon after the date of our third gospel, a Hellenic system of Christology arose into prominence, in which the problem was reversed, and Jesus was regarded as a semi-divine being temporarily lowered to participation in certain attributes of humanity. For such a doctrine Jewish mythology supplied no precedents; but the Indo-European mind was familiar with the conception of deity incarnate in human form, as in the avatars of Vishnu, or even suffering in the interests of humanity, as in the noble myth of Prometheus. The elements of Christology pre-existing in the religious conceptions of Greece, India, and Persia, are too rich and numerous to be discussed here. A very full account of them is given in Mr. R. W. Mackay's treatise on the "Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews,"—one of the most acute and erudite theological works which this century has produced.

It was in Alexandria, where Jewish theology first came into contact with Hellenic and Oriental ideas, that the way was prepared for the dogma of Christ's pre-existence. The attempt to rationalize the conception of deity as embodied in the Jehovah of the Old Testament, gave rise to the class of opinions described as Gnosis, or Gnosticism. The signification of *Gnosis* is simply "rationalism,"—the endeavor to harmonize the materialistic statements of an old mythology with the more advanced spiritualistic philosophy of the time. The Gnostics rejected the conception of an anthropomorphic deity who had appeared visibly and audibly to the patriarchs; and they were the authors of the doctrine, very widely spread during the second and third centuries, that God could not in person have been the creator of the world. According to them, God, as pure spirit, could not act directly upon vile and gross matter. The difficulty which troubled them was curiously

analogous to that which disturbed the Cartesians and followers of Leibnitz in the seventeenth century: how was spirit to act upon matter, without ceasing, *pro tanto*, to be spirit? To meet this difficulty, the Gnostics postulated a series of emanations from God, becoming successively less and less spiritual and more and more material, until at the lowest end of the scale was reached the Demiurgus or Jehovah of the Old Testament, who created the world and appeared, clothed in material form, to the patriarchs. According to some of the Gnostics, this lowest æon or emanation was identical with the Jewish Satan, or Ahri-man of the Persians, who is called "the prince of this world," and the creation of the world was an essentially evil act. But all did not share in these extreme opinions. In the prevailing theory, this last of the divine emanations was identified with the "Sophia," or personified "Wisdom," of the Book of Proverbs, (viii. 22-30,) who is described as present with God before the foundation of the world. The totality of these æons constituted the *pleroma*, or "fullness of God," (Coloss. i. 20; Ephes. i. 23,) and in a corollary which bears unmistakable marks of Buddhist influence, it was argued that, in the final consummation of things, matter should be eliminated and all spirit reunited with God, from whom it had primarily flowed.

It was impossible that such views as these should not soon be taken up and applied to the fluctuating Christology of the time. According to the "Shepherd of Hermas," an apocalyptic writing nearly contemporary with the gospel of "Mark," the æon or son of God who existed previous to the creation was not the Christ, or the Sophia, but the Pneuma or Holy Spirit, represented in the Old Testament as the "angel of Jehovah." Jesus, in reward for his perfect goodness, was admitted to a share in the privileges of this Pneuma. (Réville, p. 39.) Here, as M. Réville observes, though a Gnostic idea is adopted, Jesus is nevertheless viewed as ascending humanity, and not as descending divinity. The author of the "Clementine Homilies" advances a step farther, and clearly assumes the pre-existence of Jesus, who, in his opinion, was the pure, primitive man, successively incarnate in Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and finally in the Messiah or Christ. The author protests, in vehement language, against those Hellenists who, misled by their polytheistic associations, would elevate Jesus into a god. Nevertheless his own hypothesis of pre-existence supplied at once the requisite fulcrum for those Gnostics who wished to reconcile a strict monotheism with the ascription of divine attributes to Jesus. Combining with this notion of pre-existence the pneumatic or spiritual quality attributed to Jesus in the writings of Paul, the gnosticising Christians maintained that Christ was an æon or emanation from God, redeeming men from the consequences entailed by their imprisonment in matter. At this stage of Christologic speculation appeared the anonymous epistle to the "Hebrews," and the pseudo-Pauline epistles to the "Colossians," "Ephesians," and "Philip-

pians." (A. D. 130.) In these epistles, which originated among the Pauline Christians, the Gnostic theosophy is skillfully applied to the Pauline conception of the scope and purposes of Christianity. Jesus is described as the creator of the world, (Coloss. i. 16,) the visible image of the invisible God, the chief and ruler of the "thrones, dominions, principalities and powers," into which, in Gnostic phraseology, the emanations of God were classified. Or, according to "Colossians" and "Philippians," all the æons are summed up in him, in whom dwells the *pleroma*, or "fullness of God." Thus Jesus is elevated quite above ordinary humanity, and a close approach is made to ditheism, although he is still emphatically subordinated to God by being made the creator of the world,—an office then regarded as incompatible with absolute divine perfection. In the celebrated passage, "Philippians" ii. 6-11, the æon Jesus is described as being the form or visible manifestation of God, yet as humbling himself by taking on the form or semblance of humanity, and suffering death, in return for which he is to be exalted even above the archangels. A similar view is taken in "Hebrews;" and it is probable that to the growing favor with which these doctrines were received, we owe the omission of the miraculous conception from the gospel of "Mark,"—a circumstance which has misled some critics into assigning to that gospel an earlier date than to "Matthew" and "Luke." Yet the fact that in this gospel Jesus is implicitly ranked above the angels, (Mark xiii, 32, 33,) reveals a later stage of Christologic doctrine than that reached by the first and third synoptists; and it is altogether probable that, in accordance with the noticeable conciliatory disposition of this evangelist, the supernatural conception is omitted out of deference to the gnosticising theories of "Colossians" and "Philippians," in which this materialistic doctrine seems to have had no assignable place. In "Philippians" especially, many expressions seem to verge upon *Docetism*, the extreme form of Gnosticism, according to which the human body of Jesus was only a phantom. Valentinus, who was contemporary with the Pauline writers of the second century, maintained that Jesus was not born of Mary by any process of conception, but merely passed through her, as light traverses a translucent substance. And finally Marcion (A. D. 140) carried the theory to its extreme limits by declaring that Jesus was the pure Pneuma or Spirit, who contained nothing in common with carnal humanity.

The pseudo-Pauline writers steered clear of this extravagant doctrine, which erred by breaking entirely with historic tradition, and was consequently soon condemned as heretical. Their language, though unmistakably Gnostic, was sufficiently neutral and indefinite to allow of their combination with earlier and later expositions of dogma, and they were therefore eventually received into the canon, where they exhibit a stage of opinion midway between that of Paul and that of the fourth gospel.

For the construction of a durable system of Christology, still

further elaboration was necessary. The pre-existence of Jesus, as an emanation from God, in whom were summed up the attributes of the *pleroma* or full scale of Gnostic æons, was now generally conceded. But the relation of this *pleroma* to the Godhead of which it was the visible manifestation, needed to be more accurately defined. And here recourse was had to the conception of the "Logos,"—a notion which Philo had borrowed from Plato, lending to it a theosophic significance. In the Platonic metaphysics, objective existence was attributed to general terms, the signs of general notions. Besides each particular man, horse, or tree, and besides all men, horses, and trees, in the aggregate, there was supposed to exist an ideal Man, Horse, and Tree. Each particular man, horse, or tree consisted of abstract existence plus a portion of the ideal man, horse, or tree. Socrates, for instance, consisted of Existence, plus Animality, plus Humanity, plus Socraticity. The visible world of particulars thus existed only by virtue of its participation in the attributes of the ideal world of universals. God created the world by encumbering each idea with an envelopment or clothing of visible matter; and since matter is vile or imperfect, all things are more or less perfect as they partake more or less fully of the idea. The pure unencumbered idea, the "Idea of ideas," is the Logos, or divine Reason, which represents the sum-total of the activities which sustain the world, and serves as a mediator between the absolutely ideal God and the absolutely non-ideal matter. Here we arrive at a Gnostic conception, which the Philonists of Alexandria were not slow to appropriate. The Logos, or divine Reason, was identified with the Sophia, or divine Wisdom of the Jewish Gnostics, which had dwelt with God before the creation of the world. By a subtle play upon the double meaning of the Greek term (*logos* = "reason" or "word,") a distinction was drawn between the divine Reason and the divine Word. The former was the archetypal idea or thought of God, existing from all eternity; the latter was the external manifestation or realization of that idea which occurred at the moment of creation, when, according to Genesis, God *spoke*, and the world was.

In the middle of the second century, this Philonian theory was the one thing needful to add metaphysical precision to the Gnostic and Pauline speculations concerning the nature of Jesus. In the writings of Justin Martyr, (A. D. 150-166,) Jesus is for the first time identified with the Philonian *logos* or "Word of God." According to Justin, an impassable abyss exists between the Infinite Deity and the Finite World; the one cannot act upon the other; pure spirit cannot contaminate itself by contact with impure matter. To meet this difficulty, God evolves from himself a secondary God, the Logos,—yet without diminishing himself any more than a flame is diminished when it gives birth to a second flame. Thus generated, like light begotten of light, (*lumen de lumine*,) the Logos creates the world, inspires the ancient prophets with their divine revelations, and finally reveals him-

self to mankind in the person of Christ. Yet Justin sedulously guards himself against ditheism, insisting frequently and emphatically upon the immeasurable inferiority of the Logos as compared with the actual God (*ho ontos theos.*)

We have here reached very nearly the ultimate phase of New Testament speculation concerning Jesus. The doctrines enunciated by Justin became eventually, with slight modification, the official doctrines of the Church: yet before they could thus be received, some further elaboration was needed. The pre-existing Logos-Christ of Justin was no longer the human Messiah of the first and third gospels, born of a woman, inspired by the divine *Pneuma*, and tempted by the Devil. There was danger that Christologic speculation might break quite loose from historic tradition, and pass into the metaphysical extreme of Docetism. Had this come to pass, there might perhaps have been a fatal schism in the Church. Tradition still remained Ebionitish; dogma had become decidedly Gnostic; how were the two to be moulded into harmony with each other? Such was the problem which presented itself to the author of the fourth gospel (A. D. 170-180). As M. Réville observes, "if the doctrine of the Logos were really to be applied to the person of Jesus, it was necessary to remodel the evangelical history." Tradition must be moulded so as to fit the dogma, but the dogma must be restrained by tradition from running into Docetic extravagance. It must be shown historically how "the Word became flesh" and dwelt on earth, (John i. 14,) how the deeds of Jesus of Nazareth were the deeds of the incarnate Logos, in whom was exhibited the *pleroma* or fullness of the divine attributes. The author of the fourth gospel is, like Justin, a Philonian Gnostic; but he differs from Justin in his bold and skilful treatment of the traditional materials supplied by the earlier gospels. The process of development in the theories and purposes of Jesus, which can be traced throughout the Messianic descriptions of the first gospel, is entirely obliterated in the fourth. Here Jesus appears at the outset as the creator of the world, descended from his glory, but destined soon to be reinstated. The title "Son of Man" has lost its original significance, and become synonymous with "Son of God." The temptation, the transfiguration, the scene in Gethsemane, are omitted, and for the latter is substituted a Philonian prayer. Nevertheless, the author carefully avoids the extremes of Docetism or ditheism. Not only does he represent the human life of Jesus as real, and his death as a truly physical death, but he distinctly asserts the inferiority of the Son to the Father (John xiv. 28.) Indeed, as M. Réville well observes, it is part of the very notion of the Logos that it should be imperfect relatively to the absolute God; since it is only its relative imperfection which allows it to sustain relations to the world and to men which are incompatible with absolute perfection, from the Philonian point of view. The Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity

finds no support in the fourth gospel, any more than in the earlier books collected in the New Testament.

The fourth gospel completes the speculative revolution by which the conception of a divine being lowered to humanity was substituted for that of a human being raised to divinity. We have here traveled a long distance from the risen Messiah of the genuine Pauline epistles, or the preacher of righteousness in the first gospel. Yet it does not seem probable that the Church of the third century was thoroughly aware of the discrepancy. The authors of the later Christology did not regard themselves as adding new truths to Christianity, but merely as giving a fuller and more consistent interpretation to what must have been known from the outset. They were so completely destitute of the historic sense, and so strictly confined to the dogmatic point of view, that they projected their own theories back into the past, and vituperated as heretics those who adhered to tradition in its earlier and simpler form. Examples from more recent times are not wanting, which show that we are dealing here with an inveterate tendency of the human mind. New facts and new theories are at first condemned as heretical or ridiculous; but when once firmly established, it is immediately maintained that every one knew them before. After the Copernican astronomy had won the day, it was tacitly assumed that the ancient Hebrew astronomy was Copernican, and the Biblical conception of the universe as a kind of three-story house was ignored, and has been, except by scholars, quite forgotten. When the geologic evidence of the earth's immense antiquity could no longer be gainsaid, it was suddenly ascertained that the Bible had from the outset asserted that antiquity; and in our own day we have seen an elegant popular writer perverting the testimony of the rocks and distorting the Elohist cosmogony of the Pentateuch, until the twain have been made to furnish what Bacon long ago described as "a heretical religion and a false philosophy." Now just as in the popular thought of the present day the ancient Elohist is accredited with a knowledge of modern geology and astronomy, so in the opinion of the fourth evangelist and his contemporaries the doctrine of the Logos-Christ was implicitly contained in the Old Testament and in the early traditions concerning Jesus, and needed only to be brought into prominence by a fresh interpretation. Hence arose the fourth gospel, which was no more a conscious violation of historic data than Hugh Miller's imaginative description of the "Mosaic Vision of Creation." Its metaphysical discourses were readily accepted as equally authentic with the Sermon on the Mount. Its Philonian doctrines were imputed to Paul and the apostles, the pseudo-Pauline epistles furnishing the needful texts. The Ebionites—who were simply Judaizing Christians, holding in nearly its original form the doctrine of Peter, James, and John—were ejected from the Church as the most pernicious of heretics; and so completely was their historic position misunderstood and forgotten, that, in order to account for

their existence, it became necessary to invent an eponymous heresiarch, Ebion, who was supposed to have led them astray from the true faith!

The Christology of the fourth gospel is substantially the same as that which was held in the next two centuries by Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Arius. When the doctrine of the Trinity was first announced by Sabellius (A. D. 250-260), it was formally condemned as heretical, the Church being not yet quite prepared to receive it. In 269 the Council of Antioch solemnly declared that the Son was *not* consubstantial with the Father—a declaration which, within sixty years, the Council of Nikaia was destined as solemnly to contradict. The trinitarian Christology struggled long for acceptance, and did not finally win the victory until the end of the fourth century. Yet from the outset its ultimate victory was hardly doubtful. The peculiar doctrines of the fourth gospel could retain their integrity only so long as Gnostic ideas were prevalent. When Gnosticism declined in importance, and its theories faded out of recollection, its peculiar phraseology received of necessity a new interpretation. The doctrine that God could not act directly upon the world sank gradually into oblivion as the Church grew more and more hostile to the Neo-Platonic philosophy. And when this theory was once forgotten, it was inevitable that the Logos, as the creator of the world, should be raised to an equality or identity with God himself. In the view of the fourth evangelist, the Creator was necessarily inferior to God; in the view of later ages, the Creator could be none other than God. And so the very phrases which had most emphatically asserted the subordination of the Son were afterward interpreted as asserting his absolute divinity. To the Gnostic formula, "*lumen de lumine*," was added the Athanasian scholium, "*Deum verum de Deo vero*;" and the trinitarian dogma of the union of persons in a single Godhead became thus the only available logical device for preserving the purity of monotheism.

THE modern theory, however, at which we seem to be slowly arriving is, that light, heat, electricity, life itself, are only forms of motion, and that death is merely the cessation of this motion; that the deity is, throughout the universe, the embodiment (since that is the only word I can think of to express myself) of motion itself; and that all which dies, or, in other words, ceases to move, falls back into the universe, and is absorbed into the deity. This was the belief of the Buddhist—the framer or acceptor of a pure and beautiful religion; and to this belief modern science and the enlargement of knowledge slowly tend.—*Macmillan's Magazine*.