

THE  
**Origin of Christianity**

AND A COMMENTARY TO

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

BY

ISAAC M. WISE.

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CINCINNATI:  
BLOCH & CO., PUBLISHERS.  
1868.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year  
1868,

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In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the  
United States for the Southern District of Ohio.

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*By the Author.*



*Truth is the Redeemer of Mankind.  
The Apostles of Truth and Char-  
ity are the Angels of the Most  
High, and the High Priests of  
Humanity.*

## P R E F A C E.

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"TRUTH only, in the name of God," this is the object of this volume. With the utmost respect for religion itself and for the Bible, with due reverence for Christianity, the important factor in the history of civilization, and with a profound regard for the religious feelings of all good men, the following pages were written to contribute to the religious literature of our age the results of twenty years of individual research.

The four Gospels, the origin of which is discussed in this volume, can not be taken as the main sources for the origin of Christianity. They represent it in the second and third stages of its development. The authors were Christians before they wrote their books; hence Christianity preceded them. In the form as these Gospels are now before us, they prove that their respective authors were fully acquainted with the dissensions among the Jewish Christians on the one side and the Gentile Christians on the other. They contain polemics of those parties, and conciliatory attempts; consequently they are secondary sources for our purpose. Besides, it is next to an impossibility to ascertain from them

the religion taught by Jesus of Nazareth himself. The Jesus represented in John's Gospel is radically different in character, actions, speeches and pretensions from the Jesus of the Synoptics; while with these, Luke again differs widely in essential points from his two predecessors who are themselves by no means a unity on the narrative, or the speeches and parables. A careful investigation into the Gospels proves that not only no part of the narrative can be fully relied upon as being historically certain, but also no speech, parable or sentence supposed to have been uttered by Jesus himself will stand the test of historical criticism. What Jesus himself did, suffered, opposed or taught, hence what influence he exercised upon the origin of Christianity, or what religious principles he laid down for his disciples, is next to an impossibility to ascertain. Every biography of Jesus, every life of Christ must necessarily be considered an individual conception footing upon uncertainties; and the expression the religion of Christ is simply a misnomer.

The epistles are the oldest Christian literature and the most unquestionable sources for the origin of Christianity. They were known to the Gospel writers, and were used by them. We learn from the epistles what the apostles taught. It is from the teachings of the apostles that one might sometimes ascertain doctrines of Jesus. Therefore the epistles are the main sources used

by the author of this work. In the epistles themselves there are two entirely distinct systems of Christianity, one of which is represented by Peter, James, John and the other original apostles, and the other by Paul and his followers. The history of the development of these two systems is in "The Acts of the Apostles." Therefore this latter book serves as the basis to this work. The facts have been separated from the embellishment, and the origin of Christianity, as represented by the apostles, chronologically arranged and carefully compared with other sources.

Among the other sources which the author consulted, it is chiefly the Talmud and other rabbinical scriptures. He undertook the task of translating several hundred talmudical passages for this work, all rendered from the originals, and hopes to have expounded numerous passages in the New Testament, which are otherwise unintelligible. He hopes still more to have opened an entirely new avenue of research to Christian theology and criticism. The Talmud and other rabbinical books consulted by the author, contain not only the cotemporary history, archeology and literature of the very time when Jesus and the apostles lived, but also the laws and doctrines, as well as the superstitious and aberrations of that age and that country. Without the Talmud, a perfect understanding of original Christianity is almost impossible, as the candid reader of this book

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will undoubtedly admit, after a careful perusal of it.

May this humble contribution to American literature be acceptable to the GREAT I AM, and prove a blessing to all who long after truth. This is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

CINCINNATI, May, 1868.

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# ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

The book next to the fourth Gospel in the Christian canon is called, "The Acts of the Apostles," or also, "The Acts." It begins with a brief sketch of the resurrection, *post mortem* communications for forty days with the disciples, and the ascension of Jesus, contradictory not only to the accounts of the same events by Paul, John, Mark and Matthew, but also to Luke's account, notwithstanding the undisputed fact, that the Luke of the third Gospel was also the author of "The Acts."

The entire book, after those introductory remarks, is devoted to the transactions of the apostles and the fate of the first congregations, after the demise of Jesus. Its author, as remarked already, is identical with him who wrote the third Gospel. The introductory verse points expressly to that Gospel as "the former treatise" of the author, in which the same Theophilus is addressed. The character and style of both works, favorite phrases and crystalized prejudices for Romans and Samaritans, the

want of knowledge of the Hebrew, the laws and customs of the Jews, and of the geography of Palestine common to both books, proves their origin from one author a fact, which the church early admitted. (*Antiq. Ital.* iii, 854).

The authors of the Gospels being unknown, the author of Acts can not be pointed out with any degree of certainty. The author of the third Gospel, in the introduction, states that many before him had undertaken to write down the Christian story. This entitles us to the hypothesis that the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark, and probably also apocryphal works of this nature, were written previously to Luke's, who knew them, quoted from them, changed and added, both stories and words. In "The Acts," however, he refers to no predecessors in this task, and leads us to believe he was the first writer on this topic. This leads us to the inquiry, from what sources did the author of "The Acts" take the stories which he narrates?

It is certain that the author had two different sources before him. In the history of Paul, which occupies the largest portion of the book, the author uses the pronoun "we," (chapters 16, 20, 21, 27, 28) so that the narrator suddenly includes himself in the narrative, which is not the case in any other portion of the book. The character of these two sources is entirely different, not only in style, but in the very object of the stories. The one is full of tendency,

miracles and long speeches, and the other, on the contrary, is simple, natural and clear; he narrates what occurs to Paul, whose companion he pretends to be.

The author of the "We" portion of "The Acts" can not be identified with the author of the other portions; because he presents himself as the companion of Paul, hence one acquainted with the transactions and the life of that apostle. He could not have reported Paul's conversion in three different and contradictory manners; nor could he place words and speeches in the mouth of Paul which, as we shall fully ascertain hereafter, he could not possibly have spoken; nor is it likely that he could be so ignorant of Hebrew, if a disciple of Paul, as the writer of "The Acts" actually was. Besides, it is not well possible that the author of Acts was a cotemporary of Paul at all. Criticism ascertained beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark were written after the Epistles of Paul, against which they contain various polemics. The very fact of the polemical nature of these Gospels shows that they originated years after Paul preached, after his views and doctrines had gained so much of a reputation, that polemics became necessary in the opinion of those writers. The Gospel according to Luke was composed long after the above, as we have seen before, at a time when the Paulites considered it necessary to vindicate their system of Christianity

against the Jew-Christians. This was certainly long after the death of Paul and his cotemporaries. "The Acts" having been written by the same author, years after he had written his Gospel, with the avowed tendency of conciliation between Jew-Christians and Gentile-Christians, it could not possibly have been composed by a cotemporary or disciple of Paul.

The author of the "We" portion of "The Acts" appears to have been a companion or disciple of Paul. The final author of "The Acts" re-produced literally portions of those traveling notes, omitted much, changed passages to suit his purposes, and inserted his own productions taken from tradition and invention. Where he quoted literally from that diary he retained the "We;" elsewhere he changed it. The simple accounts from that diary were too simple and plain for the author's conception; he embellished them to suit his fancy and the traditional stories of the congregation. The history of the congregation of Jerusalem together with Peter and the other apostles, which he narrates in the first part of his book, being full of miracles and extraordinary events; the life of Paul grouped at the side of the former could not possibly be left so soberly human, as the notes of his companion represented it, and so changes and additions were necessary.

It is not well possible to point with certainty to any particular companion of Paul,

as being the author of those notes. The expounders are of different opinions and point respectively to Titus, Timotheus, Silas and Luke, all named as companions of Paul. Timotheus, it appears, was a special favorite of Paul. He calls him (I Corin. iv, 17) "the beloved and faithful child in the Lord," who would call to their minds "the way in Christ," as he everywhere "in each congregation teacheth." This Timotheus (Acts xvi, 1) was the son of a Greek father and a Hebrew mother. It appears, however, from the sum of the testimony, that Luke, or Lucanus, was the author of those notes. The second author, namely, the one who wrote the third Gospel and "The Acts," therefore, adopted this name. As the other Gospels were written according to Matthew, Mark or John, so he wrote his according to Luke, i. e. according to traditions and dogmas of congregations established by Luke, the disciple of Paul. He calls that material, "those things which are most surely believed among us."

"The Acts" is a very *deficient* book. Peter and Paul are not only the principal heroes of the narrative; they are the only apostles of whom that author has anything to communicate. The other apostles are either not mentioned at all, or they occupy the places of side figures, entirely in the back ground of the picture. No mention is made of the demise of any of the disciples, except Stephen. The book closes abruptly,

leaving Paul in his hired house in Rome, so that it appears the closing chapters of the book were lost. Its dates are confused, its quotations from the Bible full of errors, and taken almost exclusively from the Samaritan version.

The object of "The Acts" is not simply to give an account of the apostles, their lives and transactions, and the fate of the first congregations, as he ascertained it in traditional or written sources; the author had a particular object in view. Among all the movements parallel to or imitative of Christianity as Peter and his co-laborers preached it, one was most successful among the Gentiles; it was the work of the zealous, fanatical, inflexible and powerful Paul, Saul of Tarsis, who preached a Gospel of his own, one which he received not of the apostles; one which was entirely in opposition to their teachings. It was a new theology, and he was the only theologian among the apostles—with the bold innovation that the laws of Moses, both ritual, ceremonial and political were abrogated by Jesus. He held only one point in common with the apostles, viz: that Jesus was the Messiah, who died for the sins of all, and rose from the dead to demonstrate his divine mission and nature. The apostles themselves maintained that Jesus only protested against the rabbinical laws and the traditions of the Pharisees, and had not come to abrogate an iota or a tittle of the Laws of Moses. Therefore they ob-

served Sabbath and holidays, circumcision and sacrifice, temple worship and Levitical purity in common with all orthodox Jews. They considered the political laws of Moses as binding upon the Israelite and as divine in their origin, as the religious portion of the divine dispensation. Paul, in one bold stroke, abrogated everything in the name of the master, which was in the way of the new system of religion, to be promulgated among the Gentiles, ready then for a change of religion. These two different schools are known in the early history of Christianity as Jewish and Gentile Christianity; Peter was the representative man of the former system, and Paul the founder of the latter.

Our inquiry into "The Acts" will show that this difference was important and exciting; that it gave birth to a sharp conflict between Jew-Christians and Gentile-Christians; and that this controversy continued after the death of the apostles into the second century, till finally the Jew-Christians were excommunicated, and Gentile Christianity maintained the whole field.

These two diverging systems, in the beginning, considerably agitated the Christian congregation. Its internal development was by no means as peaceable, as was always supposed.

Besides the glorification of the apostles, the author of "The Acts" had also in view the settlement of this vexatious question.

In favor of his attempt, he substituted a similarity of views and notions to Peter and Paul, far beyond the facts of their respective histories. He would sometimes let Peter act in a manner as Paul only could have done and *vice versa*. He let them reciprocally approve of doctrines and actions which actually must have been censured. In this manner the author effects his purpose; the opposite views gradually give way to an amalgamation of both.

The main points of these differences are preserved in the Epistles. They afford proper means to ascertain the differences of opinion. They supply us with parallel passages to control the statements of the author of "The Acts." Besides, there are other sources which serve the same purpose in many instances. Josephus, the rabbinical scriptures, and the classics throw considerable light on some passages of the book.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### THE NASCENT CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

The author of "The Acts" opens his narrative with a new version of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. In the Gospels these events follow almost simultaneously; in "The Acts" Jesus appears "through forty days" to his disciples, to give them extensive instructions "in the kingdom of heaven." Everything connected with those



events, persons, speeches, locality and phenomena, are changed, and differ also from the first account of the same author, Luke.

However this strange method may be explained; to the critical reader it can only suggest the premise that the stories of the resurrection and ascension were not considered, by the authors themselves, a description of matters of fact. They considered them legends and treated them accordingly. Every writer produced them agreeably to the traditions of the congregation in which he lived, and suitable to the dogmas which he advocated.

In regard to the book before us the suggestion is precisely the same. We can not expect authentic and accurate history. It is a book which employs a number of historical facts in vindication of certain dogmas based upon alleged miracles, the allegations and dogmas being the main object.

The Gospels contain contradictory accounts concerning the locality of the apostles after the death of their master. Matthew leads them to Galilee, where the ascension takes place, and John brings them as far west as Lake Tiberias, while the others let them remain in Jerusalem altogether; each, however, chronicles the express command of Jesus for his favorite locality, so that all harmonizing efforts are in vain. Luke, both in his Gospel and "The Acts," maintains that the disciples and apostles remained in Jerusalem. Jesus there and then, at Bethany, to which place

he had led them, appeared to them in his body, and there ascended to heaven. "Then returned they unto Jerusalem," our author says, "from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath-day's journey." Then they began their congregational devotions "in an upper room," with the women, the mother and the brothers of Jesus. This author flatly denies that the disciples went to Galilee after the death of Jesus, whatever Matthew or John may maintain to the contrary. The fact is, that neither of them was certain on this point, nor did they intend to state a fact. They chronicled legendary traditions as such, as they had received them.

The author of "The Acts," however, had a particular reason to have the apostles and disciples remain in Jerusalem. The three Evangelists only intend to glorify Jesus and not the apostles; therefore the men, terrified by the tragical fate of their master, naturally left the city, and the apparitions of Jesus must have taken place at the homes of the disciples, in Galilee. This consternation and flight, however, would have betrayed doubt in the Messiahship of Jesus, and cowardice on the part of his disciples. Luke, whose task it was also to glorify the apostles, could not admit that. Therefore he mentions the valorous conduct of the disciples, when the multitude came to arrest Jesus (Luke xxii, 49). "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" the disciples ask specially with Luke, while

his predecessors, Matthew and Mark, know nothing about this question. Therefore the apostles, who must not conduct themselves cowardly, must not doubt for a moment the Messiahship of Jesus, could not well leave Jerusalem; and so our author retains them there contrary to the united testimony of his predecessors, because it appeared so best to him.

The number of disciples, we are told, was about 120 (Acts i, 15). This number is no less uncertain than the place. All the numbers almost are imitations of some Scriptural event. The twelve apostles were to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The seventy disciples mentioned in the Gospel represent the seventy elders, or the Sanhedrin of Israel. But this body having originally, in the days of Ezra, consisted of one hundred and twenty persons, who were called the great synod, and constructed the second commonwealth with all its religious and civil institutions; it is quite natural that, in the estimation of Luke, the first great synod of the Church must also have consisted of one hundred and twenty persons.

As a decisive testimony, however, that Luke had not the intention to chronicle facts, we only need quote what he puts in the mouth of Peter concerning Judas, the traitor (Acts i, 18, 19, 20). Luke informs us that Peter "in those days," addressing the disciples on a certain topic said, concerning Judas, "Now this man purchased a

field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers in Jerusalem; inasmuch as that field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is to say, the field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take."

In the first place, Peter here contradicts Matthew, who states expressly that the end of Judas was so: "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself." The priests, Matthew continues, bought a field with this money (Matthew xxvii, 5). Had Luke supposed that Matthew, whose statement he must have seen, intended to state a fact, he could not have thus flatly contradicted him. In this, and all similar cases, we are forced to admit either one of the narrators stated a falsehood, or each told the legend as such, in a manner best suiting his purpose.

In the second place, Peter could not possibly say to his cotemporaries, "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem;" nor could he say that the field was called "*In their proper tongue, Aceldama,*" which he must translate for them "the field of blood," if he addressed the eye-witnesses of that event in the very city of Jerusalem whose language was familiar to them. Therefore, we must suppose, Luke

added those two verses (19 and 20) in explanation of the alleged statement of Peter. But here again he betrays his intention not to write history, for he shows us the original sources from which the story sprung, namely, the name of a place near Jerusalem, where deceased strangers were buried, A celdama; and the passages from Psalms, which were understood to have been spoken against the enemies of David. Had Luke intended to state a fact, he could not call to his aid two points which render the fact itself suspicious. He narrates a legend as he had heard it, and informs us honestly, on what basis it rests.

The address of Peter to the disciples, to which we alluded, concerns the appointment of an apostle in the place of Judas the traitor, to fill up the number twelve. On his suggestion two were appointed, Barsabas and Matthew. After prayer, "they gave forth their lots," and Matthew was elected. The prayer which Luke records on this occasion can not be authentic; it is certainly his own composition. The words in verse 25, "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship," like the word "bishopricks" in verse 20, cannot be supposed to have been uttered at so early a stage of the apostolic history, before the existence of any episcopacy. They point distinctly to a time when the Church had already an episcopalian organization with ministers or deacons, apostles and bishopricks or episcopacies. It is interesting to

know that Luke took the liberty to add not only explanatory notes, but also a prayer of his own, and put it in the mouths of the eleven apostles. Of course, this is not history.

Matthew, the apostle elected, like many others, is mentioned no more. But we meet again with the rejected Barsabas (Acts xv, 22), who was one of the "chief men among the brethren."

In conclusion of this chapter we must call attention to a mistake of Adam Clarke. In his commentary to Acts i, 16, he remarks: "*The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David.* This is a strong attestation to the divine inspiration of the book of Psalms. They were dictated by the Holy Spirit; and spoken by the mouth of David." If Mr. Clarke had paid more attention to the Gospels and the Acts, he would have found that the writers quoting from Moses or the prophets, mention no Holy Ghost. They do this only when quoting from Psalms or other books of the Hiography, agreeable to an ancient rule כתובים נאמרו ברוח הקודש "The Hiography (to which also the Psalms belong) were said in a holy spirit," i. e., they are no prophecies. This "holy spirit" which was a quality of the poet, was turned into a "Holy Ghost," a divine being outside of the poet. Anyhow the authors of the Gospels and Acts started from that ancient rule of the Hebrews which places the Hiography, hence also the Psalms, below the prophets in point of divinity.

The expression of Peter says exactly the contrary to what Mr. Clarke understood it.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE HOLY GHOST.

Previous to public preaching by the apostles, and after the first church had been organized at Jerusalem, Luke, in the second chapter of "The Acts," tells us of two miracles which happened to the apostles: They received the Holy Ghost and spoke in foreign tongues. The age of miracles was long gone by. The last miracle narrated in the Old Testament was the protection of Daniel in the lion's den, which happened at least five hundred years before the Christian miracles. The great prophets, whose words are preached in all churches, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and eleven of the twelve minor prophets, never experienced or wrought a miracle. The kings of Israel, from Saul, David and Solomon down to the last of the Davidians, wrought no miracles, and saw but one or two. So that the age of miracles was well passed, and the Maccabees themselves, with their intense piety and patriotism, expected no miracles, and wrought none, in aid of their cause. Outside of the Christian accounts, we read of no miracle wrought anywhere in the world five hundred years before and after that time. Therefore it is certainly strange that just at that time and that point all the laws of nature should

have been suspended, and the Almighty arbitrarily wrought miracles on some illiterate fishermen, tentmakers, and other tradesmen of very limited knowledge; when the very idea of arbitrariness and lawlessness is incompatible to supreme reason.

Again, the age of miracles must be one of childlike simplicity, when the force of argument and testimony is inefficient to produce conviction, and intelligence stands upon so low a scale that ocular demonstration suffices to impress it with abstract truths. The age of the apostles, however, was one of high culture, of wonderful genius even, in Rome, Greece, Egypt and Syria. It was neither necessary nor profitable then to work miracles.

Furthermore, if indeed such miracles had been wrought as recorded in the New Testament, how could it happen that the Jews of Palestine were not converted after all; the few who were converted, the Ebionites and Nazarenes, were afterwards excommunicated as heretics; and how could it come to pass that the Roman writers, and Rome was then the mistress of Syria, knew nothing of it?

Therefore the miracles of the New Testament cannot be received as facts. They can only serve as a testimony that the books in their present form were written in the age when learning and philosophy had been reduced almost to zero, as this was the case in the third century, and peo-



ple were satisfied again with the marvelous and extraordinary without appeal to reason. Although the Gospels and "The Acts" were written at a much earlier date than the third century, still they must have undergone several changes in that century, before the construction of the Christian canon by the council of Nice.

Before we can proceed with the main narrative, we must make some remarks on the "Holy Ghost." The Old Testament makes frequent mention of the "spirit," or the "spirit of God," or also "an impure spirit." God bestows this spirit on man, especially on the prophet; but it was also given to the seventy elders under Moses, to Eldad and Medad, to heroes on the field of battle, to inventive artists and artizans, and Saul was infatuated by an impure spirit. The holy spirit as well as the impure one is subjective. By a divine influence this dormant capacity in the human mind is roused to activity, and it is either a רוח נבואה *Ruach Nebuah*, "a spirit of prophecy," the power of predicting future events in evidence of the prophet's divine mission; or it is רוח הקודש *Ruach Hakodesh*, a "holy spirit" without the gift of prophecy, to inspire one to lofty deeds or sublime works of art. The former is a higher degree than the latter. So, for instance, Isaiah is of the former and David of the latter class.

The "Holy Ghost" of the New Testament is not a translation of the *Ruach Hakodesh*; it is the translation of *Ruach*.

*Hakadosh*. *Kodesh* is the adjective "holy" for persons or things; while *Kadosh* is the adjective "holy" for God or the people of Israel as a totality. In the Old Testament the holy spirit is subjective, a quality of man roused by divine influence; therefore it is a *Roach Hakodesh*. In the New Testament the "Holy Ghost" is God's altogether; it is objective. He comes down upon Jesus having been baptized by John; and it is frequently remarked that, during his public career, the Holy Ghost wrought in him. The disciples, as long as the master lived, had no Holy Ghost; but they received it after his death, as Luke tells us. This is the view common to the Evangelists. John states expressly (vii, 39), "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because, that Jesus was not yet glorified." Jesus, however, on his last evening, promised his disciples (*ibid*, xvi, 16), "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive." So far John, who wrote later than Luke, agreed with his predecessor; but now he chooses his own way to impart the Holy Ghost to the disciples. The resurrected Jesus, before leaving his disciples (*ibid*, xx, 22), "He breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost." Here John contradicts the narrative of Luke, which we shall narrate after this. The other Gospels observe silence on this topic. Luke lets the resur-

rected Jesus bid the disciples: "I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endowed with power from on high." In the Acts the same author lets Jesus say, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not long after these days." Then he narrates in the second chapter, how the Holy Ghost came down upon the disciples.

The two oldest Gospels, Matthew and Mark, do not admit that the disciples or apostles were promised or given the Holy Ghost by Jesus. Matthew's account, (xxviii, 10), contains a simple charge of Jesus to his followers, to baptize and teach. Mark adds to this the promise that all believers (and they only) should be saved and work miracles (xvi, 15). But no promise of the Holy Ghost is made by either.

Therefore we know the following points:

1. The "Holy Ghost" of the New Testament is entirely different from the "holy spirit" of the Old Testament; the former is *objective* and the latter *subjective*.

2. Matthew and Mark did not know, that the Holy Ghost was given to the apostles, and had them fully ordained for their apostolic mission before the ascension of Jesus; and John, who must have known the narrative of Luke, admits that the apostles received the Holy Ghost, but denies the Pentecost miracle of Luke, and has the Holy Ghost given to the apostles by Jesus himself previous to his ascension.

We are now prepared to examine into

the Pentecost miracle. The author of "The Acts" narrates it thus:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Here the Holy Ghost comes down in a hurricane, with John he comes in a gentle breath; still both ideas are taken from one passage in I Kings xix, 11 and 12, where it is narrated, that a voice from on high was to speak to the prophet Elijah. "And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a wind, great and strong, rending the mountains, and breaking in pieces the rocks, went before the Lord; but not in the wind was the Lord; and after the earthquake was a fire; but not in the fire was the Lord; and after the fire was a sound of soft whisper." In this sound of soft whisper, Elijah perceived the voice of the Lord.

Luke took from this passage literally the rushing mighty wind and the fire. The coming down of God and imparting the oracle to Elijah was merely changed by Luke into "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "The tongues like as of fire," is no original simile with Luke; he unskillfully changed the metaphor of

Isaiah (v, 24) "a tongue of fire." John most likely perceiving how Luke destroyed the poetical beauty of the passage in Kings, rejected the whole story, and took only the conclusion of the passage, "the sound of a soft whisper," and lets Jesus "breathe" the Holy Ghost on the apostles.

The question is now, why did Luke write this passage, and why did he take the wind and fire and not rather the sound of a soft whisper as the demonstration of the Holy Ghost, as John and the author of Kings did?

The twenty-fifth day of December was adopted by the Church as the birth-day of Jesus. This was an accommodation to a pagan festival. The Saturnalia, with all their licentiousness and debauchery, were celebrated on the 25th day of December among the Greco-Roman pagans. Early Christians, with the best of intention, most likely, changed the cause and character of the day. It became the birth-day of Jesus, for which not the least historical data exist. Precisely the same is the case with the day of his death. At a very early stage of the Christian history it was already uncertain when Jesus was crucified. According to the Synoptics, this event must have taken place on the first day of the Pass-over feast; because Jesus ate of the paschal lamb the night before his death. This sacrificial meal was partaken of according to the law the evening preceding and opening the feast. But this is impossible,

because' in the first place the Jews did no public business on that day, had no court sessions, no trials, and certainly no execution on any Sabbath or feast-day; and in the second place, the first day of the Passover never was on a Friday, and never can be, according to established principles of the Jewish calendar. John, in consideration of these and several other objections, omits the paschal meal and the "Lord's supper" altogether, and adopts the day before the feast as the day of crucifixion. If it had been certain at all when Jesus was crucified, John could not set aside the statements of the Synoptics and adopt another day.

The Synoptics adopted the first day of Passover because they taught the dogma that Jesus died to redeem all sinners. The fact, concerning the day, was shaped to suit the dogma. Israel was redeemed from the Egyptian bondage on the day celebrated ever after that event as the feast of the Passover; therefore the death of Jesus, the second redemption, must have taken place on the self-same day.

The Pentecost, the sixth day of the third month, was known to the Jews as the day when the revelation of the decalogue on Mount Sinai took place, and it is considered so to this day. In the phraseology of the primitive Christians, the revelation on Mount Sinai was "the pouring out of the Holy Ghost." As Jesus died on Passover, to effect the second redemption precisely

on the same day when the first took place, so also the second revelation, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost had to come, and on the precise day when the first occurred, the Pentecost. The Jew-Christians selected these days without reference to fact; therefore John paid no regard to either, and states that Jesus himself, before Pentecost, breathed the Holy Ghost on the disciples.

The author of "The Acts" tells us, that Peter, in an address to the multitude, stated the reason why the "Holy Ghost" was poured out on the disciples.

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,

"And it came to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

"And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

"And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

"And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

The author did not quote right the words of Joel. Joel speaks not of "the last days;" he says אחרֵי כֵן "after this," viz: after the happy times which he in the previous passage prophesied to his people. He says not

"God will pour out of his spirit on all flesh;" he says, אֶת רוּחִי "my spirit," without any limitation. The prophet says not "on MY servants and on MY hand-maidens I will pour out of my spirit;" he says plainly, "And also on the servants and on the hand-maidens, in those days, I will pour out my spirit," to which Luke adds, "and they shall prophesy." He stops in the midst of the verse because the prophet concludes thus: "For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and among the remnant whom the Lord calleth."

It appears that the author of "The Acts" felt that the passage quoted from Joel did not suit his case, and he made the arbitrary changes in the Scriptural text as we have noted. But even then it will not do, for the prophet says, God would pour out his spirit "upon all flesh"; he predicts "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," &c.; and Luke claims that the Holy Ghost was poured only on some persons, and not "on all flesh." Joel predicts that event after he had said: "And ye shall know that I am among Israel, and I am God, your Lord, and none beside; *and my people shall never again be put to shame.*" After this time, so the prophet continues, God will pour out his spirit on all flesh, &c. This was not the case in the days of the apostles; for a few years later Israel suffered the worst shame, the most painful humiliation which can be inflicted on a



people: its capital and its sanctuary were destroyed by Titus, its armies slain, its land laid waste, and the people dragged into exile.

Luke or Peter could not possibly have read that passage in Joel without perceiving instantly that it had not the least reference to their case. The mistranslations, additions and omissions, are not accidental; they are intentional. This is most strikingly betrayed in the passage, "And on MY servants and on MY hand-maidens I will pour out in those days OF my spirit, AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY," when the prophet said none of the capitalized words. Luke added the "my" to suit the primitive Christian congregations, for whom he claimed the power of prophesy, of which the prophet said nothing. If Luke had intended to narrate a fact, which he believed, he could not have resorted to the illegitimate means of changing a Scriptural passage to suit his case, when he must have known that, by this very method, he rouses the suspicion of the reader.

Again, if Luke had been certain that the Holy Ghost came down upon the disciples, it was unnecessary to bring in Peter as a witness and put speeches in his mouth which he could never have made. If it sounds strange that the first words which Peter spoke, after he had received the Holy Ghost, were a falsification of Scriptures; and if it sounds stranger still that Peter with the Holy Ghost, did not know what

the prophet Joel said (and the quotation from Joel occurs in Peter's speech), it is beyond all reasonable probability that, in that scene of tumultuous agitation, amazement and ecstasy, as Luke describes it, one was cool and composed enough to write down what Peter said, or that he himself could afterwards even write down what he had said in a state of nameless trance. The scene is depicted in "The Acts" thus: A miracle is wrought, the Holy Ghost comes down in a rushing mighty wind which fills the house, and cloven tongues "like as of fire," sat upon each of the disciples. It affects them so powerfully that they speak with other tongues, in a state of such fiery excitement and feverish ecstasy, that some of the spectators said, "these men are full of new wine." The noise of the miracle and of the voices is so strong that it attracts a multitude of people so great that "about three thousand" of them were baptized. Under this amazement, noise, confusion, excitement and excogitation, so much everybody knows of human nature, nobody could have written down what Peter said, nor could he have done it in an hour of sober thought.

Besides all this, Peter is supposed, in the same speech, to have misquoted from a Psalm of David. He quotes from the sixteenth Psalm with the following mistakes: Verse 25, he makes of שויתי יהוה לפני תמיד "I foresaw the Lord always before my face," which he expounds in the next follow-

ing verses that David spoke "of the resurrection of Christ." Anybody having any knowledge of the Hebrew, which Peter could not help having, knows that *Shivveh* signifies not "to foresee;" it signifies "to make level, to put, to set." (See Gesenius.) King James' translators of the Old Testament knew this and in Psalm xvi, 8, which is the quoted passage, translated "I have set the Lord always before me." This translation, which is the correct one, does away altogether with Peter's assertion connected therewith, that David "fore-saw" the resurrection of Jesus. David set the Lord before his eyes, i. e., he looked up to God with fearless confidence, and therefore he did not fear death or corruption.

It is not well possible that Peter, in the presence of so many Jews, should have interpreted the word *Jehovah* to signify "Christ," as the author of "The Acts" reports him to have done in this speech; because this must certainly have appeared blasphemy in the eyes of his audience, who would not allow even to pronounce the ineffable name of the Most High, much less to apply it to any being, living or dead. Any attentive reader of the New Testament and the history of primitive Christianity knows, that neither Peter nor the Jew Christians ever thought of associating Jesus with *Jehovah*. Jesus was to them plainly the Messiah, a human being of a higher order, who had come to redeem Israel and restore the throne of David.

Therefore Peter could not have spoken the words which Luke puts in his mouth.

Having commenced with a misrepresentation of the sixteenth Psalm, the author of "The Acts" continues in the same strain, and says (verses 27 and 28), "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*Sheol*), neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known unto me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." The correct translation of these two verses (Psalm xvi, 10, 11) is thus:

"For thou wilt not abandon my soul to  
Sheol;  
Thou wilt not suffer thy pious ones to see  
corruption.  
Thou wilt make known to me the path of  
life,  
The fulness of joy (which is) in thy pres-  
ence,  
The pleasantness (which is) at thy right  
hand forever."

The author of "The Acts" changed לֹא into "neither" because he must have another subject in the second member of the verse. He changed חֲסִידֶיךָ into "thy Holy One," when the word is in the plural number and has not the least relation to the word "holy;" it admits no other translation beside "thy pious ones." And he does all this with the avowed intention to misguide the reader to believe that David prophesied the resurrection of Jesus, when the Psalmist actually speaks of the immortality of all pious ones, as the cause

why he feared not death and corruption. The author then changes תוֹדִיעַנִי the plain future tense into "Thou hast made known to me," and adds to the second member of the verse "Thou shalt make me" (full of joy), so that there can not be the least mistake, that he knowingly and wilfully changed this Psalm to apply to the resurrection of Jesus, when it says nothing besides the doctrine of immortality, which David says was his consolation.

Again, Peter is supposed to have said in that speech (verse 34), "For David is not ascended into the heavens;" but he saith himself, "The Lord saith unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand." This argument is absurd, as none can sit on the right hand of God, God having neither hands nor limits, and no body can ascend to heaven, it being contrary to the laws of gravity. If the words "sit on my right hand" must be understood to be seated or placed on a choice spot under God's especial protection, and in special favor with him, then ascension is not necessary to this end.

The words quoted are a translation from Psalm 110, which was addressed to David while he was in Mahenaim, on his flight before his son Absalom. But there it says not "the Lord saith to my Lord," as if God had spoken to God; it says "Jehovah saith to my lord, not with a capital L, it is not *Adoni* which signifies "My Lord" meaning God; it is *Adonee*, "my lord," mean-

ing a man. But aside from this mistake, which Peter could not well have made before a Jewish audience, to whom the words *Adoni* and *Adonee* were too familiar, he could not have used this argument without stating that he had heard it of his master, as it was considered next to a crime among the ancient Jews to adopt the words of another person, and of one's teacher especially, without giving him credit. Matthew (xxii, 44) informs us that Jesus made use of this peculiar argument before the Pharisees. The fact in regard to this misrepresentation of the 110th Psalm appears to be this: Matthew, the authors of "The Acts" and of the "Epistle to the Hebrews," which, critics know, was not Paul, found the following passage of Paul: "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (I Corinthians xv, 25.) This is a legitimate metaphor, suggested by the first verse of the 110th Psalm. But those authors being less acquainted with the Hebrew, took the hint from Paul, and turned the metaphor into a prophecy. Matthew puts it into the mouth of Jesus himself; Luke gives it to Peter, and the author of the "Epistle to the Hebrews" claims it as his own (Heb. i, 13).

Therefore, in the face of all these errors and misrepresentations, no honest critic can maintain that Peter made this speech before a Jewish audience in Jerusalem. Luke composed it and put it into the mouth of Peter, as he did with the previous prayer

and the explanatory verses, in order to have his authority for the alleged fact, that the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost upon the disciples. Thus we know to a certainty, that the author of "The Acts" gives us no authentic history, no chronicle of facts, and we have no cause whatsoever to believe him in the main point, viz: that the Holy Ghost was poured out on the disciples of Jesus, or that he himself believed it. He narrates a current tradition as he had heard it, and embellishes it with a prayer and a speech put in the mouth of Peter.

If, after a careful examination into the statements made by the author of "The Acts," we must confess that, in regard to the first acts of the apostles and the Pentecost miracles, he has not given us historical notices; we must confess at the same time that, in regard to the "Holy Ghost," he stood upon some historical ground. Paul and the primitive Christians maintained, that all believers in the new dispensation possessed the "Holy Ghost" among the gifts of grace; only that the apostles possessed it in a higher degree. There can be no doubt that the apostles alleged to be inspired by the "Holy Ghost." This allegation was neither new nor isolated in the times of the apostles, as is evident from passages in Josephus, Philo and the New Testament itself. But these passages having been frequently quoted and discussed, we will quote from the Talmud passages which explain the whole matter.

The Talmud, in many places, notices a supernatural voice, called בַּת קוֹל *Bath Kol*, "the daughter of a voice," for which we have no proper equivalent in the English, except, probably, the echo. So at least the glossarists to the Talmud (*Sanhedrin 11 a*) understood it. They remark this: "Some maintain that those who heard the *Bath Kol* did not hear a direct voice from heaven; it was like the secondary voice which is heard at a distance if one strikes forcibly the tree of a forest. It was this voice which they heard, therefore they called it "the daughter of a voice."

Moses Landau, in his rabbinical lexicon, and others, maintain the *Bath Kol* was similar to the *vox populi*. This may have been the case some times and in some places, for the ideas connected with the *Bath Kol* differed widely at various times and places. No less a rabbinical authority than Rabbenu Bechai states: "There are four degrees of inspiration: the *Bath Kol*, the *Urim* and *Thumim*, the holy spirit and prophecy itself. This is the rising scale of perfection." He evidently did not consider the *Bath Kol* to be the *vox populi*. He must have considered it to be a direct or indirect voice from heaven. His opinion is based upon several passages in the Talmud. We quote one which occurs several times (*Sanhedrin 11 a*): "The Rabbis teach, with the deaths of the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the holy spirit left



Israel; still they are communicating with the *Bath Kol*." Here the *Bath Kol* is an inferior substitute for the holy spirit which inspired the prophets. This becomes still more evident from the sequel of the same passage, which reads thus: "Once they (the students) were sitting in the upper hall of Beth Guria in Jericho, and there was given upon them a *Bath Kol* from heaven:—There is one here who is worthy that the holy spirit (*Sechinah*) should rest upon him, as it did upon Moses; only that his generation is not worthy enough. The sages looked upon Hillel the Elder," &c. "And once they were sitting in the upper hall at Jamnia, and there was given upon them the *Bath Kol* from heaven:—There is one here who is worthy that the holy spirit should rest upon him. The sages looked upon Samuel the Lesser," &c.

We translate literally, "there was given upon them the *Bath Kol* from heaven;" hence it can not possibly be understood to be the *vox populi*. It is no less evident from the above passages that the *Bath Kol* is considered inferior to the *Shechinah* or holy spirit, and precisely so Rabbenu Bechai understands the matter. This very Samuel the Lesser, it says in the same passage of the Talmud, prophesied before his dying hour the misery which the Emperor Hadrian was to inflict on Israel.

According to the Talmud, King David heard the *Bath Kol*. When he said to Mefibosheth, the son of Jonathan, "thou and Zeba, thy servant, shall divide the

field," the *Bath Kol* said, "Jeroboam and Rehabeam shall divide thy kingdom" (Sabbath, 53). In this case again the *Bath Kol* prophesies. King Solomon also, the Talmud maintains, received a *Bath Kol* (Ibid. 14); but it was only a voice of approbation, after he had ordained certain ritual laws. The Talmud brings the *Bath Kol* as high up as the Israelites in the wilderness, and tells us, "Rabbi Elieser said, when Israel said first, We will do! and then, We will hearken! (understand) there went forth a *Bath Kol* and said: Who broached to my children the secret of the ministering angels?" (Ibid, 86). In this and in the previous case, the *Bath Kol* comes directly from the Deity.

Again, in the Talmud (Sotah, 33) it is maintained that the high priests, Simon the Just and John the Asmonean, heard the *Bath Kol*. The latter was informed, while performing the solemn rites on the Day of Atonement, in the temple at Jerusalem, that the Hebrew host had engaged the Syrians the same day and had routed them completely, near Antioch. This is akin to prophecy.

The *Bath Kol* also spoke to unworthy persons. We are told, (Pesachim, 94, a) "Rabbi Johannan ben Saccai said, what did the *Bath Kol* reply to that wicked man (Nebuchadnezzar), when he said, 'I will ascend to the heights of the cloud and liken myself to the Most High'? There went forth a *Bath Kol* and said to him,

'Wicked man, son of a wicked one, scion of the wicked Nimrod, who caused all under his government to rebel against me, how many are the years of man? Seventy, and if he be strong, eighty. From the earth to heaven is a distance of 500 years' travel, the thickness of each heaven corresponds to the same distance, and the space between each heaven (of the seven) is the same. Thou shalt go down to *Sheol*, to the sides of the pit.'" This passage is carried out at length in Hagigah II.

Acher, an apostate much noted in the very age of the apostles, also heard a *Bath Kol* telling, "Return all ye forward children, except Acher who knew my glory and rebelled against me." (Hagigah).

About the same time the *Bath Kol* decided the controversy in legal matters, between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, in favor of the former. The passage in Talmud Erubin reads thus: "The House of Shammai and the House of Hillel discussed the question for three years; the one maintained our interpretation of the law is correct, and the other claimed the same preference. Then went forth a *Bath Kol* and told them, this and that are the words of the Living God, yet the law shall be practiced according to the interpretations of the House of Hillel. If both are the words of the Living God, why did the *Bath Kol* decide in favor of the House of Hillel? Because they were mild and meek; they not only repeated the words of the

Shammaites with theirs, but even placed them always in advance \* \* \* \* \* to teach thee: whosoever lowers himself, God will elevate; and whosoever elevates himself, God will lower. Who is eager after greatness, greatness will flee him; and whosoever flees greatness, greatness will seek him. Whosoever presses the hour for wealth (time is money), time will press him; and whosoever leaves the hour in the hands of Providence, the hour will favor him." The Talmud Jerushalmi gives great authority to this decision of the *Bath Kol*. It is stated in *Berachoth*: "Before this *Bath Kol* went forth, whosoever wished could do like the House of Hillel or like the House of Shammai; but after this *Bath Kol* went forth, whosoever transgressed the words of the House of Hillel was guilty of death."

The Jerushalmi supposes that this decision by the *Bath Kol* was proclaimed in the Academy of Jamnia. In the same academy, however, and a short time afterwards, the *Bath Kol* was forever rejected as a legitimate decision in points of legal controversy, and the voice of the majority was adopted instead. The passage occurs in *Baba Mezia*, 59-b. There was a hot controversy carried on between Rabbi Elieser and Rabbi Joshua, the two heads of the academy. The audience did not know how to decide. Two astounding miracles were wrought in favor of the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, but they did neither convince nor change the opinion of Rabbi

Joshua. Then Rabbi Eliezer rose and said: "If I am right let the walls of the academy decide." The walls bent, it says there, and began to fall. Then Rabbi Joshua rose and rebuked the walls to stand erect, and erect they stood. Then Rabbi Eliezer said, let heaven himself decide. "There came forth a *Bath Kol* and said: Why are you against Rabbi Eliezer, whose decisions are always correct? Rabbi Joshua rose upon his feet and said: 'It is not in heaven,' i. e., we pay no attention to the *Bath Kol*; the law given on Sinai ordains 'Thou shalt decide according to the majority.'" The miracles and the *Bath Kol* were set aside, and Rabbi Joshua was sustained.

We must quote two more passages: The *Bath Kol* afterwards became a common superstition. The Talmud informs us that Samuel, head of a Babylonian academy, fell sick. Resh Lakish and Rabbi Jochanan went to pay him a visit. They resolved to ask the *Bath Kol* how Samuel was. Passing a schoolhouse they heard a boy reading from the Bible: "And Samuel died," and they understood the *Bath Kol* to have informed them, that Samuel died, and they returned to their respective homes.

The *Bath Kol* of the Talmud is also externally like the "Holy Ghost" of the New Testament. It is the dove in which the "Holy Ghost" comes down from heaven upon Jesus, as in the following passage of

the Talmud (Berachoch, 3 a): "Rabbi Jose says, being once under way I went into one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray there \* \* \* \* \* and I heard there a *Bath Kol* COOING LIKE A DOVE and saying, Wo to the children, on account of whose sins I have destroyed my house, have burnt my temple, and have dispersed them among the Gentiles."

Without multiplying quotations, we believe to be fairly entitled to the conclusion, that the apostles claimed the same communication with the *Bath Kol* as the rabbis of the Pharisees did. *Bath Kol* could not be rendered into the Greek literally, and the "Holy Ghost" was adopted in its place. But the two things are identical. It was a great step in advance on the part of the apostles if they, the humble and illiterate men, the *Amai Haarez*, whom the rabbis neglected and contemned, claimed communication with the *Bath Kol*, as well as the learned and high-toned rabbis. It is not at all likely that the pretensions of the apostles were above the highest of their age or different from them. The Pentecost miracle is an embellishing addition of the author of "The Acts," or of one who transcribed and enriched the book in the third century.

In the academy of Jaunnia is the turning point, where Christianity and rabbinical Judaism separated in opposite directions. The apostles, like Rabbi Eliezer ben Horkinos, clung to the *Bath Kol* and miracles;

while the rabbis, like Rabbi Joshua, rejected both and held to their laws of exegese and the decisions of the majority. This is the first historical point in the origin of Christianity.

Here, however, begins the difficulty of the honest critic. The authors of the Talmud, as well as the authors of the New Testament claim, that certain persons stood in direct communication with the Deity through the *Bath Kol* or the "Holy Ghost;" that such persons prophesied and wrought miracles. Both point to the same time and place, and have the same object in view, the support of religious precepts. The critic must either decide that both are right, or both are wrong, or one side is right and the other wrong; or he must find another way of explaining the matter. The claims are presented with equal force and authority, at least to the critic who looks upon books with the eye of reason and not with the predelictions of religious faith. No side produces any particular evidence in substantiation of its claims; the allegations are made and presented to us without any proof; hence there is no ground for a decision that the one side is right and the other wrong. Where, with equal pretensions or allegations, no proof is offered on any side, caprice only, and not criticism, can accredit the one and reject the other. The comparatively intrinsic value of the New Testament and the Talmud, as products of the human mind, is

not finally decided by any means; some maintain the Body of Doctrine contained in the New Testament is chiefly taken from the sources where the Talmud took the same. Aside, of this, however, the intrinsic value of a book is no evidence for *all* the statements made therein; or else the alleged miracles and divine communications of Mohammet and Zoroaster must also be accepted as truths, since the intrinsic value of the Koran and the Zendavesta can not reasonably be denied.

Neither the Christian nor the Jew can be willing to admit, that the pretensions to supernatural communication of both the apostles and the rabbis are correct; for in this case the Christian must embrace the largest portion of the Talmud, and the Jew, of the New Testament, as divine revelations. Nevertheless both might be true notwithstanding the opposition of either party; if it were not that these oracles from the same Deity radically differ and contradict each other in vital points. To mention one instance which covers the whole ground, the *Bath Kol* decided in favor of the interpretation of the law as the House of Hillel advocated it; at the same time and in the same country the "Holy Ghost" decided that all rabbinical and biblical laws are abolished. Therefore both can not be right.

Nor have we a right to maintain that both are impostors, and alleged to have direct communication with God, when they knew



it was not true; for we have no more proof for one than the other decision. There are before us statements of men. We know not the men, hence we can not impeach their statements from personal reasons. All we have a right to maintain is, that the statements are not true; but we can not prove that the authors knew them to be false.

Therefore we are forced to accept the interpretation adopted by Mr. Wislicenus and also by Mr. Renan, viz: that the apostles (as well as the rabbis we add) in a state of intense ecstasy, believed that they received direct communications from the Deity, through the "Holy Ghost" or the *Bath Kol*, and stated so in cool moments. The revelations were altogether subjective in the imagination and not in reality.

This view of the matter is by no means new, or original with either Mr. Wislicenus or Mr. Renan, or the German rationalists; it has been advanced by Moses Maimonides, at the beginning of the 13th century. He states in his philosophical work, *Moreh Nebuchim*, Part ii. Chapter 42; "Wherever, in Sacred Scriptures, the appearing or speaking of an angel is mentioned, it is a prophetic vision or dream only, whether it is explained or not, it is always the same." After applying this doctrine to different passages of Scriptures, he concludes: "Hagar, the Egyptian, was no prophetess, nor were Menoah and his wife prophets. The words which they

heard, or imagined to have heard, are like the *Bath Kol* which the sages of old frequently mention; it is the attribution of spoken matter to a person who is not actually present, and the error in the matter is its connection with God."

The listener, paying attention, actually to his own internal discourse believes to be addressed by an angel or another creature which only exists in the imagination of that person. The *Bath Kol* connects no speaking person with the words spoken, so doth the "Holy Ghost," and imagines words only. It is no error to imagine the speaking angel or person, who is after all an imagined reality; the error is in the belief that the being is an angel or the Deity.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE GLOSSOLOGY.

How did the *Bath Kol*, or "Holy Ghost," manifest himself, to render his oracles intelligible to the human ear? The author of "The Acts" answers this question by an additional miracle. He narrates, when the apostles and disciples had been gifted with the "Holy Ghost," they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The tongues of the various persons, according to this statement, were the mere instruments of the "Holy

Ghost." He moved them, and caused them to express sentiments and concepts which originated not in those human minds, and in this or that language which the speaking persons had not known before. This is the second part of the Pentecost miracle.

The same author repeats twice, that the "Holy Ghost" demonstrated his presence in a favored person by this phenomenon. Acts x, 46, he narrates as a proof that the "Holy Ghost" was poured also on the Gentiles, "for they heard them speak with tongues," &c. Again, Acts xix, 6, he informs us that Paul, laying his hands on certain disciples in Corinth, brought the "Holy Ghost" upon them, "and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." The possession of the "Holy Ghost" and the "speaking with tongues" were considered inseparable events. Whenever a person was inspired by the "Holy Ghost," he caused him to speak "with tongues." This corresponds exactly with the expression of the Talmud, as quoted above. "*A Bath Kol* was put upon them from heaven," i. e. concepts were impressed on the mind of one or more individuals who were caused by that supernatural power to express them in words.

Before we can explain that peculiar phenomenon, we must ascertain what the author of "The Acts" in this passage understood under his statement, they "began to speak with other tongues." Luke

certainly intended to convey the idea that the apostles and disciples on a sudden spoke all sorts of foreign languages, although before that event they could converse only in the Galilean dialect; for he narrates, that Jews and Jewish proselytes "out of every nation under heaven" just happened to congregate at that point of Jerusalem, where the apostles and disciples were caused to speak by the "Holy Ghost." He goes on and mentions special nations from the East, from the Eastern coast of Africa, from Asia Minor, from Arabia and Rome. To all of them, the inspired men spoke in the various tongues of those countries, so that they must have spoken Greek, Arabic, Ethiopian, Latin and the various dialects of the Aramaic. The men who heard all these languages spoken by illiterate Galileans, were amazed and considered it "the wonderful works of God." Still others mocked them and said: "These men are full of new wine."

There are two miracles within this miracle. The first is, that the persons of those various countries assembled just at that moment and in that place without any previous notice or understanding. Undoubtedly persons from various countries, Jews and Proselytes, resided in Jerusalem; but they certainly were not the bulk of the population. Therefore, if indeed a promiscuous crowd gathered about the apostles, there may have been one or more from this or that country among it. But a multitude

so large, that about three thousand of them were baptized, to consist exclusively or at least chiefly of foreigners, and to meet accidentally in a city, the bulk of whose population consisted of natives, is more than a common miracle, it is impossible. Besides, if men rise in a city of so much intelligence as Jerusalem then was, and speak well in all languages understood there; it must certainly create surprise and amazement, it can not possibly excite ridicule and mockery. It may be maintained, that those who mocked the speakers, did not understand any of those foreign tongues, and therefore they said, "These men are full of new wine." But why did the apostles choose to speak in foreign tongues and not first and foremost in the vernacular of the country? A multitude of people living in a large city, however rude and illiterate it may be, knows enough to distinguish words of reason and sense from the confused stammerings of inebriated persons. Luke pays no attention to these two miracles which are within the one he communicates; because he could expect with certainty, that persons who will believe that God on a sudden pours into a number of men so many hundred thousand terms, as those languages have, without study or conversation, will certainly not think of the two other miracles. Whoever believes, may believe one thing as well as another. Whoever believes one absurdity may, on the same principle, believe all of them.

Mr. Renan\* supposes in this matter, that the apostles, at their entry on a ministry destined to embrace the world, were alarmed by the number of languages spoken. But they believed that the preaching of the gospel would relieve them from the obstacle of the difference of Idioms. "They pretended that, under certain solemn circumstances, those present had heard, each in his own language, the gospel preached by the apostles." On the next page Mr. Renan goes on informing us that the Jews, the Helenists excepted, preferred the original to any translation of the Bible, which, however, was quite natural. They placed no great value on translations. "But the first plan of the Christians was even broader; according to their idea, the word of God has no language peculiar to it; it is free, unfettered by any idiomatic peculiarity; it is delivered to all spontaneously and without interpretation."

Mr. Renan supposes two things, neither of which is true. He supposes the twelve apostles thought of a mission destined to embrace the world, or of disentangling the word of God from the thralldom of language; while these are the views and doctrines of Paul, as we shall see hereafter, and not of "the twelve," who did not think even of leaving Jerusalem or the country. Mr. Renan supposes the apostles narrated the Pentecost miracle or Luke told it after them, neither of which is the case, as we

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\* The Apostles, p. p. 96, 97.

have demonstrated in the second chapter. Luke only and alone is responsible for this story, the apostles had nothing in the world to do with it. Luke had particular reasons for writing this story; but we can not state these reasons before we know what the expression "speaking with tongues" actually signifies.

Paul explains this matter in his epistle to the Corinthians. He says:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

"And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

"And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

"To another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

"To another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, *divers* kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues;

"But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

These, according to Paul, are the gifts of grace bestowed on the believers, among which is also the ability of speaking "divers kinds of tongues" given to some, while others are chosen by the spirit for "the interpretation of tongues," as the one

worked miracles and another prophesied. One who spoke "divers kinds of tongues" did not himself understand what he said; he needed another inspired person to expound it, one for "the interpretation of tongues." Paul's statement contradicts Luke's in these particular points: Luke, as we have seen in the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter, considers the possession of the "Holy Ghost" and the "speaking of tongues" inseparably connected. With Paul this is not the case; not all who possess the "Holy Ghost" speak in "divers kinds of tongues." With Luke those possessing the "Holy Ghost" speak in foreign but intelligible tongues, which need neither interpretation nor comment. With Paul, however, there must be other persons for "the interpretation of tongues," so that the words or sounds uttered by the inspired ones were intelligible only to those who were also inspired, and among them only to those who were gifted with the particular grace of interpretation.

This view of the matter is fully supported by Paul in the fourteenth chapter of the same epistle. Paul rebukes the Corinthians for this abuse. He says (verse 2): "For he that speaketh in *an unknown tongue* speaketh not unto men, but unto God—for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." He continues in verses 4 and 5: "He that speaketh in *an unknown tongue* edifieth him-



self \* \* \* for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret that the church may receive edifying." He fully explains what this "speaking with tongues" signifies. He says in the next verses (7 to 11):

"And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

"So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

"Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me."

Paul then exclaims: "I thank my God; I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in *an unknown tongue*."

Thus we know that the "speaking with tongues" was a superstition, against which Paul remonstrated with the Corinthians. He did it fully and keenly in saying, "If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place and all speak with tongues, and there came in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

We know that it was not intelligible language or articulate sounds; it was an inarticulate ejaculation, a sort of groaning, moaning, murmuring or shrieking vociferation uttered in a state of violent ecstasy. These inarticulate sounds were expounded either by the individual himself or by others, who were skilled in the art of making words, in this or that language, from the inarticulate sounds thus uttered. This is not very difficult, as the elementary sounds thus uttered must have some signification in this or that language, especially if the expounder and audience are not very critical, as this is the case among persons in a state of religious excitement. Both sounds and interpretation were arbitrary and were used as a mysterious means to communicate ideas with a certain degree of awe and obscurity. This mode of expression was called afterwards "glossology,"\* and was practiced in the church down to the third century. It was practiced also by many mystics even in our days. In a meeting of believers a man in a state of exaltation utters a number of inarticulate sounds under wild gesticulations and in an exciting tone. Each of those present believing to hear a revelation from on high explains those sounds to his own satisfaction, and he will certainly find something very holy in them; or one

\* GLOSSY LALAIN are the Greek terms which are rendered "speaking with tongues." The Greek LALAIN signifies to talk inarticulate sounds, like the German *Plappern* or *Lallen*, somewhat like mumbling.

versed in this skill expounds for the rest of the audience. This was still easier in the apostolic church with her numerous languages and dialects, as each must have found something of importance in any number of arbitrary sounds. It was introduced and upheld for the special purpose of those who could not speak foreign languages. A Jewish apostle, for instance, came to a Greek congregation, he was not prepared to speak in their language, still he communicated to them special revelations; in a state of exaltation in their devotional meetings he uttered a number of inarticulate sounds, and there was somebody to expound the oracle; if not, each listener could understand it as he chose.

It may have been necessary in the primitive state of Christianity to resort to the glossology, for more than one reason. First, because mystery was inevitably necessary to convert heathens, and these mysterious sounds, understood but by the learned who expounded them, and the believers who understood them at pleasure, made a much deeper impression upon the marvel-loving heathens, than plain and intelligible words could do. Secondly, the difficulty of different languages was overcome by this universal vehicle. Thirdly, the apostles and disciples themselves may have actually believed this superstition, and so their followers practiced it, some from honest motives, because they believed in it, and others from motives of prudence.

It is difficult to say what man will not do or not believe in a state of ecstasy and under the influence of eccentricities.

It may be difficult for some readers to imagine how men could suppose only, that ideas were communicated in so fantastic and uncertain a manner. We must remember, however, that in all ancient languages, as well as in the present languages of the orient and the less civilized people of European countries, gesticulation and inflection of the voice have frequently more to do than the words with the expression of the feelings and ideas.

In Greece and Rome\* the musical and gesticulating pronunciation was retained in a high degree. The quantities of the syllables were fixed. Besides this difference of short and long, accents were placed upon syllables, the acute, grave, and circumflex which, we know, determined the speaker's voice to raise or fall. "The declamation of their orators," says Mr. Blair, "and the pronunciation of their actors upon the stage, approached to the nature of a recitative in music; was capable of being marked in notes, and supported with instruments. The case was parallel in regard to gesture; for strong tones and animated gestures always go together."

In Greece this practice was so general, that Aristotle, in his poetics, considers the music of tragedy as one of its chief and most essential parts. In Rome gesture was

\*See Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, Lecture VI.

cultivated to such an extent, that under the reign of Augustus and Tiberius, it not only engrossed the stage so entirely, that pantomime was the favorite entertainment of the public, and moved the audience to tears as much as tragedies; it also engrossed the public oratory so excessively that laws were enacted to restrain the senators from studying the pantomime art.

If inflection, gesture and pantomime played so important a part in conveying ideas and feelings among the Greeks and Romans, whose languages are rich and highly cultivated, these elements must have been still more prominent with the ancient Hebrews, whose language was poorer and their temperament livelier. The Hebrew and all its cognate languages have musical notes placed on each word, to mark the quantity of the syllable and the position of the word in the sentence. The song itself has been lost, but not the inclination to accompany discourse with numerous inflections and gestures. Rabbinical students to this day employ peculiar inflections and gestures in reading the Talmud, the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the Books of Lamentation and of Esther. The singing inflection and animated gesticulations of oriental priests and worshippers, also in the Greek church, the peculiar recitative of the Romish priests, and the behavior of the Hebrews in their synagogues which are still carried on in the old style, tell us sufficiently the impor-

tance of inflection and gesture among the orientals.

If we go back to the age of the apostles, and consider the poverty of language, the excitability of the nervous system, the liveliness of the temperament, the common usage, and the peculiar state of mind of those who believed to receive heavenly communications by the "Holy Ghost" or through the *Bath Kol*; we can easily imagine that the inflection of the voice and the gestures of the speaker, music and pantomimic, conveyed more feelings and ideas than words did, and exercised a deeper influence on the audience than speech could. The oracles, expressed in inarticulate sounds, under peculiar gesticulations and song, were a sort of universal language to them which many at least, if not all, could decypher.

It is natural to suppose that the apostles did not invent the glossology; they took it from the same source where they took the "Holy Ghost," viz: from the pretensions and practices of the rabbis of their age. Having advanced the allegation to the world that they, as well as the learned doctors, communicated with the Almighty by means of the *Bath Kol*, they could express the messages from that source only in the same manner as their opponents did.

The Talmud makes use of two different expressions in connection with the *Bath Kol*; it "went forth" or "went out" *יָצָא* *yotseah*, or also "a *Bath Kol* was given upon

them from heaven," נתנה *nathnah*. In some passages the actual enunciation of the *Bath Kol* is omitted, and it is stated that a person *heard* that mysterious voice, שמע *shamang*. Wherever the former expression is used, "it went forth," the recipient heard accidentally a voice, while he was in a state of exalting devotion, as in the case of the rabbi who prayed in one of the ruins of Jerusalem and heard the *Bath Kol* "cooing like a dove," and he expounded the voice to himself. This is especially clear in the passage (Sotah 33,) where it is narrated that two high priests, John the Amonean, and Simon the just, heard the *Bath Kol*, while engaged in divine service in the temple. There it is plainly stated, שמע קול מבית הקדשים "He heard a voice coming from the *sanctum sanctorum*," which he understood to say a certain prophecy in the Aramaic tongue. Again, where the second expression is used, viz: "A *Bath Kol* was given upon them from heaven," it was not an external voice but an internal one. One in a state of ecstasy supposed and maintained to have received a message from on high, and uttered it in inarticulate sounds which were then expounded by the experts, most always in Hebrew, it being the holy language. This was not very difficult in Jerusalem, where all the Aramaic dialects, the Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Greek and Latin languages, besides the Hebrew, were known\*, as is

\* Yerushalmi Meguillah IV, 5 and Rabbah to Esther.

evident from the roots of the popular dialect then spoken in Judea. Therefore, almost any kind of sounds, heard in a state of exaltation or ecstasy, could be connected into words of one language or the other, especially if the hearer, as he must have done, possessed the faith that God sent him a communication.

The reader will easily understand why the ancient Hebrews called these oracles *Bath Kol* "the daughter-voice." The oracle being the offspring of a voice which was heard, they, in their poetical mode of expression, could only style it the son, offspring, child or daughter of a voice. The latter word was preferred, because *Kol* "voice" takes the female form in the plural number, or because it sounded more poetical to the oriental ear.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the apostles and disciples practiced precisely the same interpretation of accidental sounds and in the same manner. In a state of devotional exaltation or contemplative ecstasy, any accidental noise from the roar of the thunder to the cooing of the dove, or any sensation of unusual joy, pain, happiness, sorrow, &c., could easily be ascribed to the influence of the "Holy Ghost," and expressed in words, or in sounds of which others composed words. Therefore the Pentecost miracle might rest on the historical ground, that the apostles and disciples, hearing a storm and thunderclaps, and seeing a stream of lightning flashing over



their meeting-room, understood this to be the *Bath Kol*, the enunciation of divine messages from on high, and expounded them accordingly before the multitude. This is the view of the matter adopted by Mr. Renan, who, in this case, as in almost all others, makes history of probabilities, and more than a bare probability can not be produced in support thereof.

On the other hand, however, we know that the author of this portion of "The Acts" had no intention to write history or even myth; he recorded a traditional tale and embellished it to suit his purposes. He invented a speech for Peter, one which this apostle never could have made. He speaks of a crowd which could not possibly have existed. He imitates a passage from the Book of Kings by a series of miracles pressed together in the time of an hour. He speaks of storm, thunder and lightning because it is the Pentecost miracle which he tells, and he attempts an imitation of the Sinaiic scenes. Therefore, while there is not a historical feature in the whole narrative, except the allegation of the apostles and disciples to possess the "Holy Ghost;" we discover everywhere tendency and special purpose. It is natural, therefore, to suppose this linguistic miracle as well as the rest of the story was invented to a certain purpose.

The purpose for the invention of the linguistic miracle is easily discovered. In the first place, the author of the narrative,

by the numbers twelve, seventy, and especially a hundred and twenty, betrays his intention to represent the first Christian synod as a body superior to the Sanhedrin of the Jews. Whether this view originated with the apostles themselves or the author of the narrative, it is difficult to ascertain; but it is doubtlessly the intention of the narrator. The Talmud, in two different places (Sanhedrin 17, a; Menachoth 65, a) cites the following passage: "None shall be appointed to the Sanhedrin but men of wisdom, appearance, stature and advanced age, *men who understand necromancy and the seventy languages*, so that they need not hear cases through an interpreter." It was supposed that the Sanhedrin, as a body, must understand the language "of every nation under heaven." They counted then seventy different languages altogether. Therefore the men of the first Christian synod were obliged, in the opinion of the author of the narrative, to converse in all tongues, "because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

Besides the passage in Mark, which Jesus, after his resurrection, is reported to have said to the disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (xvi, 15), to which end they necessarily must have been gifted with a knowledge of all languages—the narrator had in view a passage in Psalm 81, where it says (verse 6), "A language I know not I will understand;" and this is placed there

in connection with the redemption from the Egyptian bondage. Our author, by a little stretch of the imagination, thought, if at the first redemption, they understood a language hitherto unknown to them; at this second redemption through Jesus, they might have understood all the languages hitherto unknown to them. Besides all this he had in view the passages of the various prophets, the fulfillment of which was expected with the coming of the Messiah. These prophecies had to be fulfilled now. The prophets predict the return of the dispersed sons of Israel from all lands. Therefore the author of the narrative assembles on this occasion the Israelites from all lands known to him. He makes special mention of those of Lybia and Cyrene, to fulfill the prophecy of Zephaniah (iii, 10), who, speaking of the final redemption, lets Israelites return home "from the other side of the river of Ethiopia." There again the author of the narrative found occasion to invent the linguistical miracle; for there and in connection with the final redemption the prophet says (Zephaniah iii, 9), "Then I will turn *a pure language* to all nations, that all call the name of God, and serve him in one accord." He took this passage literally, and inverted it. Instead of changing all languages into one, he gave the apostles the power to speak them all, which serves the same purpose.

The whole Pentecost story with its double miracles is an invention either of the

writer of the narrative, or somebody before him, so that it reached him in the church traditions. Its object is the announcement of a new revelation on the day of Pentecost, the glorification of the apostles and disciples and placing them above the Sanhedrin of the Jews, and the literal fulfillment of prophecies supposed to point to the time of the Messiah. All this is done so unskillfully that it is easy for the critic to look through the scheme of the author. The only truth underlying this story is the allegation of the apostles and disciples to divine communications from on high through the medium of the "Holy Ghost," or *Bath Kol*, which are different names for the same object.

We will have occasion to speak once more of the Pentecost miracles on reaching the history of Paul, with whom the idea of a second revelation through Jesus originated. The author of the narrative invented a solemn occasion and brilliant scene for the embodiment of Paul's idea.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NASCENT CONGREGATION.

The growth of the nascent congregation, the author of "The Acts" maintains, was very rapid. Right after the Pentecost miracle three thousand converts were add-

ed to the 120, and shortly afterwards their number increased to 5,000 believers. Supposing that those converts were adults, the total population of believers in the city of Jerusalem must have amounted to no less than 15,000 souls. This number, of course, like almost all the others we met, is an invention of the author or transcriber of "The Acts," not merely because the numbers three and five, like seven and ten, being symbolical, are expressions of unknown or hyperbolical quantities; but chiefly because subsequent statements contradict this arbitrary number of believers. It is natural to think, if the Christian doctrine had achieved such a signal victory in the capital, that 5,000 adults had embraced it within a few days, it must have gained hundreds of thousands of believers within a short time in the provinces, which was not the case. But we shall find occasion hereafter to show the incredibility of this number. One of the most important facts in contradiction thereof is the communistic and cenobitical form of government in the nascent congregation.

According to the united testimony of Josephus, Philo and Pliny, the Elder, there existed a sect in Palestine under the name of Essenes, who were either identical with or very similar to the Therapeuts of Egypt. Modern researches have led to the conclusion that the Essenes and Therapeuts, in their respective organizations, imitated the Order of Pythagoras, with which they had

the principal features in common; nevertheless they disagreed in many doctrines.\*

These Essenees constituted a secret order with degrees, in which candidates were instructed. Josephus gives us no account of their origin. They are mentioned for the first time about 166 B. C., in the time of John, brother of Judah Maccabee. The first name of an Essenee, Judas, is mentioned about 110 B. C., in the time of Aristobul, son of John Hyrcan. Philo thinks the order was established by Moses himself, and Pliny† says they existed already "for thousands of centuries" (par saeculorum millia). The Talmud gives no account of their origin, which can be relied on. So we can only say with certainty, that at least during a time of two centuries before the apostles to an unknown time after the fall of Jerusalem,‡ the Essenees lived and taught their doctrines in Palestine and other parts of Western Asia and Eastern Africa.

We shall treat in another chapter of this work on the peculiar doctrines and dogmas of this order. It suffices for our present purpose to know that the Essenees were communists in regard to property. Josephus, in his "Wars," book ii, chap. viii, § 3, states expressly, that the Essenees despise wealth, and adhere to the doctrine of

\*Vide J. J. Bellermann's *Geschichtliche Nachrichten aus dem Alterthume ueber Essaeer und Therapeuten*. Berlin, 1821.

† *Hist. Nat. L. V.*, cap. 16 and 17.

‡ *Zach. Frankel, Monatsschrift 1853, p. 70.*

common possession, so that none of them was richer than the other, "because it is a law of the sect, that every one who joins it gives up his property to the order." "The property of all of them is their common possession, and all of them, like brothers, have but one property."

Philo, in his book, "The Righteous Only is Free,"<sup>‡</sup> says of this sect or order: "In the first place not one of them has a house of his own, which does not belong to all of them. For, besides their living together in large societies, each house is also open to every visiting brother of the order. Furthermore all of them have one store of provisions and equal expenses; they have their garments in common, as they do with their provisions. They reside together, eat together, and have everything in common, to an extent as it is carried out nowhere else." The section of the Essenes whom Pliny met East of the Dead Sea, had not even money in use among themselves.

The apostolic congregation imitated the communistic and cenobitical form of government, as they borrowed numerous other doctrines and practices from that mystic sect. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all of them, as every one had need." (Acts ii, 44, 45.) "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed

<sup>‡</sup> Vide Eusebius' Hist. Eccles., Lib. viii, cap. 12.

was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need." (Acts iv, 32-34.)

The author of "The Acts," furthermore, advances that the members of the nascent congregation, both apostles, disciples and converts, were nearly always together in one place, either in the temple or at the meal in this or that house. Luke already at the close of his gospel informs us that the apostles and disciples "were continually in the temple." Again, in Acts i., 12 to 14, he narrates that all of them met in one upper room. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." After the "three thousand" converts had been added to the congregation, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii., 42.) "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house." (Ibid. 46.) The same is repeated after the number of converts had increased to "five thousand." (Ibid. v., 42.) Up to this date the apostles were the stewards of the whole congregation, and did not only teach them and pray with them, but they did also feed them. But then a



portion of the congregation complained of the neglect of widows in the administration of the daily affairs; and seven deacons or stewards were appointed to manage the worldly matters of the community.

It is evident that 5,000, or even 3,000 adults, with their children, could not be together always, either in the temple or in any house of Jerusalem. It is no less certain, however, that Luke advances the idea that they were always together in one place, and divided their time between prayer and the meals. Therefore one of the statements must be dropped; either the nascent congregation was not one communistic and cenobitical body, or the numbers 5,000 and 3,000 are taken much too high. In the first case, all passages of "The Acts" quoted in this chapter must be declared spurious, and the whole tenor of the story fictitious, while in the latter case, only two numbers need be taken as considerably exaggerated. Besides, we have in favor of the former the fact of the Essenes whose communistic and cenobitical organization, as well as others of their forms and doctrines, the nascent congregation may have imitated; while we have against the latter the abuse of round figures common to almost all ancient writers. Therefore we set down as a fact that the nascent congregation was communistic and cenobitical, and the number of members must have been quite limited, hardly amounting in adults and minors to 300 or 500 persons at any

time prior to the fall of Jerusalem, although outside of the Jewish capital the number of converts increased much more rapidly.

It is quite natural that this congregation was soon impoverished and alms were gathered elsewhere to support it. Paul organized this affair, and appointed the first day of the week for the purpose of gathering the alms, which were sent to Jerusalem under his supervision. (I. Corin. xvi.) We find, also, one Agabus (Acts xi, 28), who collected alms at Antioch for the congregation of Jerusalem. It is no wonder, therefore, that this congregation was called Ebionites, "the needy ones." The Essenes were an industrious and economical class of people, hence they could not be poor. The nascent congregation imitated the communism of the Essenes without adopting also their industry, hence poverty was certain to come.

This "breaking bread from house to house," and eating "their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," is almost literally copied from Josephus' and Philo's accounts of the meals of the Essenes. Josephus (Wars, Book II, cap. viii, § 5), gives the following account of the cenobitical Essenes :

After having partaken of the first meal their superiors dismissed them to their work, from which they returned at eleven o'clock. Then they met again in one place each girded with a white apron. After having washed their bodies with cold water,

they went into their house, where none but the initiated were admitted, and purified as if going to partake of a sacrificial meal, they entered the dining room. Being seated in proper order, the baker handed each a piece of bread and the cook placed one simple dish before each. The elder prayed, and none were allowed to taste food before the prayer was closed. After the meal was taken the elder prayed again. The peculiar clothes which they wore during meal were laid aside, as though they were sacerdotal vestments, and each returned to his work. They met again in the evening and in the same manner partook of their supper, in company of visiting brethren. Neither noise nor confusion desecrated the house; one spoke after the other in regular order, the rest listened silently. The cause of this undisturbed order, Josephus thinks, was their strict sobriety and frugality.

Philo, in his book on "Contemplative Life," gives a better detailed description of these meals. He speaks, however, of those Essenees who lived separated during the whole week and met only every seventh day, a practice imitated afterwards by Paul.\* They met in their "semnyon," Philo narrates, which had two apartments, one for the men and another for the women, with a low partition of about three to four feet high between, so that all could hear and see each other. Philo then continues to speak, "Of their common meetings

\* Acts xx, 7; I Corinth. xvi, 2.

and their joyful amusements at their meals. After they are all assembled, dressed in white, cheerful, and with the most sublime dignity, one of the elders gives a signal, and they place themselves in proper order, their eyes and hands raised to heaven, and in this position they pray to God, that their meal may please him. After prayer they lie down at the table in order as they were initiated into the society; the men recline on their right hand, and the women on their left, upon plain mattings. They would not allow servants to wait on them, because they abhor slavery; the young men of the society wait upon the company at table. They drink no wine at those meals; they drink pure water, cold or warm. They eat no animal food; they eat bread and salt spiced with hysop.

“After the company is thus placed, all are silent. One of them proposes a passage of Sacred Scriptures, which another of the company expounds, and the others listen silently. Their approbation is marked by nods or by a calm and joyful expression of the face; they express doubts by raising one finger of the right hand towards the head. The expositions of the Law consist of symbols and allegories; for the whole Law appears to those men like one living animal, the words are the body, the secret essence is the soul, in which the soul of the wise contemplates chiefly itself.

“When the lesson is finished all clap

hands in demonstration of approbation and joy. Then the presiding elder rises and begins a song. After him all the company rises, and standing in order they listen to the song and join to one chorus at the end of each stanza. The young men carry in the tables and dishes, and the company eats.

"After the evening meal they celebrate the holy evening service (*panuchida*) in this manner. During meal two choirs are formed, one of males and another of females, with a leader to each. They sing hymns of various measures and in diverse melodies, sometimes in duet and then again in chorus. They march about in procession and pause sometimes, always chanting strophes and antistrophes in an appropriate manner."

Philo gives then a full description of the *panuchida*, which is not necessary to our purpose. The intelligent reader is fully enabled by these quotations to see where the author of "The Acts" took his expressions of "eating their bread with gladness and singleness of heart." There can be no doubt that the sacrament commonly called the Lord's supper is an imitation of the Essenian meals, and especially of the *panuchida*. The nascent congregation imitated not only the communism and cenobitical life of one section of the Essenes, but also their peculiar manner of partaking meals. The wine was added because the Pharisees pronounced the blessing

over the wine at the opening of each principal meal. Nor is it certain, from the accounts of Josephus, that those Essenees abstained altogether from wine. To this was added the mystical signification of the bread and wine to represent the body and blood of Jesus.

Paul, however, teaching his religion to the Gentiles of different cities and countries, could not introduce this ant~~is~~ocial and impracticable form of government. He restricted these meals which were intended to replace among the Heathens their sacrificial and riotous feasts, to the first day of the week, in imitation of that section of the Essenees which Philo describes. It was all imitation, the crucifixion on the day of Passover, the reception of the "Holy Ghost" on the day of Pentecost, the *Bath Kol* changed into a "Holy Ghost" the government of the congregation copied from the Essenees, the eating of meals adopted from the same source; it is all copied, and may, therefore, be true.

Paul was too circumspective and prudent a man, that he should have attempted to impose upon the Gentile converts the Essenean form of communistic and cenobitical government. The holy meals were too general among the Heathens that he could do without one; and he reduced them to one every week as among the Alexandrian Essenees or Therapeuts. But he soon found occasion to regret also this concession. As the speaking with tongues

was grossly abused by the Gentile Christians, so was the holy supper; it soon became a nuisance in the estimation of Paul, and he opposed it in his usual and frank manner. So he wrote to the Corinthians (I. Cor. xi, 20:) "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before others his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken. What! Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in; or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." After having given them advice how to take the holy meal, he continues: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." He concludes with the admonition: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation." Also in II. Peter, ii, 13, the apostle speaks in harsh terms of the abuse of the holy meals. He says: "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you." A similar passage occurs in the epistle of Jude

(verse 12): "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeling themselves without fear—clouds they are without water, carried about of winds," &c.

So this matter would do only among the Palestine Christians, who were used to Es-senean ascetics, sobriety and frugality; among Gentiles used to riot and excess at their sacrificial meals, the substitute for those meals—the Lord's supper—soon was converted into a source of sensuality and excess. It is no wonder therefore that these apostolic feasts of charity soon were changed in the church. They were replaced by the bread and wine at the Lord's supper, parcelled out by a priest, so that none should get too much.

The author of "The Acts" could not close his remarks on the government of the nascent congregation without narrating a miracle. He tells the following story (Acts v, 1 to 11):

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, (his wife also being privy to it,) and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

"While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

"And Ananias hearing these words, fell



down, and gave up the ghost. And great fear came on all them that heard these things.

"And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

"And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

"And Peter answered unto her. Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

"Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord? behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

"Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

"And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."

Attempts have been made to assign natural causes to this terrible miracle. The death of Ananias and Sapphira was accounted for by a violent, though unusual, shock on the system by the unexpected discovery of their falsehood, and this shock caused sudden death. A single case of this kind would certainly be an extraordinary event, especially in the case where no terror reigns, no severe punishment is to be feared. But that the same accident should happen twice the same day and in the same place, and to husband and wife, is altogether improbable. Besides, if the death of the two persons had been accidental, Peter and the others must have exceedingly regretted

that two good persons died so suddenly for so small and pardonable an offense.

The most singular feature of this story is its barbarity; its character is entirely repugnant to every consciousness of love, justice and humanity. With the calm wickedness of a blood-thirsty despot, Peter is made to say to the terrified woman, "Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out." Therefore if the miracle of itself renders the story suspicious, the tenor of the miracle renders it entirely unacceptable. Peter can not thus contradict himself, so much every body must know of human nature, and preach a religion of love and forgiveness of sin, while on the other hand he acts a bloody and merciless executioner. Common sense rejects this entire story as a rude fiction.

There is tendency, however, in this story. Peter's knowledge is marvelous and supernatural; he is the head of the congregation, speaks and acts on her behalf; the money is not given to the congregation, it is laid at the feet of the apostles; a deception practiced on the apostles is identical with one practiced on the "Holy Ghost," and this is a crime punishable with death. Here are evident traces from a century, when the successor of Peter was acknowledged as the head of the church and the bishops were her representatives. An example was invented to terrify people, not to deceive the head of the church or

her representatives, to prompt people to bequeath their property to the church, and let them know whosoever deceives a priest and does not give him all he promised, deceived the "Holy Ghost," who will surely kill him. Only in a century of barbarism, when the original intentions of the founders of Christianity were no longer understood, this story could be invented and smuggled into "The Acts" by some dishonest transcriber.

The government of the nascent congregation, in imitation of the Essenes, was certainly mild and patriarchal. The members living together, eating their frugal meals from the same store and at the same table, for a long time expected the immediate return of the crucified Messiah, the restoration of the Davidian throne and the redemption of Israel. With this expectation and hope, it was natural to them that they sold all they had and sacrificed it to the sustenance of the congregation. We have seen the same thing done here, when the end of the world was predicted. After they had sold all they had and it was all spent, the communistic and cenobitical organization was perfected, alms came from abroad, and they continued in this state for many years, most likely to the time when they were expelled altogether from Jerusalem during the Roman war. So far we believe to have extracted all the facts from

our sources relating to the origin of Christianity.\*

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## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE MIRACLES.

The author of "The Acts" in the progress of the story narrates that the apostles, especially Peter and John, wrought miracles. He states first in general, "And many signs and wonders were done by the apostles," (Acts ii, 43.) He repeats this statement (Ibid. v, 12,) "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people." He then gives some details of these signs and wonders thus: "Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and those which were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one."

The superstition that the shadow of Peter healed the sick is not ascribed to the apostles, nor is it maintained that cures were effected thereby; the author only informs us that Peter's reputation was so great among the people that many were

\*The ancient Jews had a tradition, that the number of disciples altogether consisted of 320 uncircumcised persons. See Ibn Ezra to Daniel xii, 2, and Rashi to Sanhedrin 65 b, Amsterdam edition.

led to credit the superstition, that even the passing shadow of Peter was sufficient to cure diseases and to banish unclean spirits. This is hyperbolic, of course, and intended to glorify Peter. Had Peter, indeed, enjoyed so extraordinary a reputation among so superstitious a class of people, the cause of Christianity must necessarily have met with much better success in and about Jerusalem than was actually the case.

A special cure by Peter and John is mentioned in Acts iii, 2. A man, lame "from his mother's womb," was carried daily to the gate of the temple, "to ask alms." One day, on seeing Peter and John, he asked alms of them; but Peter cured him, so that "he leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." This miracle created great astonishment among the multitude, for the man was already forty years old. The crowd gathered about the apostles "in the porch that is called Solomon's." Peter embraced this opportunity to preach his doctrines to them, which increased the number of believers to "five thousand, and led to the arrest of the two apostles."

The speech put in the mouth of Peter on this occasion belongs again to the author of "The Acts." This is evident from the use of the terms "Son of God" and "the Holy One," in connection with Jesus, of which neither Peter nor the Ebionites knew any thing, nor did they ever admit any such

doctrine. Jesus was to them the Messiah, or the Christ, as it is called in Greek. With Peter, as is evident almost from the same passage, Jesus was a prophet like Moses (iii, 22, 23, 24.) But as we shall dwell on this point at some length, we pass over here to another. The highpriest Ananias, a Sadducee, is mentioned in connection with this scene. This can only be the same highpriest who had the apostle James stoned, viz.: Ananias, the son of Ananias. He, according to Josephus (*Antiqu.* xx, ix, 1) was appointed to his office by King Agrippa II, and exercised stern severity, because "he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above all the rest of the Jews," as Josephus says. The highpriest slew James, the brother of Jesus, when Festus was dead, and the new procurator of Judea, Albinus, "was but upon the road." This Albinus came to Judea in the year 62, A. C. In "The Acts," however, this scene and speech and the subsequent arrest of Peter and John are represented as following shortly after the Pentecost miracle, hence about two months or so after the crucifixion. We merely call attention here to this utter confusion of dates, on which we must treat at length hereafter, to show that neither the miracle, nor the scene, the speech and subsequent arrest of Peter and John are historical.

Peter also healed a man of the palsy. His name was Eneas. He had kept his bed

eight years. In the same chapter we are also informed in a little story that a certain pious woman from Joppa, whose name was Tabitha or Dorcas, died after a brief illness. Peter then at Lydda was sent for. He came, prayed, and said, "Tabitha, arise." The dead woman obeyed; she rose and lived, "and many believed in the Lord."\*

Paul worked no miracles. It is narrated of him, indeed (Acts xxviii, 3) that a viper fastened to his hand without doing him any harm; but he says not that he performed a miracle. He speaks of "mighty signs and wonders by the power of the spirit of God," (Romans xv, 19); but he may have imagined them in the power of his eloquence which enabled him to preach the Gospel "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum," especially as he says (I. Corinthians i, 22,) "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." Again he says (Ibid. ii, 4) that his preaching "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power;" but this points to no miracles; it points much more to mighty appeals to the sentiments and feelings in preference to logical evidence. He speaks of visions and revelations (II. Corinthians xii, 1,) but not of miracles performed on others, like those of Jesus, Peter or John.

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\* A similar story (Acts xx, 7, &c.) of Paul, while at Troas, is not narrated as a miracle. Eutychus fell down from the third loft, "and was taken up dead." But he was not dead, for Paul said, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him." It was no miracle.

The same is the case in the passage I. Thesal. (i, 5) and in II. Thesal. (ii, 9.) These are the passages on which Mr. Renan bases his allegation that Paul believed in miracles.†

No critical reader will find therein any inference even entitling him to such an allegation as a matter of history.

The only passage which might possibly commit Paul as a believer in miracles is I. Cor. xii, where he speaks of the gifts of grace. "For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another faith by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." But in the same chapter (verses 28, 29, 30,) he evidently ascribes wisdom to the apostles, knowledge to the prophets, faith to the teachers, and below these three classes he places those who work miracles, heal the sick, speak with diverse tongues, or interpret, so that neither of these lower functions belonged to the apostles. This passage proves only that Paul admitted the Gentile Christians' pretensions to work miracles, heal the sick, &c.; it admits by no means that he believed any thing of the kind.

The gift of prophecy of which Paul speaks is not a prediction of future events; it is merely a sort of trance, something akin to

† The Apostles, p. 123.



speaking with "diverse tongues," with the distinction that the prophets spoke intelligible words, while those of the diverse tongues did not. This gave rise to great confusion in the primitive churches, as is evident from the words of Paul, (I. Corinth. xiv, 26, &c.) :

"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

"If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

"But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

"If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

"For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

"And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

"For God is not the *author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

"And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

"What! came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

It is true that Paul recommended charity as a virtue superior to all gifts of grace which he enumerates, superior even to faith and the gift of prophesy (I. Corinth. xiii, 2,) hence it does not appear that he felt any high admiration for miracles, prophecy, healing, or the other gifts of grace, as then claimed by the Gentile Christians; but it is no less true that those Gentile Christians claimed to be in possession of those powers, and they did so up to the third century. Who was the originator of this perversion of the understanding among the Gentiles? It is well known that the Greco-Roman pagans had their demonology, exorcism, necromancy, thaumaturgy, oracles, and prophets, connected with the most abhorrent practices of debauchery, cruelty and deception. But in the form as we meet those superstitions in "The Acts" and the Epistles, they are of Jewish origin, as we shall prove instantly. Paul having been the originator of Gentile Christianity, he must have approved of them either as a matter of prudence, as he has done in many other cases, to destroy them gradually by the influx of truth and light from the source of revelation, as it could not possibly be done at once, and not even attempted without danger to his cause; or he replaced those

Pagan superstitions by the milder or practically harmless Jewish ones, which he may have believed himself or not.

Thus much is sure, if Paul only countenanced those superstitions, the other apostles must have done so before him; for he was not the man to *invent* superstitions. He accommodated himself to obstacles which he could not remove. We may, therefore, set down as a fact that the apostles and the primitive church believed in demons, exorcism, necromancy, and marvelous cures, or pretended to do so. This fact afterward gave rise to the wonderful stories which the author of "The Acts" and of the four Gospels narrated of Jesus and his apostles. In confirmation thereof we will quote some of the Jewish superstitions then existing, as the Talmud and Josephus narrate them, and we will find the apostles did precisely with these superstitions as they did with the *Bath Kol* and the glossology; they stood in their respective age, and adopted its aberrations. We will divide the material into demonology, exorcism and thaumaturgy, miracles, marvelous cures, and prophecies.

The severity of punishments threatened by the Laws of Moses to persons who practice divination, enchantment or necromancy, to wizards, witches and observers of times,\* is proof positive not only of the existence of those superstitious practices

\* Deuter. xviii, 10; Lev. xviii, 23; xix, 26, 31; xx, 27.

to an alarming degree among the ancient Hebrews, but also of the origin of those aberrations of the mind in Egypt. Still there is no evidence of any demonology in these laws. Both necromancy, asking the dead to reveal future events, and the *Ob* consulting with familiar spirits, only relate to the spirits of deceased persons. The witch of Endor (I. Sam. xxviii) who is called a *Baaloth Ob* has no connection with any demons, she plainly conjures the spirit of the deceased Samuel. Thessalonian women were known in Greece as experts in this secret art. They sprinkled blood upon the body of the dead whom they intended to invoke, offered libations to the soul of the deceased one, and were then certain that he would answer to their queries. The Syrians also practiced this superstition, only more inhuman than the Greeks. They killed little children, cut their heads off, salted and embalmed them, then they engraved upon a golden tablet the name of the evil spirit to whom this abhorrent sacrifice was made, upon which they put the head of the murdered child, placed wax tapers around it and prayed to it as to an idol; this caused the head to answer to their queries. The early Christian writers firmly believed in the reality of this superstition, and charged the Emperor Julius Apostate with the practice thereof.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the *Ob* of the ancient Hebrews was like either the

Greek or the Syrian practice. It appears not to have been like either; for the witch of Endor was certainly not in possession of Samuel's body, hence it was not similar to the Greek practice, and she conjured Samuel's spirit himself in the presence of Saul, hence it was not like the Syrian practice. Therefore the laws are no evidence of any existing demonology.

It is evident, however, that the ancient Hebrews knew the Satyrs like the Egyptians and Greeks, the hairy and lascivious Satyrs with the goat's feet, and loved to make sacrifices to them † Also the *Shedim* or demons are mentioned in Deut. xxxii, 17, as objects honored by sacrifices.

Beside these there was the evil spirit which infuriated King Saul and the spirit of falsehood in the parable of the prophet Michiah, (I. Kings xxii, 19,) to open a wide field to the fantasy, partly to adopt from other nations and partly to produce demons of all sorts and classes. Another starting point for a vast demonology was offered in the words of Ecclesiast. ii, 8, where King Solomon is represented to have said of himself, "I procured myself שָׂרָה וְשָׂרוֹת," which most likely signifies "captivating and charming beauties;" but the words *Shiddah* and *Shiddoth* sounding so much like *Shed* and *Shedah*, "demons," being actually derivatives of the same Hebrew root, Solomon was made also master of the

† Levit. xvii, 17; Isaiah xlii, 21; xxxiv, 14; II. Chron. xi, 15.

demons, as we shall see hereafter, and his name was connected with numerous ghost stories.

The first demon mentioned in the Bible is Satan, who is a poetical fiction in the book of Job. In Zechariah iii, Satan is a personification of the "filthy garments" in verse 3, or the sins which "prevent" or "hinder" the high priest Joshua to stand uprightly and firmly before the angel of the Lord. Still both the Satan of Job and Zechariah, two figures which have nothing in common besides the name, were made to the prince of evil, of darkness, and of wickedness, the Ahriman of the Persian mythology, the Typhon of the Egyptians, and the Pluto of the Greeks. The Hebrews gave him the name *Samael*, "the destructive power," *Yetser hara*, "the evil inclination," and *Maloch Hamaves*, "the angel of death," or also the Greek name *Katagore*, † "prosecutor."

From these few starting points the Hebrews developed a demonology peculiar to itself. The ancient rabbinical sources mention the following different demons מלאכי חבלה *Mazikin*, "evil doers;" מלאכי חבלה *Malachai Habalah* "seductive angels" or messengers, רוח שומאה *Ruah Tumeah*, "the unclean spirit;" and רוח רעה *Ruah Raah*, "the evil spirit;" all of which have the generic name of שדים *Shedim*, "demons." Besides, there are mentioned לילין *Lilin*, "fe-

† So also Revelations of John xii. 10.

male demons." The origin of these demons is not certain. In one place of the Talmud they are said to be descendants of Adam at a time between the birth of Abel and Seth (Erubin 18 *a* and elsewhere.) But otherwise it is maintained God created them Friday evening in the last hour, when the Sabbath set in, creation was closed and the demons received no bodies. Still they were supposed by some to have a hairy body and the legs of birds.

The mother of the demons is the *Lilith* (Nocturna,) the primitive night of Egyptian mythology. She is like the Grecian Proserpine; only that the Lilith of the Talmud is depicted as a beautiful and lascivious woman. Later writers mention four mothers of the demons, viz.: *Lilith*, *Naamah*, *Aggereth* and *Mahelah*, which appear synonymous with Proserpine, Venus, Hekate and Lamia. The husband of *Naamah* or Venus was *Shomeron*, Vulcain, whose son was *Ashmedai*, the prince of demons. Harman, the Persian Ahriman, is mentioned as a son of Lilith. The souls of wicked persons after death are also changed to demons.

As regards the nature of the demons, the rabbis, it appears, were well informed. They state (Chagiga 16 *a*) "Six things are said of the demons; in three things they are like angels and in three like men. They are like angels in this; they have wings like angels, fly from one end of the world to another, and know future events like

the angels. How can they know this? They hear it behind the curtain like the angels. In these three things they are like men; they eat and drink, propagate their species and die like men." It is also known that they are very intelligent and inquisitive. It is said of their prince Ashmedai that "he daily ascends to heaven to learn in the school of heaven, and then he descends to the earth to learn in the school on earth," (Guitin 68 *a.*) Elsewhere it is narrated that Rabbi Hanina bar Papa went out at night to distribute charity, when he was met by "the chief demon," viz.: Ashmedai who threatened to do him harm for imposing on his domain, night; but the Rabbi discussed Scriptural passages with the demon and proved to him that he had no right to injure one who was out at night to distribute charity. Of course, finally the Rabbi drove the demon to flight (Jerushalmi, Shekalim *v.*) Again Raba informs us that the demons every Sabbath crowded the academy to listen to the lectures, and the torn garments of the students must be ascribed to the same cause—the demons press themselves so close to them. (Berachoth 6 *a.*) These passages will suffice to show a peculiar characteristic of the demons among the ancient Hebrews; they were looked upon as superior intellects, as sagacious and heartless beings, prudent and wicked. It is an eminently psychological idea. Beings gifted with superior intellect and none but brutal and wicked propensi-



ties are demons in the strictest sense of the term.

The office and function of all these demons is injury, evil to man; but they are named according to the different kinds of evil which they inflict. The *Mazikin* inflict bodily injuries and perpetrate mischief in an ordinary sense of the term, like the Satyrs of the Greeks and the Fauns of the Romans. They are very numerous on earth, but invisible. Aba Benjamin says, "If the eye was permitted to see, no creature could stand the *Mazikin*." Rabbi Huna says, "Every one of us has a thousand (*Mazikin*) at his left hand and ten thousand at his right one." (Berachoth 6 a.) These *Mazikin* are most frequently in ruins, (Berachoth 3 a.) in unclean places, as in privies, (Berachoth 62 a.) in sewers through which the waste water flows from houses. (Cholin 105 b.) In that place of the Talmud the following story is told: Abai said, in the first place, I believed, it is prohibited to sit under the sewers of houses on account of the water; but Mar told me it is on account of the demons. A man carried a barrel of wine; being tired, he set it down on a sewer, and instantly a demon came and broke the barrel. The man went to Mar, son of Rabbi Ashai, and complained; the Rabbi put the demon under ban, and he appeared. The Rabbi asked why he broke the barrel, and the demon answered, the man put the vessel right upon my ear. the Rabbi, however, said, "Thou hast noth-

ing to do at a place where so many people pass; thou art wrong; go and pay the damage." The demon paid the damage after he had stolen the money from piles which were not counted; for he said that his confreres had no power over things "bound, sealed, measured or counted." It appears that the rabbis managed the demons without much trouble.

The same Abai also narrates in the same place that the *Mazikin* also frequent the waters like the Greek nymphs. It is narrated there: "Rabbi Papa had in his house one conversant with demons. One day he sent him to the river to fetch water, the servant stayed away a good while. On returning, the Rabbi asked him why he tarried so long, and the servant answered: "I had to wait till the evil waters passed away, as the demons had drunk thereof." This was so common a superstition that nobody would drink water before he had spilt a few drops from the vessel, to pour out "the evil waters" which the demons leave on the surface.

Those demons were also present to do injury where things or persons were in even numbers—two, four, six, &c—where two glasses of wine were drunk, and not one, three or five. This superstition is narrated at length in the Talmud (Pesachim 105, 109, 110 and 111,) where even the magic spells are recorded to banish the demons which preside over such incidents.

It appears that the *Mazikin* are personifications of physical causes of diseases, the miasma rising from unclean places, impure ingredients of the water, the foul air in the ruins, &c.; but the superstition connected with even numbers is inexplicable to us.

The *Melachai Habalah* or "Seductive Angels" are the counterparts of the *Mazikin*. The latter demons injure the body, and the former seduce the soul to evil, and then scorn with diabolic pleasure at the corrupt soul. Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha states (*Berachoth* 51  $\alpha$ ) that the archangel Suriel\* told him among other things, "Legions of seductive angels sit and wait impatiently for man, saying, when will man commit one of these things and be ensnared!" The things prohibited there by Suriel are not of a strictly moral character; still the passage is clear enough in showing that these demons wait for man's seduction. Further on the same Rabbi states (*see Meharsho to this*) that these demons are "the unclean powers who wait anxiously for man to injure and kill him," morally, of course. Another passage of the Talmud reads thus (*Kethuboth* 104): "Rabbi Elieser said, when the wicked man is blotted out from this world, three groups of 'Seductive Angels' meet him in the other; the one says, 'No peace to the wicked, said the Lord,' the other says,

\* In another chapter we will treat on the angelology of the Hebrews, where this Suriel, who, like Metatron, is an archangel שׂר הַפְּנִיִּם, will find his place.

'Thou shalt rest with grief,' and the third says, 'Go down and lay with the wicked ones.'

These "Angels of Seduction," personifications of crime and remorse, appear in the role of Satan's actual servant, and partake fully of his nature, as described in Christian sources. While the *Mazikin* stand under a milder prince, viz.: Ashmedai, of whom the Talmud says that he is not himself wicked, the "Angels of Seduction" stand under Satan himself.

The *Buah Tumeah*, "the unclean spirit," was contracted on burial grounds for the sole purpose of prophecy. The prohibition in the Law of Moses against inquiring of the dead, against which also the prophet Isaiah remonstrates with his cotemporaries, is expounded in the Talmud thus: "This is one who fasts and then stays all night on a burial ground, that he be possessed of an unclean spirit," (Sanhedrin 64)—a practice which appears to have been very common in those days. At another place (Niddah 16) this practice is enumerated among others which endanger a man's life "and bring his blood upon his own head." Plato, both in his *Phaedon* and the work *On Law*, speaks of the returning souls of the deceased.† In the former work he says the soul after the separation from its body is attracted to the upper world by a certain force of attraction inherent in the body,

† See *Phaed.*, edit. Leipzig, 1825, p. 81 C—E. and p. 208 the notes; *On Law*, p. 935.

&c. These souls soar about their graves and monuments, and are visible, because they are not yet entirely separated from all bodily matter. These are not the souls of good men; it is a punishment for their wicked life. Therefore they resume the wicked practices of their former days. Then he states that the soul of murdered persons haunt in Hades the souls of their murderers. Here then are the impure spirits on burial grounds as a superstition which must have been common among the Greeks long before Plato, because he attempts to assign a natural reason to it. In the Talmud one rabbi states: "During the twelve months after death, the soul rises and returns (to the grave); after twelve months it rises to return no more." This has been adopted by theologians of the middle ages, with the theory of Plato, viz.: the soul feels a desire after the bodily organs and corporeal pleasures and enjoyments. A soul, therefore, altogether given to carnal pleasures must be attracted so much longer by its body.

From another story, however, recorded in the Talmud (Berachoth 18 a and Abboth Derabbi Nathan, Sec. 3) it appears, the superstition was prevalent that the dead hold conversations, which, at certain times and to certain persons, are audible. The story there is of a pious man, who having given alms to a poor stranger, was upbraided by his wife so badly that he left the house and remained all night on the burial

ground. He heard two dead children converse, hence no wicked persons. One of the children had been above in heaven, heard from behind the curtain what God said regarding the future, and on returning communicated it to the other child. This was done twice on the eve of New Year; but the third time the conversing children had found out that somebody listened, and they communicated no more secrets.

It appears, therefore, that this superstition changed its form at various times; but under all forms it was believed that one was thus enabled to prophesy. We shall see in another chapter how, by fasting and similar means, not only an evil spirit was contracted; but also a pure spirit for the same and similar mystic purposes.

The *Ruch Raah*, "evil spirit," is a demon which finds pleasure in taking possession of human beings (according to the New Testament, also of swines) and in causing them to do wicked or mischievous things contrary to their will. A clear definition of the nature of this class of demons is in the thirteenth chapter of *Pirke Rabbi Elieser*, the first chapters of which are much older than the Talmud, and their author was a cotemporary of the apostles. It says there: "A man who has an evil spirit, whatever he does, he does not from his own choice, but by compulsion of the evil spirit; and whatever words he speaks are the words of the evil one." The evil spirit silences a man's soul, suspends his will, his moral

and mental volition, and exposes him entirely to the will of the demon; so the belief was.

We must add here a remarkable passage of the Talmud (Erubin 41,) "Three things cause man to violate his own will and the will of his Maker, viz.: idolatry, AN EVIL SPIRIT, and extreme poverty. To what purpose is this told? that one should pray for him."

The Talmud narrates several such cases. We quote one: Rabbi Simon, the son of Yochai, and Rabbi Elieser, son of Rabbi Jose, were sent to Rome to petition the emperor for the revocation of an edict which prohibited the observation of the Laws of Moses, (probably under the Emperor Hadrian.) When they were under way, "*Ben Talmion* ('son of a wretch,') met them and said, if you wish I will go with you. Rabbi Simon wept. He said, three times the angel appeared to the handmaid in my father's house (Hagar,) and to me not once. Let the miracle come from any place. Then the demon *Ben Talmion* hastened before them to Rome and took possession of the emperor's daughter. When they arrived, the Rabbi commanded the demon, leave! and he left." This, of course, moved the emperor to revoke his edict.

In the New Testament we have to deal chiefly with the two latter classes of demons—the unclean spirit and the evil spirit. The demoniacs of the New Testament are not simply persons who labored under

phases of insanity, or suffered from some hallucination. Matthew states distinctly: "Even those who were possessed with demons, and those who were lunatics, and those who had the palsy." Here a distinct line is drawn between the demoniac and the madman.

An English physician, partly from personal observations and partly from facts otherwise known to him, set down the following points of difference between the demoniac and the madman.\*

1. A madman never acknowledges himself to be insane; the supposed demoniac, on the contrary, while firmly insisting that he is in his right senses, fully believes himself to have been compelled to the commission of his crime by some power he was unable to withstand.

2. The demoniac seems to possess almost a supernatural strength for the time being.

3. The demoniac, although perfectly well aware of the crime he is about to commit and the consequences which may attend it, has neither pleasure nor satisfaction in its perpetration, and the victim is generally one who gave him no cause of offence whatever.

4. At the commencement of the attack religious suasion appears to exercise an immense curative power on the demoniac; but that power diminishes in strength the longer recourse to it is delayed, till its efficacy is utterly lost.

\* See *Good Words*, London, 1867, pp. 116, &c.



That writer thinks, "It is a state unaffected, so far as science can prove by any physical condition of the body, on which medicine appears to have no effect, and on which religion alone seems to exercise any beneficial control." Still he admits that the disease is contracted by the excessive use of spirituous liquors, as also by medical treatment under the strong stimulating system carried to excess in cases of typhoid fever.

The reader will observe that this description of the demoniac coincides precisely with the rabbinical notices of this disease, as well as with those of the New Testament. In a warm climate which relaxes the nervous system, in an age and at places where, as we shall see hereafter, artificial means were frequently used, to overstrain the nerves to their utmost powers, in order to see mystic visions and receive supernatural oracles, this unexplained disease may have been quite frequent, and may, in many instances, have been cured by religious suasion or other moral influences. Not knowing the nature and causes of the disease, it was ascribed to the villany of a demon.

This brings us down to Exorcism and Thanmaturgy. We must, however, make mention of a similar disease among the Greeks, before we enter upon the next topic. The fate of the Arcadian King Lykaon, whom Zeus changed into an ugly wolf, is well known. This, in after times, gave rise

to a demoniac disease called *Lykanthropia* or *Kynanthropia*, on which the Greek physician Marcellus of Sidae (under the Emperor Mark Aurel,) treated at some length.† He shows that the patients suffering of this species of madness, especially at the approach of spring in the month of February, attempted to imitate the manners and passions of animals, especially of dogs and wolves, and spent their nights on solitary burial places.

The rabbis of the Talmud describe as one criterion of insanity, "To stay over night on a burial ground."

Magic and incantations as practiced by the ancient Greeks was introduced among them, as their accounts maintain, by Oethanes who came into Greece from Persia with Xerxes, and promulgated the rudiments of those secret arts. They were afterward enlarged by Democritus, who, it was maintained by the ancient Greeks, had learned them out of the writings of certain Phoenicians. The whole mystic art came from sources, thus much is certain, to which the ancient Hebrews had access long before the Greeks. Therefore it would be wonderful, almost miraculous, if the Hebrews had not learned some of these superstitious practices, especially as they profess to have learned "the names of the angels" in Babylonia. The fact that they knew the Ahriman, son of Lilith, as one of the prom-

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† Thorlacius, Opuscula T. IV, p. 54, &c.

inent demons, points distinctly enough to Persia. It appears even that the Ashmedai, the prince of demons, was identical with Ahriman, and the word being composed of עֵשׂ *Esh*, "fire," and מַדַּי *madaï*, "median." It must not be forgotten that the only difference between the two Persian deities Ormuzd and Ahriman is light and fire. Ormuzd is "the light of intelligence," and Ahriman is "the fire of man."

Still those superstitions never assumed the stupendous dimensions among the Hebrews as they did among the Pagans, and especially among the Greeks, with whom superstition outdid itself. However, as we have seen already, exorcism and thaumaturgy were practiced, or at least it is maintained in the Talmud that certain persons were experts in these secret arts. Not only the Talmud, also Josephus chronicled this superstition.

Speaking of King Solomon (*Antiquit. B. VIII, Chap. ii, §5*) Josephus states:

"Now the sagacity and wisdom which God had bestowed on Solomon was so great that he exceeded the ancients, inasmuch that he was no way inferior to the Egyptians, who are said to have been beyond all men in understanding; nay, indeed, it is evident that their sagacity was very much inferior to that of the King's. He also excelled and distinguished himself in wisdom above those who were most eminent among the Hebrews at that time for shrewdness; those I mean were Ethan, and Heman, and Chaleol, and Darda, the sons

\* See *Antiquities of Greece* by John Porter, D.D., Book II, chap. xviii.

of Mahol. He also composed books of odes, and songs, a thousand and five, of parables and similitudes, three thousand; for he spake a parable upon every sort of tree, from the hyssop to the cedar; and in like manner also about beasts, about all sorts of living creatures, whether upon the earth, or in the seas, or in the air; for he was not unacquainted with any of their natures, nor omitted inquiries about them, but described them all like a philosopher, and demonstrated his exquisite knowledge of their several properties. God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, † which is a science useful and sanative to him. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day: for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazer, releasing people that were demoniacal, in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the

† Some pretended fragments of these books of conjuration of Solomon are still extant in Fabricius' *Cod. Pseudepigr. Vet. Test.* p. 1054; though I entirely differ from Josephus in this his supposal, that such books and arts of Solomon were parts of that wisdom which was imparted to him by God in his younger days; they must rather have belonged to such profane but curious arts as we find mentioned, Acts, xix, 13-20, and have been derived from idolatry and superstition of his heathen wives and concubines in his old age, when he had forsaken God, and God had forsaken him, and given him up to demoniacal delusions. Nor does Josephus' strange account for the root *Baara*, (*Of the War*, B. VIII, ch. vi, sec. 3,) seem to be other than that of its magical use in such conjurations. As for the following history, it contains what Christ says Matt. xii, 27, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?"—*Whitton*.

man fell down immediately, he adjured him to return unto him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazer would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon was showed very manifestly; for which reason it is that all men may know the vastness of Solomon's abilities, and how he was beloved of God, and that the extraordinary virtues of every kind with which this king was endowed may not be unknown to any people under the sun; for this reason, I say, it is that we have proceeded to speak so largely of these matters."

"The cup and basin full of water" which the demon overturned, to let the spectators know that he had left the man, is mentioned also in the Talmud on the occasion narrated above, when Rabbi Simon, son of Yochai, drove out the demon "Ben Thalmion" from the daughter of the emperor. Rashi to this passage (Meilah 17) quotes another version of a part of that story, according to which the demon Ben Thalmion says in advance to the rabbi, "And this shall be your sign that I went out, in coming forth I will break all the glass vessels in the house of the prince."

Again in another place (Wars, Book VII, chap. vi, 23) Josephus narrates this:

"Now within this place (Macherus) there grew a sort of rue,\* that deserves our won-

\* Spanheim observes here, that in Græcia Major and Sicily they had rue prodigiously great and durable like this rue at Macherus.

der on account of its largeness; for it is no way inferior to any fig-tree whatsoever, either in height or thickness; and the report is, that it had lasted ever since the times of Herod, and would probably have lasted much longer, had it not been cut down by those Jews who took possession of the place afterward. But still in that valley which encompasses the city on the north side, there is a certain place called *Baaras*, which produces a root of the same name with itself; its color is like to that of flame, and toward the evening it sends out a certain ray like lightning; it is not easily taken by such as would do it, but recedes from their hands, nor will yield itself to be taken quietly, until either the urine of a woman or her menstrual blood be poured upon it; nay, even then it is certain death to those that touch it, unless any one take and hang the root itself down from his hand, and so carry it away. It may also be taken another way without danger, which is this. They dig a trench quite round about it, till the hidden part of the root be very small, they then tie a dog to it; and when the dog tries hard to follow him that tied him, this root is easily plucked up; but the dog dies immediately, as if it were instead of the man that would take the plant away; nor after this need any one be afraid of taking it into their hands. Yet after all this pains in getting, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to the sick persons, it quickly drives away those called *demons*, which are no other than the spirits

† This strange account of the place and root *Baaras* seems to have been taken from the magicians, and the root to have been made use of in the days of Josephus in that superstitious way of casting out demons, supposed by him to have been derived from King Solomon, of which we have already seen he had a great opinion; Antiq. B. VIII, chap. ii, sec. 5. We also may hence learn the true notion Josephus had of demons and demoniacs, exactly like that of the Jews and Christians in the New Testament, and the first four centuries. See Antiq. B. VI, chap. viii, sec. 2; B. XI, chap. ii, sec. 3. — *Whiston*

of the wicked that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them."

Fabricius, in his *Codex Pseudepigr. Vetr. Test.*, p. 1054, preserves some pretended fragments of these books of conjuration of Solomon, which may be a translation from a book known to the rabbis of the Talmud, as the ספר הרפואות *Sefer Harefuoth*, "the book on therapeutics," which King Hezekiah is reported to have hid, for which he received divine approbation. (Pesachim 56 and elsewhere.) Most likely some pseudograph wrote a volume on this subject and passed it for the work of King Solomon which King Hezekiah had hid, together with the copper serpent which Moses had made in the wilderness. The compilers of the Talmud gave credence to the story as they did to the stories of the Phoenix and the Salamanders (Cholin 127.)

It is, therefore, beyond doubt that exorcism was practiced among the Hebrews in the time of the apostles; that it had a history, and popular credulity dated its origin back to King Solomon, of whom the Talmud also narrates the beautiful fable of his adventures with Ashmedai, whom he banished in order to tell him where the worm *Shemir* could be found. This worm which grows in the ashes of the Phoenix, cuts stone by mere touch. Solomon was obliged to have this worm to cut stones for the altar of the temple, to which purpose no iron instruments were to be used. Ashmedai alone

knowing where to find it, after the use of much strategy, he was brought before Solomon and informed him where to find the *Shemir*. Afterward, however, Ashmedai retaliated on Solomon.‡ We call attention to this story only in support of the fact that the origin of exorcism was supposed to be of Solomon, who not only had *Shiddah* and *Shiddoth*, but "was wiser than all men;" "and he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes;" consequently he could also govern the demons and teach others how to do it. The demons dreaded his very name as late, indeed, as in the days of Vespasian and Josephus.

The Hebrews certainly did not consider this mystic art a gift of grace, because Solomon did not enjoy the reputation either of a prophet or of a very pious man. Although the Talmud maintains in one place, "Whoever says Solomon sinned is in error;" still it is well maintained on the other hand that he was one "who teaches wisely and acts otherwise." The root of the plant, according to Josephus, had more to do with this mystic art than the magic spells uttered on the occasion. It would appear even that those magic practitioners actually knew of

‡ This story is beautifully explained in the *Erech Millin* by S. J. L. Rapoport, part 1, art. Ashmedai,



medicine to cure the disease called demoniac. The rabbis, as we have seen already, had no need of any medicine; Rabbi Simon, son of Joehai, plainly commanded the demon Ben Thalmion to leave, and it left. Mar, son of Rabbi Ashi, summoned the demon before his court and imposed a fine on the wretch, which it had to pay. They considered exorcism a science which one could and should study. We have seen in a former chapter that the members of the Sanhedrin were required to know this mystic science. The Talmud (Succah 28 *a*) tells that Hillel had eighty pupils, among whom Rabbi Johanan, son of Saccai, was the youngest, yet he knew all and every thing that the age possessed. Among the sciences of this rabbi there is specially enumerated "conversation with the angels and conversation with the demons." It was considered a profane science which was prohibited on Sabbath. So the Talmud informs us, (Sanhedrin 101 *a*) "None should inquire on Sabbath in matters of the demons." One Rabbi Jose has sense enough to add thereto, "Also on week days it is prohibited." There are recorded in the Talmud some magic spells to banish demons (Pesachim 105 to 110) and a secret art to enable one to see them (Berachoth 6 *a*); but they are of a much later origin than the period on which we treat.

Again, in the Talmud Sanhedrin (beginning of chapter eleventh,) where those are counted who shall not enter the kingdom of heaven in eternal life, Rabbi Akiba adds,

"Who read profane books and who whispers over a wound, 'All the sickness which I brought on the Egyptians, I shall not bring on thee, for I, the Lord, am thy physician.'" This entitles us to believe that class of incantations, healing wounds by magic spells, was a common superstition which that rabbi opposed. The Talmud narrates several times that the apostles and disciples of Jesus practiced this superstition: "The grandson of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi was sick with an inflammation of the throat, and a person came, whispered into his ear the names used among Nazarenes, and he recovered." (Talm. Yerushalmi Eruvin.) At another place (Abodah Zarah 85 a) another note of this kind occurs: A nephew of Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha was sick, and the apostle James came to heal him in the name of Jesus, but the rabbi would not allow it. Whether Rabbi Akiba opposed this practice simply because it was a superstition, or he did so because it was a Christian superstition, it is now difficult to decide. The former is most likely, because the magic spell was a verse from the Old Testament.

We need go no further on this topic. The above quotations must have already convinced the reader that the knowledge of demonology, as well as exorcism and thaumaturgy, was, in the time of the apostles, a vulgar belief and a secret science, of which some made use and others did not. Some considered the whole pretensions supersti-

tious and others did not. Some employed this mystic art for the purpose of deception and imposition, while some may have made it subservient to other and better purposes. But it was not a gift of grace any more with the Eleazer of Josephus, Rabbi Simon and others in the Talmud than with the apostles and disciples of Jesus, and *vice versa*. On the part of the Jewish writers it is not even claimed as a gift of grace.

In regard to miracles, however, the pretensions of the Talmud run fully as high and higher than those of the New Testament. All kinds of miracles, except the reanimation of the dead, a miracle which the author of kings only had the boldness to claim for the two prophets Elijah and Elisha, but all other miracles recorded by the authors of the New Testament, and some considerably more stupendous are recorded also in the Talmud, as having been wrought by men who were cotemporaries of the apostles, and by their sires. Some characters of the Talmud are specially noted as workers of miracles and are called on this account מלימך בנסיים "experienced in miracles," as Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, mentioned before, Nahum of Gimsu (Taanith 21) and many others. By the way (and also in *Vajikrah Rabbah*) the Talmud narrates the following marvelous anecdote of this Nahum: His people wished to send a present to the emperor, and they appointed him to be the messenger. They gave him a box filled with gems and pearls.

On his way, stopping all night in an inn, thieves emptied the box of its valuable contents and filled it with earth. The poor man discovered his bad luck, but having no means to replace the stolen treasures, he, as he was used to, exclaimed, "Also this is for good," and continued his journey. He reached his place of destiny and delivered the box with earth to the emperor. On examining its contents, the emperor and his officers, of course, were much offended, and Nahum and his party were in danger for their lives. But the prophet Elijah assumed the appearance of one of the Imperial officers and pleaded the unlucky man's cause. "Perhaps this is of Abraham's earth which possesses the charming power to render an enemy's sword like stubble and ashes," the disguised Elijah advanced. The earth was tried and it actually possessed this precious virtue. This rendered it more valuable than any treasures which could be offered to the ruler, and Nahum was greatly honored by the emperor and sent home with rich presents. That the prophet Elijah came down from heaven and conversed with this or that person, or wrought miracles for somebody, was almost an everyday's occurrence.

The oldest man of miracles recorded in the Talmud was the Rip van Winkle of the Jews, the man who slept seventy years. His name was *Honi Hamangel*. He lived in time of Alexander Jannæus and his wife and successor in office, Alexandra, between

105 and 75 B. C.\* This man of wonders, we are told in the Talmud (Taanith 23,) was so familiar with the Almighty himself that he asked favors of God like an uncouthed son, whose will the good father does after all. His prayers were instantly granted. The month of Adar had passed, the Talmud narrates, and no rain had refreshed the parching land. They sent to Honi Hamangel and requested him to pray for rain. He did so and it rained not. He dug a hole, went down and prayed, "O Lord of the world! thy children have set their countenance on me, as if I was the son of the house before thee; I swear by thy great name that I will not move from this spot until thou hast shown mercy to thy children." It began raining slowly. His pupils said, it appears to rain only for the purpose of absolving him of his oath, so that he might go home. Honi continued his prayer, "This is not the rain for which I prayed, I asked for a rain which fills wells and cisterns," and lo! a heavy current of rain poured down with violence. It appears the rain has come to destroy the world, his pupils said much alarmed; he prayed again, and it rained quietly. It rained so much that Jerusalem was overflowed to such an extent that people fled upon the Mount of the Temple, and again Honi prayed and the rain stopped. This is a miracle as great as any told in the New Testament.

\* He was a cotemporary of Simeon ben Shatach who could hardly have lived longer than 75 B. C.

The close connections of this man with God were not limited to him only; two of his grandsons, Aba Hilkiah, his son's son, and Hanan or Onias "who hid himself," his daughter's son, did precisely the same things at various times, as the Talmud narrates in the same place. This Hanan or Onias "who hid himself" came to a tragic end. When Aretas and Hyrcanus besieged Aristobulus in Jerusalem, Josephus tells us (*Antiqu. Book XIV, chap. ii, §1.*) "Now there was one whose name was Onias, a righteous man he was, and beloved of God, who, in a certain drought, had prayed to God to put an end to the intense heat, and whose prayers God had heard, and had sent them rain. This man had hid himself, because he saw that this seduction would last a great while.† However they brought him to the Jewish camp, and desired that as by his prayers he had once put an end to the drought, so he would in like manner make imprecations on Aristobulus and those of his faction. And when upon his refusal, and the excuses that he made, he was still by the multitude compelled to speak, he stood up in the midst of them, and said, "O God, the King of the whole world! since those who stand now with me are thy people, and those that are besieged are also thy priests, I beseech thee that thou wilt neither hearken to the prayers of those against these, nor bring to effect what these pray against

† The Talmud gives another reason for the surname "who had hid himself," both, however, may be correct.

those." Whereupon such wicked Jews as stood about him, as soon as he had made this prayer, stoned him to death." Thus the rabbinical tale of a man working wonders by prayer is corroborated by Josephus, while none of the miracles recorded in the New Testament can boast upon such important testimony.

This *Honi Hamangel* and his two grandsons were not the only men who wrought wonders by prayer; the Talmud narrates most astonishing miracles which were performed especially by Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, Rabbi Phineas ben Yaïr, (the miraculous powers of these men extended to their asses on which they rode,) Rabbi Judah ben Elai, Rabbi Judah ben Baba,† Rabbi Elieser ben Hyrcan, and numerous others. We must quote some of the most remarkable ones. Nakdimon ben Gurion, a rich citizen of Jerusalem, borrowed of a Roman officer the water contained in twelve cisterns, when water was scarce in that city, to supply the pilgrims. He promised twelve talents of silver to the Roman, if on a certain day the rain should not refill his cisterns. This was then quite a large sum of money. The last day of the contract had approached, and no rain had fallen. The Roman sent word to Nakdimon to send him the water or the money; but Nakdimon replied, the day has yet many an hour. The Roman laughed at this and said, the whole year no rain fell, it

† See Seder Haddaroth, edit. Karlsruhe, 1754, p. 106 a, column 1.

will certainly not come to-day. He went to the bath full of joy, and Nakdimon went into the temple and prayed, "O Lord of the world, thou knowest that I have not done this for my honor or the honor of my father's house, I have done it to thy glory that the pilgrims have water to drink." Instantly the clouds rose and the rain descended so copiously that all cisterns overflowed. The Roman going out of his bathhouse and Nakdimon coming from the temple met; the latter said, pay me for the surplus of water thou hast received, to which the Roman replied, "I know that thy God shakes the world on thy account; still I have another plea against thee, for behold the sun is set, the day is past, thou must pay." Nakdimon returned to the temple and prayed, "Lord of the world, make known that thou hast beloved ones in thy world; as thou hast done me a wonder in the beginning, do me one more at the end." The wind turned, the clouds dispersed, and the sun came forth brightly from behind the clouds.¶

Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was another man of great miracles. Being on the road he was overtaken by a heavy shower. He prayed, "O Lord of the worlds, everybody is pleased, must Hanina be distressed!" It stopped raining. Having reached his house he prayed again, "Lord of the worlds, everybody is distressed and Hanina should be pleased!" Instantly it rained again.

¶ Taanith 19 and Aboth Derabbi Nathan.



The *Bath Kol* "daily" proclaimed in the name of God, "The whole world is given sustenance for the sake of HANINA, MY SON, and Hanina, my son, lives on a measure of turnips from one Sabbath to another." (*Berachoth* 17, *Chulin* 86 and in *Taanith*.) This same Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa performed a miracle similar to the one which Paul did with a serpent, only that the rabbi did it still more wonderfully. "There was near a certain village a venomous serpent, called *Gnarud*, which poisoned many people. They went to Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa and complained. Show me the hole of the serpent, he said, and they did so. He placed his heel in the hole, the serpent bit him; but it was the serpent which died. Hanina took the dead creature upon his shoulder, went to the academy and declared, the serpent kills not, the sins do. Then they said, wo to the man who meets a *Gnarud*, and wo to the *Gnarud* which meets Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa." (*Berachoth* 33.) Further on (p. 44) it is stated of the same man that he not only cured the sick by his prayers; but he even knew while praying, whether God would heal the sick man for whom he prayed. So he prayed once for the sick son of Rabbi Gamliel, and right after prayer he said to the messenger that the patient was well already. In the same manner he saved the son of Rabbi Johanan ben Saccal, whose wife was much surprised that her husband should not be able to do what Hanina could do; but the rabbi said,

"He (Hanina) is like a servant before the king (having free ingress) and I am like an officer before the king." This Hanina, as is evident from his connections with the rabbis Gamliel and Johanan ben Saccal, was a cotemporary of the apostles.

Another most extraordinary man was Rabbi Phineas ben Yair who flourished a century later than Hanina. This man divided the water of a river by his plain command. The story is told in the Talmud (Chulin 7 *a*) thus: "Rabbi Phineas ben Yair went out to release captives. His progress was arrested by a river called *Guinai*. Divide thy waters, Guinai, said the rabbi, and let me pass on. The river replied, thou goest to do the will of thy Maker, and I go to do the will of my Maker; it is doubtful whether thou wilt do it, and it is certain that I will do it. If thou dividest not thy waters, the rabbi continued, I will punish thee that never water shall flow again in thy bed. The river obeyed, the water was divided, and the rabbi passed through."

It is not necessary to our purpose to mention any of the minor miracles whose number in the Talmud is legion,<sup>2</sup> when we can

<sup>2</sup> Some of the minor miracles are those told by Rabbi Elieser on his death bed in the presence of Akiba who was the witness of the miracles told, viz: Elieser commanded, and a whole field was suddenly filled with pumpkins; he commanded again, and all the pumpkins were gathered together to one heap. (Sanhedrin 88.) Another story (Sabbath 129 *b*) was thus: "One king of Syria (Antiochus Epiphanes?) issued a decree, whoever will put phylacteres upon his head, that head shall be fractured. Elishah, a pious man, minded not that law, he placed the phylacteres on his forehead and going into the street met a Syrian officer; Elishah ran, the officer overtook him, and

point to the following allegations which throw the miracles of the New Testament altogether in the shade.

Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha held conversation with the angels, and on several occasions he communicates freely what the angels told him. In one instance (Berachoth 51) he narrates what the archangel SURIEL told him. This rabbi, we are told, was in heaven, and four others, viz: Akiba, Ben Soma, Ben Asai and Acher were in Paradise. How intimately acquainted the rabbis were with the angels is best illustrated in a story told in the Talmud (Hagiga 14): "Rabbi Johanan ben Saccai rode upon an ass out of Jerusalem, and one of his pupils, Rabbi Elieser ben Aroch, followed him to learn something of him. He said, Rabbi, repeat to me a section on the throne of God ('*Maaseh Merkabeh*;)') but the rabbi replied, my son, have I not taught you not to speak thereof, except to one alone, if he is wise and gifted with self-reflection? The pupil then replied, well then permit me to recite before thee what I have learned. Rabbi Johanan gave him permission, came down from the ass, wrapped his whole form

Elishah hid the phylacteres in his closed fist. What hast thou in thy hand? the officer asked. The wings of a dove, Elishah answered. He opened his hand, and behold instead of phylacteres there were the wings of a dove." So his life was saved. Joseph ben Simal was an officer of the crown. Another story is told (Sabbath 121): "Once fire broke out in his house on Sabbath, the Pagans came to put it out, but he would not allow a violation of the Sabbath to save his property. A miracle happened, instantly a heavy rain fell and quenched the fire." Dozens of such stories could be compiled from the rabbinical literature.

in the wide cloak, and seated himself upon a stone under an olive tree. The pupil asked, Rabbi, why hast thou left the ass? The rabbi said, if thou speakest of the throne of God, the *Shechinah* will be with us, and the ministering angels will accompany us, and I should ride upon an ass? Rabbi Elieser then began to speak of the throne of God, fire came down from heaven and enwrapped all the trees of the field, the trees sung hymns, and an angel exclaimed out of the fire, truly this is the description of God's throne." When Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Jose heard this, they also spoke of the same subject. "That day was in high summer, still heaven covered itself with clouds, a rainbow appeared in them, and the ministering angels assembled and came to listen, as men will at the plays before a bridal pair."

All these men were cotemporaries of the the apostles. We shall attempt in another chapter to find a key to these extravagant mysteries; here, however, they will suffice, as they are, to show that miracles and conversation with angels was nothing uncommon in those days. Not only the angels, even the evil one was under the control of the rabbis. King David already, the Talmud informs us, had the advantage over "the angel of death," so that he could lay hold on him by strategy only (Sabbath 30;) but Rabbi Joshua ben Lévi and Rabbi Hanina bar Papa retaliated on the evil one, deprived him of the sword of death by

strategy, and went alive into Paradise (Kethuboth 77 and elsewhere.) "The angel of death" is Satan himself, taking death as the greatest physical evil. This Rabbi Joshua ben Levi communicates in another place of the Talmud (Beráchoth 51) part of the secrets which "the angel of death" told him:†

The Talmud not only claims for the various rabbis full power over Satan and the hosts of demons (once they even caught Satan and laid him in chains as Solomon did with Ashmedai) and full knowledge of the heavenly hosts, the power of restoring the sick by prayer, and of governing the laws of nature; it claims still more for them. They were in possession of "the laws of creation," *Hilchoth Yetsirah*, and the secrets thereof, so that the man of marvels mentioned above, Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, and his colleague, Rabbi Oushia, actually created, say created a calf, which, when it was three days old, they killed and ate. (Sanhedrin 67.)

It is certainly superfluous to multiply instances, the above are sufficient to give the reader a proper insight into the spirit and allegations of the age of the apostles. The above stories were not written down immediately when it was supposed they transpired; the Gospel miracles also were written long *post festum*,

† There existed a book "Pinkéseh" of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi which was lost. This may have contained the mystic tales, some of which were quoted in the Talmud (Sabbath 155b.)

both, however, point to the same chapter of history!

Any intelligent reader, on discovering all these superstitions in the Talmud, will at once come to the conclusion, that both the authors of the New Testament and the compilers of the Talmud committed one and the same error, viz: they accepted and presented those aberrations of the human mind as matters of fact. It is certainly not necessary to prove that the whole demonology, together with the mystic arts and miraculous performances connected therewith, are the inventions of superstitious persons; modern science and philosophy, and the current conceptions of religion, reject those superstitions as unfounded and ridiculous, as fantastic products of a childish imagination. Therefore the Christian argument, that one party wrought these miracles by the "Holy Ghost," and the other by "Satan," falls of itself to the ground. As we do not admit the existence of demons, we can not believe the miracles performed on them. Neither Jesus and his apostles, nor the rabbis of the Talmud and the Elieser of Josephus, could have banished demons. Still, if one should be credulous enough to believe in the existence of demons, he must admit at once that those rabbis and that Elieser possessed the same gifts of grace as Jesus and his apostles did, and it would not prove any thing in favor of the New Testament which could not be claimed also in favor of the Talmud. If these things prove

the divinity of the New Testament, they prove also the divinity of the Talmud. The believer in demons must accept both collections as divine, which neither Christian nor Jew might be willing to admit.

It is perfectly useless to maintain, as the rationalists do, that the stories of demons and exorcism must be taken in a figurative sense only; rational talmudists advanced the same theory in regard to the Talmud, because both classes of authors are perfectly in earnest about this matter, and betray not with one word that they meant any thing except literally that which they have written.

Did the rabbis imitate the apostles or *vice versa*? The passages quoted from Josephus are decisive in one respect, viz: that these superstitions existed among the Jews long before the rabbis and the apostles, hence in the main there was no necessity for imitation on either side. The popular superstitions existed and were adopted. It is easy to imagine why they were adopted. The vulgar and illiterate mass is by far more disposed to bestow attention on ocular demonstration, however unskillful a manipulation, and be impressed with a superstition, however manifest an absurdity, than to reason and to grasp the products of reason. To establish one's authority over such a mass, one need only condescend to their superstitions and prove his controlling power over things which they fear, and his good grace and favor with such other things of

which they expect favors. Little ingenuity suffices to prove things which are believed in advance, and the smallest demonstrations of miraculous powers are exaggerated to enormity by credulous admirers. The apostles and the rabbis established their authority over vulgar and illiterate masses precisely by the same method; they condescended to the popular superstitions connected with the demons and demonstrated their marvelous powers over the dreaded creatures. A little knowledge of the laws of nature unknown to others, in connection with some ingenuity, are sufficient to do wonders. On the other hand they maintained to stand in particular grace and good favor with God and His angels, proved this by healing the sick as the Esseneans and Therapeuts of those days did by marvels, and produced rain in due season, which would have come without their interference, re-animated the dead if they were in a swooning state, and practiced such other necessary arts to establish their authority over others. Some of the rabbis and the apostles may have believed in those things, as some of the greatest scholars of all ages had their peculiar superstitions; while others found it necessary to practice those impositions to the very best of purposes, viz: to gain the confidence of the lower masses, in order to instruct them in those lessons of truth which the apostles and the rabbis, each his own theories of course, considered indispensably



necessary to the salvation and happiness of man. Most all demagogues and impostors of our own days, as well as most of the popular teachers with the best of intentions practice this self-same system of accommodation to popular prejudices and superstitions, and man was always about the same creature, with the same merits and demerits. We are selfish enough to smile at the imperfections of past ages, and would not admit how coming generations will laugh at our follies.

Therefore there can be no doubt that both the apostles and the rabbis practiced those impositions. The apostles were obliged to do so, because the rabbis did. Having adopted the *Bath Kob* and the glossology and maintaining to stand in every point as high and higher than their opponents, the apostles were bound to work miracles and banish demons, or else they could not have established a reputation among the lower class of people; the *Am Haarez*, whom they especially sought to convert. Elisha could drive out a demon in the name of Solomon, and Peter could not do it in the name of Jesus—this one thing would have been enough to ruin the reputation of Peter and his master. Besides, there was a belief current that whenever the Messiah shall come, all the demons, together with their prince, should be overcome; Satan himself should be changed into a good angel. So moral perfection was symbolized. Many passages of the Gospels point directly to this popular

belief. The Messiah having come, the demons were obliged to submit to those who possessed the gift of grace and were the messengers of the son of David; so the apostles were obliged to practice exorcism.

This, however, proves not that Jesus and the apostles or the various rabbis performed the fetes described in the New Testament and the Talmud; on the contrary, it is much more likely that neither of them would write down a memorial of events, calculated to rouse suspicion against them with the intelligent and learned portion of the community. They may have claimed, in general terms, such powers and supernatural gifts; posterity invented events, particular cases, especially when philosophy and learning declined, and it declined rapidly in the second century already—in illustration of those marvelous powers. The authors and transcribers of the New Testament, as well as the compilers of the Talmud, received those stories as facts and incorporated them in their respective works.

These and similar superstitions were by far more popular among the Gentiles than among the Jews. The Jews dispersed among the Gentiles were looked upon, as a general thing, as being in possession of those secret arts and mystic sciences. In Rome, at the very seat of the art and science of those days, the satyric poet, Juvenal, informs us the Jews were looked upon as the best interpreters of dreams and the most expert soothsayers. The Roman women run after

Jewish beggars to have their fortunes told.\*

Throughout the middle ages the Jews maintained this peculiar reputation among the Gentiles, and in some parts of Europe superstitious people still believe in it.

When Paul, therefore, visited the Gentiles, he went first to the Jews. He found them in possession of this reputation among the Gentiles. This was too advantageous a point to be neglected by a man of Paul's prudence. So he admitted that all the Jews, of course who adopted his doctrines, possessed the various gifts of grace, to speak with tongues, prophecy, heal diseases, expel demons and perform other miracles; and only added to this that all who believed should receive instantly the same enviable gifts of grace which the Jews possessed. If Mr. Renan supposes we must not form an opinion of "the means of conversion" by these *naïve* errors†, and he thinks this prudent accommodation to current superstitions was not converted to efficient means of conversion; he is certainly mistaken in regard to Paul, who employed these as well as other means at his command to the propagation of the faith which he preached, without the least proof on record, that he believed any of those secret arts or mystic sciences. On the contrary, when these superstitions assumed alarming dimensions, he remonstrated, as we have seen in the

\* Juvenal Satyra vi, verses 541 to 546. Also Demas-cius Vie d Isidore 56.

† Renan's Apostles, chap. vi.

passages from his epistles, quoted in the beginning of this chapter; but he could no longer master them. "In the third century the church still believed herself possessed of the same privileges, and claimed as a permanent right the power of healing the sick, of driving out devils, and of predicting the future.†

This is one of the radical errors in the origin of Christianity, the nugatory effect of which is not entirely obliterated in our days. While Moses firmly and severely opposed those superstitions, because they are absurd, impious and perverse to the intellect, the founders of Christianity embraced and propagated them to the detriment of genuine piety and the degradation of reason. If the Talmud is objectionable on account of these superstitions, the New Testament is no less so. This was an unpardonable crime on truth and on the understanding, which fell destructively upon uncountable tens of thousands who were bewildered, confused and degraded by those superstitions. Had the founders of Christianity, like Moses, refused to employ those contemptible means for the propagation of faith, it might not have succeeded as fast as it did among the Gentiles; but it would have saved its votaries the disgrace of believing in demons, exorcism, thaumaturgy and other degradations of reason. We can close this chapter only with an expression

† Irenæus *adv. hæer.* ii, xxxii, 4; v, vi, 1, Tertull. *Apol.* 23 to 43; *Ad Scapulum* 2; *De Corona* 11; *De Spectaculis* 24; *De Anima* 57.

of deep sorrow, that the author of Christianity as well as the compilers of the Talmud are guilty of having lent their hands to the promulgation of superstition.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PERSECUTION OF THE APOSTLES.

The author of "The Acts" narrates three persecutions of the apostles with Peter, besides the execution of Stephen (Acts vii) and of James the brother of John (Ibid. xii). In the first persecution Peter and John only are mentioned (Ibid. iv); in the second persecution all the apostles are included (Ibid. v, 18); and in the third Peter alone is mentioned after James was slain, as the object of persecution (Ibid. xii, 3).

There are several weighty reasons why the accounts of those persecutions can not be accepted as facts: In the first place, we know already that the author of "The Acts" did not intend to write authentic history. The early Christians attached so little importance to that book, that Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, in the beginning of the fifth century, began his homily on the Acts with the words, "By many this book is not at all known, neither the book itself, nor who wrote and put it together"; and said in the same homily, "To many this book (the Acts) is unknown, by others it is despised, because it is clear

and easy." Most likely, however, it was unknown because considered unimportant, and it was despised on account of its manifest inventions.

The second reason is, the narratives of these persecutions contain so many self-contradictory elements that the story can not well be accepted as true. Let us first examine the narratives as they lay before us. The first story runs thus: After Peter and John had healed the lame man who was forty years old and was born lame, Peter gained numerous followers for the religion of the apostles, so that their number grew to five thousand, which was certainly not the case. It was not this, however, at which the authorities took offence; "As they (the apostles) spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, AND THE SADDUCEES, came upon them; being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead; and they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day." So the author of "The Acts" states the case (iv, i, &c.) without bestowing the least consideration on the important circumstance, that all at once the face of the story is changed. In the first place, the Pharisees were the enemies of Jesus and his disciples, and Jesus is their uncompromising opponent; now, on a sudden, the Pharisees are all satisfied and silent, in one instance they even protect Paul against the Sadducee authorities, and

the Sadducees pour out their wrath on the apostles. "The Pharisees and the Scribes" appear quite in a different light in the Acts from what they do in the Gospels. They are no longer "the hypocrites" of the age; on the contrary, one of the best sentences of the New Testament is put into the mouth of Gamliel the Pharisee, as we shall see below; a sentence which even Dr. Adam Clark calls "humane, sensible, candid, and enlightened" (Acts v, 34). This change of the tenor must have a sufficient cause. The author of "The Acts" says the Sadducees were grieved because the apostles preached the resurrection from the dead; but the Pharisees always preached this doctrine, and Jesus did the same without exciting the ire of the Sadducees who must have certainly been well used, to hear a doctrine preached which was the popular belief of all classes of Hebrews, the few Sadducees excepted. If the Sadducees would have arrested all those who preached the doctrine of resurrection, they must have laid hands on three-fourths of all the Jewish doctors. This was certainly not the cause which led to the arrest of Peter and John.

The friendship of the Pharisees, supposed by the author of "The Acts," points distinctly to a time after Paul's conversion. Paul, the pupil of a Pharisee, Gamliel, and a Pharisee himself, remained in continuous conversation with the most prominent doctors of that school, as we shall see here-

after. The influence of Paul upon the primitive Christians changed the feelings of their writers concerning the Pharisees. Besides, the apostle James, as noticed above, stood in friendly relations to the Pharisee doctors, Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi. The onslaughts made against the Sadducees rests upon another historical ground. Josephus narrates the following story:

“ And now Cæsar, upon hearing of the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes, that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons, who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and who had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent: he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when therefore Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority.] Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called *Christ*, whose name was *James*, and some others. [or some of his companions.] And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most



equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa,] desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him, that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a sanhedrim without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which account king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, high priest.—(Josephus' Antiquities, book xx, chap. ix, § 1.)

This paragraph of Josephus is very important to our purposes. Although the words "who was called *Christ*," or Messiah, are evidently the addition of a Christian transcriber; still the facts recorded can not be doubted. They show that James and other Christians were slain by the Sadducean high priest Ananus. This was 62 A. C. Still it is evidently this fact which guides the author of "The Acts" throughout the book, and he always speaks condemnatory of the Sadducees and the high priest Ananus. Facts, dates, and persons, were of very little consideration to the author of "The Acts," whose objects were doctrines, conciliation of the Jewish and Gentile Christians, and not to write history. This is especially clear in the piece before us. Here "Annas the high priest"

is named as the judge of Peter and John. This is a mistake. The first high priest, Annas or Ananus, the son of Seth, was the fourth in office before Caiaphas, who, according to the Gospels, was in that office when Jesus was crucified, up to the year 37 or 38 A. C., when he was deposed by Vitellius, the governor of Syria. (Joseph. Ant. xviii, iv, 2, 3). The author of "The Acts" could not have thought of Ananias, the son of Nebedus, the seventh high priest after Caiaphas, because he calls him Annas and not Ananias, which are two entirely different names. Besides, he places this Ananias in the time of Felix (which is also a mistake), who was Governor of Judea from 53 to 60 A. C., and the story of Peter and James narrated here, is supposed to have occurred soon after the crucifixion. The mistake is obvious, and could only have suggested itself to that author by the story of Ananus and James, as narrated in Josephus.

The next important fact in the above paragraph by Josephus is, that the Hebrews "disliked what was done," condemned the bloody act of Ananus before king Agrippa, and complained about it so seriously before the Roman dignitarian Albinus, that Ananus was deposed from his sacerdotal office. This is only an additional evidence to that deducible from many passages of the Talmud, as from the whole tenor of the author of "The Acts" concerning the Pharisees, that the Jews,

or at least those "who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws," did not persecute the apostles or the primitive Christians, whose doctrines and practices differed very little from those of the other Jews. This is frequently admitted in "The Acts," when its author says of the officers laying hands on the apostles, "They feared the people, lest they should have been stoned."

These considerations lead to the supposition that the whole story of the arrest, trial, and dismissal of Peter and John is fictitious, produced at an age when the actual lives of the apostles had been known no longer. The author of "The Acts," starting from the premises that the apostles, after the death of Jesus, remained in Jerusalem and continued the master's work, invented various stories to correspond, in spirit at least, with that of Ananias and James, and placed them up as high and as near to the death of Jesus as he possibly could. This supposition receives additional force from the circumstance that each of these persecutions is connected with some miracle. The one before us begins with the marvelous healing of the lame man, and this point is represented as a "notable miracle" known not only to the Sanhedrin, but also "manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem." The stories may have been invented for the additional reason of narrating a miracle to

the glorification of the apostles and their cause. This may have been intended for the special purpose of converting the Jews, who were shown that their own ancestors, rulers and doctors of by-gone days, accredited the miracles of the apostles; especially as the Pharisees are treated in those stories with so much regard and kindness, and the Jews, after the fall of Jerusalem, were all Pharisees. Besides all these considerations all these persecution stories have the doctrinal tendency imprinted on their foreheads. Peter, addressing the priests in his own defence, pronounces these doctrines:

1. He heals the sick by the name of Jesus; hence, by pronouncing his name over the sick, they are healed, a doctrine prevalent among Christians to the fourth century.

2. That Jesus was raised from the dead, and the apostles bear witness in this matter, a doctrine by no means unanimously accepted by the primitive Christians, still it is the corner-stone upon which Christianity was reared. It is the main business of the apostles to testify to this matter.

3. That salvation is in Jesus only, a doctrine which was never clearly defined, and strongly reminds one of days when many false prophets rose and false gospels were preached; still the words are put into the mouth of Peter.

4. It is the Holy Spirit which speaks through the apostles and not human wis-

dom, because "they were unlearned and ignorant men," so that the priests marveled and felt convinced, "that they had been with Jesus." This is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Reason and understanding are no factors in religion; inspiration and faith are everything.

So the author of "The Acts" may have invented this story to suit all these purposes, and especially to afford Peter a proper opportunity to utter these doctrines and obtain for them the sanction of the rock of the church, in order to silence all skeptics within the pale of Christianity.

Still, it is possible, and highly probable, that these doctrines are original with Peter and the apostles, and the story itself rests upon a fact, although the story and the utterance of these doctrines have no necessary connection. The law interdicted the practice of thaumaturgy. The apostles, according to Christian and Jewish testimony, practiced thaumaturgy. In the case before us a lame man is healed by Peter and John, and they are arrested and put on trial for the practice of thaumaturgy, so that they are asked by the high priest, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" to which Peter replies that this was done, "by the name of Jesus." Before the court of priests it is merely a case of thaumaturgy, a superstitious practice common then among Jews and Gentiles, and therefore, in strict compliance with the Jewish law אין עונשין אלא מודרין

"None should be punished before he was warned"—the two apostles were dismissed with a mere warning. The author of "The Acts" may have embellished this historical nucleus to suit his purposes. Unfortunately he was not well acquainted with history or chronology, and translocated the high priest Annas, together with the hatred of the Sadducees against the Christians, from the year 62 to year 33 or 34 A. C.

The mildness of the high priest and his court in this matter is quite remarkable; they merely commanded Peter and John "not to speak at all nor to teach in the name of Jesus." In plain words this is a warning not to practice thaumaturgy with the name of Jesus, which the apostles did not merely for the purpose of healing, but to teach the name of Jesus and the power thereof. There is no trace of hatred or ill will in this charge: therefore it is quite unlikely that Peter had charged upon the priests the crime of having crucified Jesus, as this must have excited the indignation of the priests, who must have known, if such an event transpired at all, that the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus. But there is no trace of indignation. The words, "whom ye crucified," must have been added by Luke; because Peter, like Mark (xv, 16, &c.) and Matthew (xxvii, 27, &c.), must have known, or at least maintained, that the Roman soldiers, and not the Jews, mocked, tormented, and crucified Jesus.

Luke and John, as they frequently did, discredited the statements of the former evangelists, and place the Jews in the position of the Roman soldiers, in mocking and crucifying Jesus. Therefore Luke, and not Peter, could have accused the priests in the words, "whom ye crucified." We shall have frequent occasion to show how Luke, like John, writing for Greeks and Romans and not for Jews, took particular pains to justify the Roman and condemn the Jew. So he does on this occasion, without any historical ground whatsoever, that the apostles ever accused the Jews of the crucifixion of Jesus.

We had occasion before this to notice that Luke felt no scruples in the invention of speeches for his heroes, a practice quite common with ancient writers—and so he does on this occasion. What Peter actually said to the priests in his own defence, is altogether unknown. We know from the story before us, what Luke said; we know his tendencies as well as his errors and mistakes.

The second persecution noticed in "The Acts" befalls not merely two apostles, but all of them (Acts v, 17, &c.). The affair is narrated thus: The warning of the ecclesiastical court to the apostles, not to practice thaumaturgy with the name of Jesus, and not to use these fraudulent means to promulgate their doctrines—was not heeded; on the contrary, the apostles continued to employ all the superstitious means then

in vogue among the vulgar, especially the healing of the sick by pronouncing magic spells connected with the name of Jesus, to effect their purpose, to establish their authority and to spread their doctrines. (Ibid. iv, 23, &c.; v, 12 to 17). The exertions of the apostles were successful, the author of "The Acts" informs us. "The people magnified them, and believers were the more added to the Lord." The congregation itself did not increase in numbers, "and of the rest (of the people) durst no man join himself to them," our author states; but her influence upon the multitude grew steadily, as this was and still is the case universally, where the current superstitions, prejudices or passions, are sanctioned and appealed to by men of moral weight or popular eloquence. The illiterate masses reason feebly and feel keenly. The understanding is clogged and the passions, being under no restraint, control the will. To them, ocular demonstration and momentary satisfaction or surprise is everything, and the uncontrolled fantasy supplies successes and miracles, where there is actually nothing but delusion.

In every enlightened community the law prohibits the practice of charlatany: not only because the practician obtains money or confidence under false pretences, but also because it is injurious to the public morals and detrimental to the progress of science and enlightenment. If the apostles



would now re-appear in Prussia, or in Austria, or in any other country where medical police regulations are enforced, and necromancy is considered a public nuisance, and those very apostles would play again the roles of mountebanks, as ascribed to them by the author of "The Acts," they would surely and justly be arrested and punished to the very extent of the law. Precisely the same thing was done then in Judea. Not only the biblical laws but also the laws of Rome prohibited those practices. Already in the year 12 A. C., Augustus and Tiberius published the imperial edict against diviners and astrologers. Therefore it appears likely that the second persecution of the apostles is also based upon a fact, which the author of "The Acts," or some transcriber after him, embellished to suit the taste of his age.

It is again the high priest and the Sadducees, not the Pharisees and the Scribes, who are "filled with indignation," and consequently they "laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." The high priest's name is not mentioned on this occasion, and we are left to conjecture any person or time in connection with this event. It was evidently Luke's intention to make the reader believe this story occurred shortly after the persecution of Peter and John. Unfortunately, however, as in the first the name of Ananias contradicts the chronology, so in this case, the names of Theudas (v, 36) and of

Judas of Galilee (v. 37) point to a later date. For Theudas, who maintained to be a prophet and able to perform miracles ("boasting himself to be somebody"), was captured and beheaded by Roman soldiers in the days of the Governor Fadus; 44 or 45 A. C. (Josephus Antiq. xx, v, 1). Orthodox interpreters admit that every circumstance, as related by Josephus, agrees well enough with what is said of the Theudas of "The Acts," so that the identity of the two persons is well established. The chronology, however, is in their way, and they adopt one Judas for this Theudas, viz: Judas, the son of the robber Hezekiah, (Ibid. Wars ii, iv, 1, and elsewhere) who was one of the royal pretenders, and was killed by Varus. (Tacitus, History v, ix). In the first place there is no valid reason why one Jew (Josephus) should have called the same man Judas, whom another Jew (Gamliel) called Theudas, especially as he, right in the next verse, mentions a Judas. In the second place, it is not likely that Gamliel, who mentions here the Theudas, should have pointed out one of the numerous prominent rebels from the time of Archelaus, and omit the others who were even more prominent, as Simón, the slave of Herod, and especially Athronges, who gave most trouble to the Romans. (Jos. Ant. xvii, x, 7). Two thousand Jews were then crucified by command of Varus, and from all of them, it is supposed, Gamliel picked out but one name, which he did

not even know correctly. In the third place, there is not the slightest reason why we must adhere to the chronology of the author of "The Acts," contrary to the Gospels, whose authors (Luke excepted) let the apostles and disciples go back to Galilee after the crucifixion of Jesus, so that nobody can tell when they returned to Jerusalem.

If that Theudas brings this persecution story to 44 or 45 A. C., the next verse of "The Acts" brings us down to a date still more recent. The verse reads, "And after this man (Theudas) rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing," &c. This Judas, the republican zealot who maintained that it was base and sinful to obey a heathen governor, lived in the days of Cyrenus about 10 A. C., about 35 years before Theudas, and not "after this man." It will not help the matter to make of Theudas the Judas son of Hezekiah, for the two Judas' were cotemporaries. It appears, even from a careful comparison of passages in Josephus, that Judas of Galilee flourished before the other Judas. Here is evidently a mistake in "The Acts." It appears, however, that this mistake was not originally made by Luke; it is the blunder of a transcriber whose traces we shall notice in this piece. After the death of Theudas, when Tiberius Alexander was governor of Judea, 46 and 47 A. C., the sons of Judas of Galilee, James and Simon, were crucified by command of that gover-

nor. (Jos. Ant. xx, v, 2). Most likely, as the mode of their death suggests, they were guilty of a sedition. This came to pass shortly after the death of Theudas. An ignorant transcriber replaced the sons by the father without regard to either chronology or history.

Having thus brought the story down to the year 46 or 47, we must not forget that Gamliel is speaking of those persons and events in the past tense, "For before these days rose up Theudas," he says; "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee," &c.; he continues. Taking into consideration, however, that according to the Greek original, verse 36 should be rendered: "For it is not very long yet," &c., we might safely establish the date of this story to about 50 A. C., about 15 to 17 years after the crucifixion.

Having fixed the cause and the date of this persecution story, we come now to the subject matter. The apostles were arrested. "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth." This requires no critical investigation, as in our days no sensible man believes in such child-like fantasies. The angel also commanded them to go to the temple and speak "to the people *all the words of this life.*" These latter words should most likely read "all these words of life." As they stand now they make no sense, and only show again the hand of an ignorant transcriber. Accordingly, they

went early in the morning to the temple and taught. Meanwhile the high priest convoked the council. "*and all the senate of the children of Israel,*" it is added. The council was the senate and *vice versa*. Here is again the tautology of an ignorant transcriber who evidently thought of two different bodies. The phraseology is also entirely new, and is taken from the bible and not from the current expression of those days. The apostles were sent for, but the officers finding the prison empty, returned and told, "the prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened we found no man within." Who reported this verse verbally to Luke? Had he a reporter at the senate, or was this report entered upon the journal of that body, for Luke to copy it? It is not likely that either was the case. He invented this speech as he did all the rest. Meanwhile somebody brought the information that the apostles preached in the temple. Notwithstanding the miracle, the captain and the officers arrested them again and placed them before the council. To what purpose then was all the trouble the angel had taken with them?

The high priest began the examination of the prisoners with the query, why they preached their doctrines again, after they had been warned not to do so, and then he accused them "you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." "This man's

blood" being a literal translation of *וְהָיָה הַחַיִּים* *otho haish*, we know beyond a doubt that the writer thereof must have lived long after the time described. Besides we can not see how the high priest could have accused them of this, as they certainly never maintained any such thing. But the supposed reply of Peter proves beyond doubt, that all these words are the author's invention. Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." This answers the question. But as to the accusation, he continues, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." Not one of these words is true, and none could have been uttered by either Peter or Luke, who must have known the difference between crucifixion and this Jewish mode of execution. Those who were stoned to death were then hanged on a tree (See Mishna Sanhedrin, vi, 4); while those who were crucified by the Romans, as Jesus was, were nailed alive to the cross, on which they lingered sometimes for days before death released them. The latter part of this verse (30) is undoubtedly the addition of the same ignorant transcriber whose hand we have traced before—of a man who did not care about such nice differences. Then Peter continues, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand" (not "to sit at his right hand," as the Gospels have it) "a Prince and a Saviour" (this is also a new term) "for to give repentance to Israel" (also a bran new

expression) "and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him." This of course, is the gist of the matter, for which the whole speech was invented; the apostles must testify officially to the resurrection of the crucified Messiah and the possession of the Holy Ghost by all "that obey him." But the invention is too obvious in this piece.

The narrator having concluded the speech of Peter adds this note: "When they heard that they were cut to their heart, and took counsel to slay them." If the high priest and his subordinates together with the council and the senate of all the children of Israel had been a band of lawless savages, an infuriated mob, or the secret tribunal of the Spanish inquisition, such proceedings might appear probable. But among the religious, literary, political, and judicial representatives, the highest authorities, the supreme tribunal of a nation which for fourteen centuries had been guided and governed by the laws of Moses, the precepts of the prophets and the inductions of their schoolmen, in such an official body transacting public business before the public eye—such lawless proceedings are utterly incredible. The spirit of that age, from which rabbinical jurisprudence with its Talmuds and its casuistry sprung, led to an overscrupulous and hair-splitting exegese in expounding the Law; so much so

that the spirit frequently was lost sight of by a tenacious attachment to the letter of the law, and the Law of Moses was so highly venerated that it was the very cause of the zealous resistances offered to Rome. Among such a people and in such an age the supreme tribunal can not possibly defy every law and every idea of justice, and take counsel to slay twelve persons whose guilt consisted of words. Here the author of "The Acts," or his transcriber, surrounded as he most likely was by a semi-barbarous populace, exhibits his entire ignorance of Jewish law and Jewish character, misled as has been stated by the story of Ananias and James.

The laws of the Jews of that age are well known. The Mosaic law lies before us to-day as it did then before them, and that code gives no power to any tribunal to condemn a criminal except on the positive testimony of two or more witnesses. In the case before us no witness was heard, none were deemed necessary. Gamliel, who, as we shall see below, pleaded the cause of the apostles, and successfully too, must have, first and foremost, alluded to the fact that there was no case before the tribunal, on account of no witnesses. That "doctor of the law" who was "had in reputation among all the people" could not possibly be guilty of so gross a blunder; the writer of this part of "The Acts" must have made it. The tribunal was not an excited or infuriated mob, for they listened



patiently to Gamliel's plea, "and to him they agreed."

Beside all these points, the laws then in force among the Jews are well known. They are preserved in the undisputed paragraphs of the *Mishna* (משנה קהלה). We must here deviate from our course and acquaint the reader with the main laws, as far as they interest us here.

The Sanhedrin, the senate and supreme tribunal, or also the high court (*Beth Din Haggadol*) of Jerusalem, was the highest authority, according to the Jewish laws in all judicial, legislative, and executive matters. There was no appeal from the decisions or the ordinances of that body; nor was there any person in Israel, except the Herodian kings, who was not subject to that body—the high priest no less than the private citizen, was subject to its decisions and ordinances; the ecclesiastical affairs no less than the political and judicial matters of the nation were under its supremacy.

The authority of the body is derived directly from the Laws of Moses (Deut. xvii, 8 to 13), where the perpetual existence of the supreme tribunal is ordained, and the penalty of death is threatened to those who violate its decisions or ordinances as promulgated by its head, be he priest or layman. The penalty of death in this case, however, was limited in after times to the rebellious judge only, if he was qualified by the law to occupy a seat in the Sanhed-

rin, and he decided a cause wittingly against any decision or ordinance of the supreme tribunal, and any person or persons had acted in accordance with such unlawful decision. Such a culprit was called *Saken Mamreh*, "a rebellious senator." The origin of this body was ascribed to a divine ordinance delivered by Moses, (Numbers xi,) and tradition maintains the perpetual existence of this tribunal, in all ages of the Jewish history, also during the Babylonian captivity, from Moses to the third century A. C. It is noticed frequently in the Bible under the name of "the elders of Israel," in the apocryphies of the Old Testament and the rabbinical literature as "the great synod" or the "Sanhedrin"; so it is also noticed by Josephus, Philo and the New Testament. These are "the Pharisees who sit in the seat of Moses."

This senate was composed of seventy-one persons, because the first council of elders was composed of seventy men and Moses. They held their offices during good behavior. Vacancies were filled by the promotion of judges from the next lower court, the Sanhedrin of twenty-three, whose place of session was at the gate of the temple. The vacancies of this lower body were filled by the promotion of judges from the next lower court, also of twenty-three persons, whose place of sessions was on the temple mount. Vacancies again in this court were filled by the promotion of

ordained judges from any place in Palestine. Judges were originally ordained by a committee of the senate (afterwards by the three highest officers only). Committees were sent by the senate throughout the country; they ordained judges by the *Semichah* "laying the hands upon the head of the candidate," who was required to be "a sage who fears sin, who is humble and meek, of pleasant deportment and beloved by the people" (Maimonides, *Yad. H. Sanh.* ii. 8). These latter qualifications could be ascertained by a popular vote only. Each senator, therefore, had to be originally appointed by a senate committee, as being worthy of a judgeship, and had then to work his way through two higher courts before he was admitted to that grave body. It is not likely, therefore, that the senate was composed of any ignorant or unworthy persons.

The senate was presided over by one elected prince *Nassi*, and two inferior officers, the *Ab Beth Din*, or chief justice, and the *Haham*, or ecclesiastical chief. It had three scribes or secretaries who recorded the transactions (Mishnah, Sanhedrin, iv. 3). The place of session was in a hall adjoining the temple, called *Lishihath Hagazith*, "the hall of hewn stones." They sat in a semi-circular line, the *Nassi* in the center, the two other officers on his both sides, then on both sides the senators according to rank. The scribes stood before them. There were seated before them

three rows of three ranks of doctors; the first row acted as proxies to the senate, those of the second row were proxies to the first, and of the third to the second. Their time of session for the transaction of business, after having been convoked by the ruler, was daily, Sabbaths and holidays excepted, from the morning, after the close of divine service in the temple, to the beginning of the evening service, called *Minchah*.

The names of the presiding officers of this body, from the time of the first Asmonean ruler to the dissolution of the body, are preserved in the rabbinical literature, especially in *Pirke Aboth* (Section I.) and elsewhere. One hundred years before the destruction of the temple, Hillel, the Babylonian, was appointed *Nassi*, which dignity ever afterwards remained in that family. Hillel was succeeded by his son Simon, who was again succeeded by his son Gamliel, and also he was succeeded by his son Simon, who was slain by the Romans after the fall of Jerusalem. In the time on which we treat, either Gamliel or his son Simon must have presided over the Sanhedrin, a fact which the author of "The Acts" did not know, and makes the high priest to preside over the senate, something which never happened. High priests may have been members of that body, but none of them is noticed in the nomenclature of the senatorial officers,

and those nomenclatures are undoubtedly authentic.

In political matters the senate alone was sovereign; the kings or rulers, up to the time of Herod I., were responsible to this body, and could not declare war without their consent. The enlargement of the city of Jerusalem, or of the temple district, and the appointment of criminal courts where there were none, belonged to its functions. It had appellate and final jurisdiction in all cases; original jurisdiction, however, it had but in a few cases, among which is also the case of the false prophet. The case of the apostles, as narrated by the author of "The Acts," could not lawfully be tried before the senate except on appeal from a lower court. Luke was not acquainted with the Jewish laws, and so he embellishes his story by pompous meetings of the senate in extraordinary sessions and accompanied by extraordinary events, neither of which can be true, as little indeed as a spiritual medium would this day be tried before the senate of the United States, or an angel would appear to open anybody's jail.

The apostles accused of thaumaturgy and necromancy must have been tried before the usual criminal court of twenty-three persons, and especially the one which had its "hall upon the temple mount." It is possible, indeed, that they were charged with disorderly conduct in the temple, as they always were at the porch of Solomon.

and preached there. Their being arrested by the captain of the temple, indeed points to this charge; but then they must have been placed before the court of priests, called *Sikne Kehunah* or *Beth Din shel Kohanim* (Mishnah Jomah i, 5; Ketuboth i, 5), whose functions and privileges are unknown now; so much, however, is known that those courts had no right over life and death, and that the high-priest did not preside over them. It may be, however, that the apostles were placed first before the court of priests, where they were accused of disorderly conduct in the temple, and then they were sent before the criminal court for prosecution, where they were also charged with the practice of thaumaturgy and necromancy.

But also in this case, which we can only guess from the sources in which nothing is certain—the author of this portion of “The Acts” fails entirely to state the truth in the matter. We must never forget that a criminal court, with the officers of a temple together with the high priest, is not a body of lawless ruffians, or an infuriated mob. It is but fair to suppose that the proceedings of such a body are, in form at least, according to law, which is not at all the case with the proceedings described in “The Acts.” The criminal court of twenty-three judges was seated in the same manner as the Sanhedrin, with three rows of law students before them, and with two scribes, or three according to Rabbi Judah.

The process was accusatorial and not inquisitorial as in the Roman law; the witnesses accused the criminal. In cases of capital crime the witnesses were admonished thus: "Say nothing of what was said to you or of what you have heard, as a witness from the mouth of a witness, or what you may have heard from the mouth of any veracious man; probably you know not that we will examine and cross-examine you," &c. (*Mishnah, Sanhedrin, iv, 5*). The entire formula is literally preserved. It was intended to deter the witness because the aversion to capital punishment was almost general. The punishment of the false witness, according to the Mosaic law, was severe; he suffered the punishment which his testimony, if true, would have brought on the culprit. The witness was informed thereof before he testified. Each witness was heard alone. He was asked seven accidental questions, viz: "In what year after the jubilee, in which year, month, date and day; in which hour of the day and in what place," was this crime committed? after which other circumstantial questions were asked. So every witness was examined separately. If their testimony disagreed in any of these points, the case was dismissed. If they agreed in every particular, the witnesses were done and the debate began. Each of the law students was entitled to speak in defence of the culprit, and if he did so, he was treated for that day as a member of

the court. The culprit also had the right of self-defence. If the court found the culprit not guilty after his defence had spoken, he was dismissed the same day. The defence had the whole of the first day of debate, and none was permitted to speak for the prosecution (Sanhedrin iv, 1). If the culprit was not cleared the first day, the court adjourned to the next, then the side of the prosecution was heard. Those who had spoken in favor of the culprit could not speak against him. At last the scribes read the arguments and a vote of the court was taken. One majority for guilty cleared the culprit, two majority condemned him. If they could not agree, judges were added even to the number of seventy-one, until they agreed lawfully (Sanhedrin v).

Such was the law in the time when the apostles were tried, and we have no reason to believe that any exceptions thereof would have been permitted in any case. The author of this portion of "The Acts" describes a lawless and therefore an untrue proceeding from the beginning to the end. There are no witnesses at all; the high priest opens an inquisition. This might have been done in a Roman court, not in a Jewish one. The case could not possibly have been brought before the Sanhedrin; still that author states expressly that the high priest called together "all the senate of the children of Israel." The high priest accuses them of having preached certain



doctrines; this was no crime in Palestine, unless the culprit preached idolatry. He furthermore accuses them of having THE INTENTION to bring the blood of Jesus upon them; while in Jerusalem nobody could be called to account for his intentions, and the apostles certainly never intended any such thing. The first thing the court does after Peter has spoken, "they took counsel to slay them," which again is contrary to law; first and for the whole first day the defence must speak, the second day was for the prosecution. So the whole trial, from the beginning to the end, is fictitious. There is not one word of truth in it, except probably the main fact, that the apostles were prosecuted for disorderly conduct in the temple, for thaumaturgy or necromancy, and were dismissed without any further trouble. This may be true or it may not be. The sources before us are no testimony.

The speech of Gamliel, "a Pharisee, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people"—in defense of the apostles, reads thus:

"Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men:

"For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

"After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew

away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

"And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

"But if it be of God, ye can not overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Here again the question rises, who reported this speech to Luke? The apostles on trial could not think of acting as reporters to anybody. Besides, it is a matter of sheer impossibility that a body of men so infuriated against their victims that, without any process of law, they "take counsel to slay them," should at once, by these few and simple words, which are artless imitations of Scriptural passages\* be moved to a sense of justice and a feeling of compassion to dismiss the victims unhurt, as the author of "The Acts" tells us. Such a sudden transition of feelings is purely dramatical, but no reality. It appears much more likely that Luke invented the situation to introduce Gamliel, the teacher of Paul, as the advocate of the apostles, not only to please the Paulites, but also the Jews, who honored and respected two doctors of the law of the same name, both princes of the senate, both men of great reputation and authority among the Jews, viz: Gamliel the Elder, the grand-son of Hillel, and Gamliel of Jamnia, grand-son of the former. This histori-

\* Prov. xxi. 80; Judges vi, 28 to 32.

cal name may have been chosen for the same reason, as stated before; to convince the skeptic Jews that their learned forefathers already were favorably inclined to the apostles.

The essence of the speech itself is undoubtedly historical. It is an expression of the feelings of the Pharisees toward the primitive Christians, a subject which we will fully explain in the next chapter. The Pharisees, themselves guilty of employing superstitious means to gain the confidence of the ignorant masses, saw no wrong in the practice of thaumaturgy and necromancy on the part of the apostles, to spread their doctrines and gain confidence for themselves. On the whole, the doctrines of the Pharisees and the Christians (before Paul) did not differ much, and the Pharisees were used to similar differences on the part of the Essenees, who, after all, stood in high reputation for piety and wisdom.

The author of "The Acts" then tells us that the apostles were not killed, but they were *beaten* and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus.

It is not against the Jewish law to beat persons who violate the injunctions or decrees of a court. Therefore, it is possible that the apostles, after having been warned not to teach the name of Jesus by the superstitious means which they employed, and they having violated this decree of the court, were beaten exactly according to the law. This part of the narrative is proba-

ble; still it is by no means certain. The whole persecution stories have so much of invention plainly and openly expressed, that one must see at once the author did not intend to write authentic history, and the transcriber, knowing this, shaped it to suit himself.

In the third persecution, James, the brother of John, was slain, and Peter was saved by a miracle, the author of "The Acts" informs us (xii, 1, &c.). This was the third persecution, and can have happened either under King Agrippa I., hence previous to 44 A. C., for in that year Agrippa died; or under Herod II., who succeeded Agrippa I., not indeed as king, in any political sense of the term, for the land was governed by Roman officers, but as the sovereign of the temple and all ecclesiastical matters. (Joseph. Ant. xx, 1, 3, and v, 2). This is the exact time when Theudas and the two sons of Judas, the Galilean, viz: James and Simon, were slain.

Luke evidently thought of Agrippa I., whose sudden death at Cesaria he, somewhat like Josephus, ascribes to a miraculous cause. Still this could not possibly have been the case; if the second persecution happened about 50 A. C. as the names mentioned by Luke prove beyond a doubt, the third and last could not have taken place before 44 A. C., i. e. six or more years before the second.

As it will be necessary to our plan to write an extra chapter to investigate the

statements concerning the martyrdom of James and Stephen, we drop this point here, together with the chronology and the peculiar coincidence that the victims of Luke on this occasion are James and Simon (or Peter) exactly as those of Josephus, the sons of Judas of Galilee, JAMES and SIMON who were slain by Tiberius Alexander, about the same time of which Luke speaks.†

The story itself offers conspicuous features of a fictitious character. It runs thus: Herodus Agrippa I., noticed by Josephus and the Talmud as the best and most pious of the Herodian princes, persecuted the Christians. His uncle Herod Antipas, having killed John the Baptist "by the sword," this Herod killed James the brother of a John, also by the sword. The king being a Pharisee, the author again changes the situation. He appears to have forgotten his former statements in this respect. Agrippa is not afraid of the people, as Luke noticed on all former occasions; on the contrary, "he saw it pleased the Jews," all of them, Sadducees and Pharisees, priests and laymen, so that all on a sudden the Christians had no more friends in Jerusalem, while but shortly before this their friends were so numerous that the high priest and the senate were afraid to harm the apostles. This sounds incredible. The king took also Peter and put him in prison. The prisoner was

† Joseph. Ant. xx, v, 2.

guarded by "four quaternions of soldiers" to make sure of him over the feast of unleavened bread, after which he was to be delivered to the people. This precaution was taken against the industrious angels who had played the Jews a trick on a former occasion, against which Agrippa took precautionary measures. The end fully justified this. The angel, the inevitable coadjutor in all Gospel stories, the angel of the Lord, who was nowhere when Stephen was stoned and James beheaded, who, it appears, did not care much for a couple of saints, still moved by the incessant prayer "of the church" (here the church is brought in in her saving capacity) came "upon" Peter in his prison, got him up and dressed, went with him through the "four quaternions of soldiers" to the iron gate, after the chains had fallen from Peter's limbs, and the gate "opened to them of his own accord and they went out." The angel vanished, and Peter in his surprise soliloquized: "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the Jews." Peter soliloquized and Luke knew precisely what he said in that painful situation. Peter, himself a Jew, said that God saved him "from all the expectation of THE PEOPLE OF THE JEWS." It takes an unusual amount of faith not to discover the fictitious character of these statements. Peter then went to the house of Mary, the mother of John,

where many of the congregation were assembled. He knocked, and after some difficulty was admitted. In their astonishment those good people thought it was his ghost. He having told them his marvellous story, left the city, "and went into another place." That is the last we hear of him.

The story closes with a dramatical catastrophe. Herod, on learning that the angel had cheated him out of his prisoner, "examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death," viz: the four quaternions of soldiers. All this people must believe. In the land of the Book and the Law four quaternions of men are killed, somewhat like Dahomey justice, by order of a king who enjoyed the reputation of a law-abiding prince, and all that because an innocent prisoner escaped. Where is the justice of God in this case? What was the offense of those keepers that the angels suffered them to be slain? The angel who rescued Peter did a murderous work and ought to have been punished for it, especially because he did not rescue the keepers also. But we know already that the story is not true; here, however, we see that the writer thereof had a very imperfect sense of justice. He did not care much for a few soldiers; if their death was required to wind up a story with a proper cadence.

It is undoubtedly a fact that after the doctrines of Paul, especially the abolition

of the Law, had sufficiently spread among the new Christians, the Jews must have hated the rising sect, as the Catholics did the young Protestants; for the Christianity of Paul was entirely and radically averse to Judaism as understood in those days. It is also true that the author of "The Acts" places this third persecution after the conversion of Paul; still it can not be accepted as a fact, because the story in itself is of a fabulous character; in the year 44 A. C. Paul's peculiar doctrines could not have been known yet, and the main object of the story to get Peter out of the way, is too obvious not to be observed on the first glance.

The author of "The Acts" was in a peculiar dilemma. Instead of describing a natural course of events, as one might expect, so that the apostles, after the death of their master, must have gone back to Galilee and remained there for some time, after which some or all of them may have come back to Jerusalem, where in course of time they established a congregation which gradually and naturally increased, he reverses the order and begins at once with a large congregation which enjoyed the admiration of the masses, and filled all Jerusalem with their doctrines. To this end he must have miracles, angels, pompous assemblies, speeches, sensations, excitements, public trials and all the concomitants thereof, which he was obliged to invent and to decorate. But all this proved



worthless at the end, when in the year 66 A. C.; Cestius Gallus besieged Jerusalem, all the Christians left the city to settle down in Pella, in Celosyria, and all of them were no more than 500 souls, whom the Jews; then in full and undisputed possession of the city, suffered to depart in peace, as they, like our modern Quakers, were non-combatants. This proved that all former statements in regard to numbers and their relation to the rest of the population were incorrect and highly exaggerated. Besides, with the first authentic notice of the congregation, we find James and not Peter at the head, and the distinctions between Jews and Christians much too faint to call the latter even a sect in the stricter sense of this term. To come out of this dilemma Luke was obliged to invent persecutions which had no real existence, to show why the congregation decreased so rapidly, and why Peter left it. There may have been some law proceedings against the first teachers of Christianity for the practice of thaumaturgy and necromancy, or for the disturbance in the temple by the enthusiastic and overzealous teachers of the new doctrines; but those proceedings certainly did not amount to much. The persecutions as the author of "The Acts" narrates them are certainly fictitious. The same, we have no doubt, was the case with the martyrdom of Stephen and James, the brother of John; still, before we can prove this, we must devote a

chapter to the apostles' creed, and the causes of its origin and success.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED.

The brief summary of the principal doctrines of Christianity, which bears the name of the Apostles' Creed, Mosheim felt already compelled to admit, is not the work of the apostles. That historian says, "There is much more reason and judgment in the opinion of those who think that this creed was not all composed at once, but from small beginnings, was imperceptibly augmented in proportion to the growth of heresy, and according to the exigencies and circumstances of the church, from whence it was designed to banish the errors that daily arose."\* Upward of ninety different creeds which were heresies, are admitted to have existed within the first three centuries of Christianity. But the "God of God" doctrine contained in the Apostles' Creed was not adopted before the council of Nice, 327 A. C.; and the phrase "He descended into hell" is of a still more recent date. Lately one Michel Nicolas wrote a book on this subject.† He comes

\*Ecclesiastical History, &c., London, 1823, vol. i, p. 116.

†Le Symbole de Apotres; essai historique. Par Michel Nicolas; Paris: Levy freres, 1867.

to nearly the same conclusion with Mosheim. The creed as it now is, was at no time entirely new, nor was it the composition of any one author or body of authors, nor even of any one period. It formed the final development of a series of changes, the expansion of a number of antecedent formulas, tentative and incomplete. The common root of the whole was the profession of faith demanded of the neophyte in baptism. The baptismal profession had always in it somewhat of a secret formula, in analogy with the pagan rites of initiation. It was forbidden to put it in writing, a prohibition which can be traced till the latter half of the second century. Tertullian (200 A. C.) records the formula as it then existed: *Credo in Patrem, Filium, Spiritum Sanctum et in Sanctum Ecclesiam*. This is undoubtedly the original from which the Apostles' Creed was gradually developed, and which was in the second or in the beginning of the third century, added to Matthew's Gospel: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."†

†The history of the successive phases through which the primitive formula can be shown to have passed is tantamount to a summary of the state and progress of dogmatic belief in the Church. The chief modifications of the simple form of belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are concisely summed up by M. Nicolas at the end of his critical inquiry:

*Premiere modification.*—Dans la seconde moitié du deuxième siècle, on y ajouta un quatrième terme relatif à l'Eglise, pour affirmer qu'elle seule, à l'exclusion de toutes les sectes dissidentes et rivales, possédait et continuait la véritable tradition apostolique. La confession de foi, pour être admise au baptême, fut

Therefore the piece read in the churches as the Apostles' Creed affords no information of what the Apostles believed or taught. The first article of that creed reads thus: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth"—or as the other version reads (there are two accepted and read in the church): "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible." Peter and his co-laborers among the Hebrews did cer-

alors, "Je crois au Pere, au Fils, au Saint-Esprit et a la sainte Eglise." Cette nouvelle formule a ete le cadre du Symbole des Apotres, qui n'en est qu'un developpement.

*Seconde modification.*—A mesure qu'il fut necessaire de mettre les fideles en garde contre les erreurs, d'abord des gnostiques de toutes denominations, et ensuite de novatiens et de donatistes, il fallut marquer en quel sens l'Eglise entendait chacun des quatre termes de la formula precedente. C'est articles explicatifs. Il resulta de la des formulaires plus ou moins confus, d'une etendue relativement considerable et par cela meme ne respondant pas tres-bien a l'usage auquel ils etaient destines.

*Troisieme modification.*—Il fallut les simplifier en en elaguant tout ce qui n'etait pas strictement necessaire. De ce premier travail de revision sortirent les differents Symboles des Apotres qu'on trouve en usage, a la fin du quatrieme siecle, a Jerusalem, a Alexandre, a Rome, a Aquilee, dans les Eglises de l'Afrique preconinsulaire.

*Quatrieme modification.*—Vers le commencement du cinquieme siecle, le Symbole des Apotres, desormais en usage seulement dans les Eglises latines, fut complete de differents articles, empruntes principalement, a ce qu'il semble, a celui de l'Eglise de Jerusalem, et quelques-uns des articles en furent remanies dans l'intention evidente de les rendre des expressions plus claires ou plus exactes des croyances qui y sont exposes. Ce travail eut lieu en Afrique, par les soins de saint Augustin.

*Cinquieme modification.*—Enfin, au sixieme siecle, on y ajouta, en outre de quelques mots d'une importance secondaire, deux articles, celui de la descente de Jesus-Christ aux enfers, qui n'avait ete jusqu'alors que dans le Credo de l'Eglise d'Aquilee, et celui de la communion de saints, qui etait entierement nouveau. Le Symbole des Apotres se trouva des ce moment definitivement constitue.

tainly not teach this doctrine, because there was no need for it, as every child in Palestine knew it. It was undoubtedly the principle doctrine which they afterward taught the Heathens to whom this was new, but in Palestine there was no need to advance it. However widely the sects and the schools of those days differed on essential points, in this particular one they all agreed. The post-biblical literature of the Hebrews records nowhere any difference of opinion in regard to the divine essence, nature or attributes. Hence the question rises, what did the Apostles teach their fellow Israelites in Jerusalem, distinguishing their system of religion from others?

A correct reply to this query can be ascertained only from a careful comparison of three different sources, viz :

1. From the statements of the author of "The Acts." But here we must always bear in mind that Luke's tendency was reconciliation of the Christian schools according to Paul and according to the disciples of Jesus. Therefore his statements must be carefully compared with others before they can be adopted as facts.

2. From the genuine epistles of Paul. The polemic points of these epistles show what other Christians believed contrary to the teachings of Paul, and those very points of disagreement lead us to that which the disciples of Jesus believed and taught.

3. The cotemporary literature of the rabbis, the sentiments and conception

then in vogue, as recorded by various authors, and the critical sense, to distinguish the probable from the improbable.

It has been stated before that the Ebionites and the Nazarenes were the primitive Christians among the Hebrews. Their story of Jesus, known as the Gospel of the Hebrews or also of the Nazarenes, which was accepted into the canon, differed essentially from the canonical gospels, although the synoptics and Matthew especially made abstracts and adopted much from it. The Ebionites believed that Jesus was a man, born of Joseph and Mary, according to the ordinary course of nature. The Nazarenes, at least of the second century, believed that Jesus was born of a virgin and was also in a certain manner of the divine nature. But this certainly was not originally an article of their faith; in course of time they adopted this doctrine from the Gentile Christians, although also in this form their conception of the divine nature of Jesus was far different from the pagan conception.

The idea of apotheosis is eminently pagan as is the "Son of God." In Hebrew literature and religion, with that strict monotheism and unalterable spirituality of the Deity, the deification of a man, or the humanization of God, is entirely foreign. This was especially the case at the time of the origin of Christianity, as is evident from the Aramaic version of the Pentateuch by Onkelos, the proselyte, and many

rabbinical passages, when in direct opposition to the plastic gods of Greece all possible attempts were made to render the poetical tropes of the Bible, so as to remove every idea of corporality, or human attributes and passions, from the infinite Deity; when, as is evident from Josephus and the Talmud, they went so far as not even to pronounce the Hebrew proper name of God. There is no instance, in Hebrew literature, of apotheosis. Enoch and Elijah, whom popular veneration transported alive to heaven, were not supposed to be deities; they were thought to be angels, Syndalphon and Metathron. In the Bible, Israel is styled God's first-born son (Exodus iv, 22, 23): "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my first-born son; and I say unto thee, Send off my son, that he may serve me." In reference to this passage, which Moses addressed to Pharaoh, the prophet Hosea said: "For Israel was a lad and I loved him, and I called my son from Egypt," (Hosea xi, 1.) The Evangelist referred the last part of this verse to Jesus without observing that in the first part Israel is named as the object which was loved, hence also which was called from Egypt. Again Moses said to Israel, "Ye are sons to the Lord, your God," (Deuteronomy xiv, 1.) The prophet Jeremiah, introducing the Almighty as speaking of Ephraim or the kingdom of Israel, has Him say, "Is not Ephraim a dear son unto me, or a child that I dandle?" (Jerem. xxxi, 20.) The

prophet Nathan brought to King David the divine message, in which God promised the king that his own son should succeed to the throne of Israel, who should build a house to God; and concerning this son, the message of the prophet continues: "I shall be unto him to a father, and he shall be unto me to a son." (II. Samuel, vii.) The connection of the verses in that passage shows plainly that this could refer to the immediate successor of David only, to him who built the temple on Mount Moriah. Therefore this very King Solomon who wrote the Psalms 1st and 2d, which anciently were but one, says of himself: "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee." In the Hebrew idiom it is the affectionate vocative to address one my son or my daughter without any reference to family relations.

In all these biblical passages there is no idea of emanation otherwise than the emanation of the human race from the Creator. The terms son and father are used figuratively to express the intimate relation of God to His image, the human being, or to Israel, His chosen people, or to King Solomon, who should build the temple. It is intended to express the fathership of God and the sonship of man in their mutual relations, in contradistinction of the pagan conception of arbitrary, capricious and fate-ridden gods and men. But the Christian conception of the "Son of God" is entirely different. It means direct and real emana-



tion from the deity. Mary conceived directly of the Holy Ghost, hence the issue is spirit of God's spirit and matter of God's matter, and Jesus, mind and matter, is the "Son of God," as David was the son of Jesse, or Solomon was the son of David. This conception is so entirely anti-Hebrew, so repugnant to Jewish theories of the Deity, and so contrary to the teachings of the Old Testament and its ancient exponents, that it is plainly impossible to find any foothold for it in the Hebrew Bible or in the Jewish traditions. Hence neither the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, nor the Hebrew apostles and Jesus himself could ever have thought of the divinity of Christ. Therefore the Hebrew apostles must not be supposed to have advanced any new theology. Jesus, like the prophet Ezekiel, is reported to have called himself "Son of Man," which signifies the human being without any title; it means a "Scion of Adam." If he had supposed himself to be the Son of God and God himself, it must have been his duty, in honor of truth, to announce himself as such in plain and unmistakable terms, as every-where in the Hebrew Bible God proclaims himself, "I am Jehovah." Therefore all passages in the Gospels and in the Acts, previous to the advent of Paul, wherein Jesus is called the "Son of God," can be spurious only, since neither Jesus nor his apostles, disciples and followers among the Jews could ever have entertained

a conception so foreign and repugnant to the Jewish mind.\*

The sons of the gods are so numerous in the Pantheons of all Heathens, and their ideas of deity were so crudely pantheistic, so diametrically opposed to the spirituality of the Hebrew theories, that it is not difficult to account for the "Son of God" among Gentile Christians. The sons of Saturnus, Jupiter, Apollo and Mercury alone are numerous and popular enough to inform us where that idea originated. The nature and fate of Aesculapius, the son of Apollo, are so similar to those of the Jesus of the Gospels that the authors must have seen the Metamorphosis of Ovid, and imitated the "*Ergo ubi fatidicos concepi mente furores,*" &c. *Lib. 2, lin. 640.* One conversant with the Gospel story, can

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\*The parable of the man who planted a vineyard, and let it out to a husbandman, which the three synoptics narrate as having been said by Jesus in the temple a few days before his crucifixion, can not be accepted as authentic, not only because the whole story of his stay and conversation in Jerusalem is narrated altogether differently by John who must have seen and discredited the statements of the synoptics; but also because Jesus speaks of himself as being the Son of God, an idea which he never entertained of himself. Besides the narrative betrays itself as being fictitious. The parable is plain, it says that the glory of Israel shall pass over to the Romans, that Jerusalem shall be destroyed and the people be dispersed. This certainly could have been written only by one who saw Israel dispersed, the temple destroyed, and the Romans embrace Christianity. Jesus never had an idea that his doctrine should spread beyond the circle of the Jews. Notwithstanding the plain words of the parable the priests and elders are represented as being such fools as not having understood him. It is all so childish that one with very little critical taste can see that this parable, being an imitation of Isaiah v, was written by somebody after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, to flatter the Romans, and elevate Jesus to the pagan dignity of the Son of God.

not possibly read the drama "Prometheus Bound," written by the skillful hand of Aeschylus, or Potter's translation thereof, without being instantly struck with the similarity of the two, Jesus and Prometheus. Both "divine sufferers" were "both God and man." There can be no question as to the origin of the "Son of God" among the Gentile Christians; the only question can be, why Paul admitted this error. We will explain this when treating on Paul.

Therefore no new theology must be sought in the Apostles' Creed. If they met on the porch of Solomon or in the temple, they certainly had no intention to pray to any one being but the very **JEHOVAH**, the One, Eternal, Omnipresent and Infinite God, as taught by Moses and the prophets, and as worshiped by all Israel. All the additions to the strictly Unitarian doctrine are of pagan origin.

The first article of faith in the Apostles' Creed must have concerned the Messiah, and if ever couched in writing, it must have read somewhat to this effect:

*ART. I.—The Messiah has come. Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. He was crucified, but he resurrected from the dead and lives now. He will re-appear on earth to restore the throne of David and establish the kingdom of heaven.*

With the exception of the crucifixion, resurrection and second advent, the acceptance of which circumstances enforced, these conceptions are purely Jewish; hence

it is within the compass of probability that the apostles should have entertained them.

MESSIAH, Hebrew *Mashiach*, Greek *Christos*, is a noun derived from the verb *mashach*, "to anoint," and signifies one who is anointed. The high priest having been anointed is called *Ha-kohen Ha-mashiach*, "The anointed priest," (Levit. iv, 3; v, 16.) The king of Israel who was anointed before mounting the throne was also called *Mashiach* or Messiah (I. Samuel ii, 10, 35; xii, 3, 5; xv, 6.) David called Saul, in his absence, the Messiah of the Lord, (I. Samuel xxiv, 7, 11; xxvi, 9, 11, 23; II. Samuel i, 14, 16.) Thus, on the authority of David, we know that Saul, who was by no means a very good man, was the Messiah of the Lord, simply because he was the king of Israel. Abishai called David the Messiah of the Lord (II. Samuel xix, 22,) and the author of Samuel speaks of David as the Messiah of the God of Jacob. (Ibid. xxiii, 1.) Solomon called himself the Messiah in Psalm ii, 2; so did David call himself in Psalm xviii, 51; xx, 7; xxviii, 8. In Psalm 105, 15, and I. Chronicles xvi, 22, the Messiahs are mentioned in the plural number, "Ye shall not touch my Messiahs, and ye shall not afflict my prophets," as God's rebuke to kings and nations not to maltreat Israel. Not only the Hebrew high priests and kings were called the Lord's Messiahs, but also the pagan king Cyrus was called so by the prophet Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord to

his Messiah Cyrus." (Isaiah xlv, 1.) In the authorized English versions, the translators did not render those terms Messiah or Christ, as it ought to be; they retained this distinction for Jesus, and rendered these terms always "the anointed one," which is a mere circumscription of Christ or Messiah. It signifies the same.

Thus we know that the high priests, Saul, David, Solomon, and the other kings of the Hebrew people were Christs or Messiahs. The Hebrew Scriptures mention nowhere any Christ or Messiah who should, at some future day, redeem Israel or any other people. The word Christ or Messiah is not made use of in any of the so-called messianic passages of the Bible. The redemption of Israel, the re-elevation of the Davidian dynasty, and the final and universal triumph of truth, are frequently predicted by the prophets; but these three distinct events stand in no necessary connection with each other, and in no case the Christ or Messiah is mentioned. Hence, whatever expectations, hopes and conceptions the ancient Hebrews may have associated with the Messiah, his person, his offices or his successes, this much is sure, that neither can legitimately be traced back to the biblical sources. In fact there is no testimony on record to prove that the Hebrews previous to Herod I at any time expected a Messiah, or believed that one should come. On the contrary, the entire silence of all sources on this subject, from

Ezra to Herod I, affords no slight evidence that they believed not in the coming of a Messiah. Paul, and after him John the Evangelist, and the other prominent Gentile Christians, understood well that the Messiah argument of the older apostles in favor of Jesus amounted to nothing, and he discarded it almost entirely and adopted the "Son of God."

However, during the reign of Herod I, it appears, the messianic ideas sprung up and took deep root among all classes of people, the aristocracy and the friends of Rome excepted. The origination of that belief and hope among the Hebrews at that particular period was quite natural. They saw their independence vanish, their liberties destroyed, their ancient rights disregarded, their sacred laws violated, their best men slain or their property confiscated. They saw themselves helplessly prostrated at the feet of a heartless despot, who was a foreigner, the son of a hated man, and the agent of Rome, a terrible and bloody spouse, father and friend, in whom none could trust, who killed king and high priest, wife and children. In such a state of misery and utter prostration, it is quite natural that a people with that boundless confidence in its laws and institutions should expect some supernatural redemption and sudden assistance from on high. So the Hebrews began to expect a redeeming Messiah who should make an end to their political misery and helplessness, and

restore the ancient order of things. Wherever a people harbors such hopes, persons apparently corresponding thereto will surely appear on the stage of public life.

During the lifetime of Herod the silence of the grave reigned, terror hushed the enraged hearts. A false report of his death had already emboldened two patriots, Judas, the son of Saripheus, and Matthias, the son of Margalothus, to inspire their pupils, to tear down the golden eagle from the temple. It was too soon, Judas and Matthias with many of their followers perished in the flames. (Joseph. Ant. xvii, 4.) These were the first Messiahs of that age. When death released the Hebrew nation of the execrable tyrant, Herod, he was scarcely buried, when the flame of rebellion bursted forth in all parts of the country. The people, instead of mourning over the death of Herod, as the court wanted it, lamented over the loss of Judas and Matthias. The son of Herod, Archelaus, could not pacify the people, and like so many other bloody despots, he sent his hirelings against his people, and on the feast of Passover 3,000 of the patriots were slain in and about the temple. This could not diminish, it could only increase and intensify the messianic hopes.

Archelaus and the whole royal family after this fete left Jerusalem, where they could not feel secure, and he went to Rome to find support there. This was the signal to a national revolt, against which the

avaricious Sabinus and Varus fought with the entire force of Rome in Syria and whatever armies he could obtain there from the petty rulers. The nation was enraged, but it was not organized, and defeat was certain. A number of Messiahs sprung up in different parts of the country. Josephus mentions only a few of them—Judas, the son of Ezekias; Simon, a slave of Herod; and Athronges. He mentions not even the chief leaders. Varus discomfited the embittered people, thousands of them were slain, their ambassadors to Rome complained in vain, Archelaus was placed on the throne of Judea, and the rest of the Herodian kingdom was divided among his other two sons Philip and Antipas. The nation bled from a thousand wounds and kept the peace for ten years, till Archelaus was banished to Vienna, and Judea was reduced to a Roman province without any cause on the part of the people. This was the signal for another rebellion.

Cyrenius, the Governor of Syria, had come, with him Coponius, the first procurator of Judea, the census and the taxation, and the just indignation of the Hebrew people. Joazar, the son of Botheus, their high priest, persuaded them to yield and bear, as resistance appeared to be madness and self-destruction. But there was another Messiah, Judas of Galilee, an enthusiast, with whom prudence, precaution, utility and policy had little weight; he yielded to the impulses of just indignation, love of inde-



pendence, and faithful adherence to God's laws, and marshalled the people to a revolt against Rome. This Judas of Galilee, it appears, was the actual precursor of the messianic speculations, from which Christianity originated. This Judas was a truly Jewish patriot. He opposed the taxation as "an introduction to slavery," because with the taxation the annexation of Judea to Rome, as a province thereof, was identical. Judas said his people "were cowards, if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords." "And the nation was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree."\*

This Judas with his associate Saddauk, to whose doctrines Josephus ascribes all the misfortunes which befell the Hebrew people, by their obstinate resistance to Roman aggression and Roman laws, by their love of liberty and independence and their attachment to the laws of their country, have done the same thing precisely as the Maccabees did in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. They expressed the sentiments of all the patriots in Judea: No lord besides God and no law besides Israel's. The taxation and annexation of Judea was the turning point in history; from this day down to the fall of Bethar and the death of Barcochba the messianic ideas were fixed,

\*Compare Josephus Antiquities, Book xviii, chap. i, sec. 1, 6; Book xx, chap. v, sec. 2; Wars, Book ii, chap. viii, sec. 1; chap. xvii, sec. 8.

and one Messiah after the other sprung up. The Messiah must shake off the foreign yoke, must restore the laws of Israel, the throne of David, the kingdom of heaven, which were identical terms. Numerous were the Messiahs who undertook this great task, among them also three sons of this Judas of Galilee, thousands of Jewish patriots were crucified; but in vain was all the precious blood shed, in vain were all those heroic and death defying combats, the nation was enfeebled and demoralized after every defeat from the gigantic and uncompromising Rome with her bloody, avaricious and treacherous procurators. The enthusiastic patriots, it is true, remained faithful to the last. They adhered to their principles with an unparalleled tenacity and an admirable self-denial. Still the prudent politicians, like Josephus and his compatriots, the rich men, the men in power by Roman appointment and those greedy after it, could only cling to Rome, and hope for better times. But also the men of sober reflection might have seen that submission to Rome was, though time serving, still the best policy to save the country. Thus from the day of the taxation and annexation, there were actually two great political parties in Judea, the submissionists and the patriots. The patriots, notwithstanding all the reverses they suffered, held out and clung to the hope that a Messiah must come to redeem the people. The weaker they grew, the more

miracles they expected from on high, to be wrought by or for the Messiah.

The patriotism of the ancient Hebrews was so invincible, because it had a religious basis resting on pure understanding. There were the great religious and moral verities which, for centuries, had been the birthright of the people that, in all these things, could look down upon the Greek with scorn or pity. There was the faith of all good men, that truth must triumph at last, and justice must prevail. There were the great promises of the prophets, pointing to a glorious and happy future. There was plenty of strong nutriment to patriotism. With that firm faith in their cause, which was the cause of truth and justice, they could not think of discomfiture. Therefore, as their disasters and their misery increased, and the consciousness of their own weakness dawned forcibly upon them, in the same ratio their faith in miracles and a supernatural Messiah to save their cause, grew and spread among them; so that finally any impostor almost found credence and enthusiastic followers, notwithstanding the thousands who were crucified by the Romans.

Still, another and entirely different view of the subject was entertained by others, and this was the separation of the moral and religious verities from the political laws and institutions of Israel, so that all the prophetic promises should relate only to the final and universal triumph of truth

and justice themselves, without reference either to the land of Palestine or to its political laws and institutions. This was the purely religious view of the question, while the other was the patriotic. This religious view found sufficient grounds in the prophetic books, especially in that of the second Isaiah\* who evinces every-where a thoroughly cosmopolitan spirit.

Let us read some of those passages. The first Isaiah (ii, 2) and his older cotemporary, Micah (iv, 1), quote and expound a more ancient prophetic text, which reads thus: "And it shall come to pass in future days† that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be firmly established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and unto it shall flow all the nations. And the multitude of nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us of His ways, and we may walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of God out of Jerusalem. And He will judge among the nations, and decide for the multitude of people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-knives; nation shall not lift up

\* Isaiah from Chap. 40 to the end of the book.

† באחרית הימים must not be rendered "the last days" or "the end of days." It signifies literally "in the future of the days," a future more or less distant in time. See Deut. iv, 30; Jerem. 48, 46; 49, 39; Ezekiel 38, 16; Hosea iii, 5.

sword against nation, and they shall not learn any more war." Micah adds to this, "And they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree, with none to make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Whatever the commentators may have written on this passage, the unprejudiced reader can discover in "the mountain of the Lord's house" a figurative expression only, representing "the law" and "the word of God," which was to go out from Zion and Jerusalem. It can only mean the moral and religious verities made known to Israel, after which the nations should eagerly inquire, and which should bring about the blessings of profound peace to all. Here is neither geographical nor political limitation; nations, whatever their political organizations or geographical locations may be, nations and not a multitude of people come, to be instructed in, and saved by the law and the word of God. Here is a strict separation of the political laws from the moral and religious verities of Israel, and the expectation of the final and universal triumph of the latter, without any connection with the former.

With the second Isaiah, all geographical and national limits fall completely to the ground, whenever he speaks of God and triumphant truth. So he says:

"To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth

out their host by number : he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power ; not one faileth.

“ Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speak-est, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God ?

“ Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

“ He giveth power to the faint ; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.

“ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall :

“ But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.”

In the 55th chapter we are informed, how that prophet calls upon all the world, to all who are thirsty, to come and drink, and eat, and be satisfied with truth and grace. He promises to all who should hearken unto the Lord a divine covenant like the one made with David. Then he concludes this section of his inspired speech : “ Behold, NATION thou knowest not, thou shalt call, and NATION that knew not thee shall run unto thee ; for the sake of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One in Israel, for He hath glorified thee.”

Let us read nine more verses from Isaiah (Ix, 1) :

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

"For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

"Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side.

"Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

"The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.

"All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

"Who *are* these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee."

This glowing and dazzling description of the final and universal triumph of religious and moral truth re-echoes in the following words of Zechariah (viii, 20):

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts: *It shall*

yet *come to pass*, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities :

“ And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts ; I will go also.

“ Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

“ Thus saith the LORD of hosts : In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you ; for we have heard *that God is with you.*”

This and many similar passages of the prophets certainly entitled to the expectation of another than a political Messiah, with those who expected the coming of a Messiah at all. These expectations must have been rooted deepest among the Hebrews who lived outside of Palestine, and in Palestine among the Essenes.

There is no evidence on record that the Hebrews outside of Palestine believed in the coming of any Messiah, the Hellenistic Jews excepted. They had messianic hopes. This is evident from the Septuaginta, where Genesis xlix, 10; “ until Shiloh cometh,” is rendered, “ till he cometh, to whom it is given, and who is the expectation of the nations.” This means literally a personal Messiah from the tribe of Judah. In Numbers xxiv, 7, the Seventy translate contrary to the text: “ A man will go forth from his seed who will reign over many nations, and his kingdom shall be higher



than Gog's." Verse 24 (*ibid.*) is thus prefaced, "And beholding Gog," then the translation follows, "He will go forth from the Kitites, who will maltreat Assur, and maltreat the Hebrews, and then be himself destroyed."

The Sybillian books, written by Egyptian Jews in the century before the Christian era, contain many expressions of Messianic hopes. The same is the case with the apocryphal book, called "The Wisdom of Solomon," which was also written in Egypt. Still it appears that also among the Egyptian Jews, the most prominent Helenists, the messianic hopes were by no means general. Eusebius and Clemens preserved numerous fragments of Egyptian Jewish writers before Philo. There are the fragments of Aristobule,\* of Eupolemos,† of Artapanus,‡ of Demetrius,§ of Aristeas,|| of Cleodemos,\*\* of Polyhistor, Alexander and others, besides the fragments of the poets Ezekiel, Philo the elder, and Theodotus. Still in neither of them are the messianic hopes mentioned. Philo, the philosopher, the cotemporary of the Apostles, is the first and only Greek writer

\* Euseb. *praep. evang.* 7, 14; 8, 10; 9, 6; 13, 12. De Rossi in *Meor Enayim* 3, 10, communicates that the MSS. of a large work by Aristobule was in the library of Florence, and another copy in the Benedictin library of Mantua. One of that order told him the book was better than any one of the Philo's. Nothing has been heard thereof. \*

† About 140 B. C. Eusebius *praep. evang.* 9, 17; 26, 30 to 34 and 39, to which comp. 1, *Maccab.* 8, 17.

‡ Eus. *praep. evang.* 9, 18; 23, 27.

§ *Ibid.* 9, 21; Clemens, *Strom.* 1, 21; about 147 B. C.

|| Eus. *praep. evang.* 9, 25.

\*\* *Ibid.* 9, 19 and 20; Joseph. *Ant.* I, 15, 1.

who mentions the Messiah. He has his own views on the subject. His Messiah partakes somewhat of an angelic nature, to be visible to the pious ones only. He is expected to lead back home all the Jews from the Greek and the barbarian countries. The Hebrew people will be perfect in good morals and in obedience to God's laws; the fountains of grace shall then flow as freely as in olden times, the ancient cities shall rise from their ruins, the wilderness shall be changed into fertile land, and the prayers of the living shall have the power to revive the dead.††

This fantastic view of the Messiah is purely Philonic, in whose opulent imagination facts, laws and persons of the Bible were transformed to allegoric ideals, to teach or at least suggest Platonic doctrines. Whatever the general opinion on this subject may have been, the Jews of Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, could hardly expect a political Messiah. Living, as they did in the various countries of their birth, in a very agreeable condition, politically and socially (with some exceptions in later periods,) and speaking the Greek and the Latin as their native tongues, they could feel no particular patriotism for Palestine, or else they must have migrated to that land, as nothing was in their way to prevent them from returning to their an-

†† Philo, *De exerationibus*, M. II, 435, 436. Comp. Graetz *Geschichte*, Vol. 3, p. 259; Herzfeld *Geschichte*, Vol. 2, p. 473, and sequ.

cient home. Therefore the messianic hopes of the Helenistic Jews outside of Palestine must have been limited to the universal and final triumph of the religious and moral verities of Israel. In connection therewith, they may have imagined a wise or prophetic scion of the house of David, who should bring about this desired triumph. In view of all the fragments mentioned above, the works of Philo and Josephus, the Septuaginta and the Apocryphes, all of which had chiefly and avowedly the intention to instruct the Greeks in the religious and moral tenets of Israel; again, in view of the rapid progress which Jewish ideas made among the Greeks, as we shall see thereafter: it is quite natural that the Jews of those regions and of those days expected to see the triumph of their precepts in the same ratio as they saw the political power of Israel decline. Furthermore, the messianic hopes crowded around a son of David, being cherished prejudices with them, it is quite natural that these two ideas were blended into one, and a Messiah was expected to accomplish the final and universal triumph of truth.

The Messianic hopes of the Essenes in Palestine and Syria undoubtedly corresponded with those of the Egyptian Jews, as their founder must have been an Egyptian Jew who was acquainted with the Pythagorean order, and about 200 B. C. came to Palestine. The Therapeuts of Egypt and elsewhere were in name and

essence an imitation of the Essenes, founded about 170 B. C., although they differed from the former in many points. There are no positive traces of their messianic views left either by Josephus or Philo, or even by the Talmud; yet in consideration of their numerous similarities to the Egyptian Jews, it is but reasonable to suppose that they entertained messianic hopes similar to the latter. Besides there are facts on record from them, which show that they could not think of a political Messiah. In the first place they attached no importance whatsoever to earthly possessions or carnal enjoyments, hence they could be no patriots like those who are attached with fervency to the soil where they are born, which their fathers and forefathers cultivated, and every inch of which has endeared itself to them. In the second place the Essenes sought no public offices, and accepted none, the exceptions are very rare. Such men can feel no particular patriotism for a land which they would neither defend in time of war nor govern in time of peace. In the third place their entire tendency was to despise this life and to prepare the soul for the life hereafter, hence they could not possibly care much about their country. In the fourth place they would not even recognize the Jewish polity and made no sacrifices in the temple. The Messiah of the Essenes, therefore, could not have any political complexion; they must rather have imagined him to be an

ethereal, semi-angelic, contemplative and ascetic prophet, as all the Essenes were, who should effect the final triumph of truth over error, and virtue over corruption.

This is the very Messiah of the Apostles. The type was taken from the Egyptian Jews and the Essenes, and the character of Jesus was described and proclaimed to correspond therewith.

Whether Jesus himself claimed the messianic dignity, or whether his followers, after his death, proclaimed him as such, must be ascertained from the following statements. Luke tells us the following story:

“And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him; and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?”

“They answering, said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

“He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering, said, The Christ of God.

“And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing.

“Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

“And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

“For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

“For what is a man advantaged, if he

gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God."

According to this story the disciples during his lifetime already took him to be the Messiah, only he did not wish to be proclaimed as such, because he was afraid to excite against himself the ire of the elders, priests and scribes. But the story contains many traits which make it spurious. The reply of some disciples, "One of the old prophets is risen again," presupposes the Pythagorean belief in the transmigration of the soul. This was the belief of cabalistic Jews long after Jesus; at that time it was entirely foreign to them. This reply points to a time when Christianity was already adopted by Greek heathens, many of whom believed in this doctrine. Besides, he speaks in verse 23 of his followers, that each should "take up his cross daily and follow me." This points distinctly to a time after the crucifixion, and even long after it, when the cross, the Egyptian symbol of immortality, had been adopted by the Christians as the symbol of the new religion. Jesus could not possibly speak to his disciples of the cross with the least hope of being understood, even if he knew prophetically his final fate.

But there are other and more essential points, which render this story spurious. Matthew (xvi, 13) tells the same story; but, according to this statement, Jesus made a reply altogether different from that of Luke:

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”

Here Peter is made the head of the Church, a fact which Luke, who places Paul and James at the head, entirely ignores. The leadership of Peter could not suit at all the narrator of “The Acts.” But Luke must have seen the statement of Matthew, still he had the boldness to ignore the principal portion thereof. This he could do only, if he considered the whole story spurious, gotten up after the crucifixion, to assign higher authority to the claims of Peter.

Mark (viii, 27) also tells the same story in substance, without the words of Jesus to Peter, according to Matthew, or his address to the disciples, according to Luke. John knew nothing of the story. The three Synoptics agree that Peter proclaimed

Jesus as being the Messiah, and he forbid them to publish it. This latter charge naturally suggests the opinion that the story itself is spurious; but that Peter, after the death of Jesus, was the first to proclaim him the Messiah, with the addition that this was believed and stated already during his lifetime, but he interdicted its publication. This is also evident from the speeches which the author of "The Acts," as we have noticed above, put into the mouth of Peter. To the Israelites, Jesus could be announced only and exclusively as the Messiah, since they entertained not the remotest notion of any son of God.

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the story of his stay there and of his law process before the Sanhedrin and Pilate, prove nothing in this respect; not only because Jesus in no wise compromised himself as the Messiah, but also because the whole story was written long after the transpiration of the event, and was shaped by each author according to his conceptions of the matter.

Peter could not have proclaimed Jesus the political Messiah, even if he expected his personal return. He must have proclaimed him, as the Essenes, the Greek Jews and others imagined their Messiah, the prince of peace, who will bring about the final and universal triumph of religious and moral truth, at least among the Hebrews. We must differ here radically from Lessing's fragments and others who dis-



cover in the Gospel story a defeated political scheme. We can discover nothing in the Gospels, Acts or Epistles, that looks like political ambition or political schemes. Words like these—"My kingdom is not of this world;" or "Give to Cesar that which belongeth to Cesar, and give to God that which belongeth to God"—have certainly no political character. Besides, it is most remarkable that during the last stay of Jesus in Jerusalem, he is not reported to have said one single word concerning the political situation of the country. He had before himself a nation of heroes who struggled desperately against the tyranny and usurpations of the Roman giant; a nation that mournfully and despairingly contemplated its certain downfall, because it saw its strength steadily decline and the enemy steadfastly advance; he had before himself a nation that confidently hoped, prayed, longed, yearned after a redeemer inspired from on high to make an end to their misery and restore the ancient glory of Israel; and he has not a word of encouragement, not a word of consolation, not a single word of advice to say to his afflicted brethren. So none of the Apostles—and they saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple—have a word to say on the subject.

This proves in the first place that the authors of the Gospels did not consider Jesus in any way a political character. It proves in the second place that the whole

account was written by Gentile authors who had no feeling for the misery and woes of Israel. The story that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, being narrated by one only, was certainly invented by some patriotic Jewish Christian.

The restoration of the throne of David and the kingdom of heaven could have had no political import with those who expected a Messiah for the exclusive purpose of accomplishing the final and universal triumph of Israel's religious and moral verities. It is impossible to tell with certainty what they understood under the throne of David, how they spiritualized so earthly a thing as a throne is, and mortals so frail and sinful as the descendants of David were in the time of their prosperity. Still if one reads the works of Philo or the Greek fragments mentioned above, he will not at all feel astonished that almost any thing could be symbolized and typified to denote every thing imaginable, and any historical name or fact could be wrought into an allegory, to represent whatever the author inclined to state. To the sober and analytical reasoner of our days, the Essenean Messiah and the throne of David are two incongruous and heterogeneous points which can be united only in the imagination of the fantast. The philosopher, the prophet, the prince of the mind, never required a royal pedigree or a royal claim in support of their mission; and the house of David was never promised any superiority

in the spiritual domain or the mental province. Still the Apostles taking hold upon a popular prejudice—the expected Messiah from the house of David—were obliged to reconcile the two heterogeneous missions of the king and the philosopher or prophet, as best they could. The primitive Christians had to do a piece of reconciliation even worse than this, in harmonizing the Jewish Messiah with the pagan Son of God; but nothing is impossible to faith and fancy. The dynastical prerogatives of the Davidians were not limited to the throne of Israel; they were extended to all the thrones of all potentates and princes. Their claims were not understood to be, to rule, to reign, or to govern, as one might expect of pretenders to a crown; they merely claimed the spiritual and invisible dominion by an invisible and incomprehensible prince. The air-castles over which we now laugh, are definite realities in comparison to the typified, symbolized and spiritualized king and lord Messiah, who has not a spark of reality in his character.

The kingdom of heaven is a purely spiritual domain, and is a literal translation of the Hebrew מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם *Malchuth Shamayim*. The Israelites have a passage in their daily prayers, in that portion which, it is claimed, was composed by the men of the great synod under Ezra, which says of the heavenly host, "And all of them impose upon themselves the burden of the kingdom of heaven, even one from another,"

&c.—*i. e.* they daily avow submission to God and his laws. So the author of the *Mishnah* understood these terms, when stating in regard to divine worship (*Berachoth* ii, 2;) “Rabbi Joshua ben Korchah said, Why do we read the section of *Shemang* (Deut. vi, 4 to 9) before the section of *Vehaya im shamonga?* (Ibid. xi, 13 to 22.) Because one must accept upon himself first the burden of the kingdom of heaven, and then the burden of the commandments.” The first section mentioned in this passage begins thus: “Hear, Israel, God is our Lord, God is One. Thou shalt love God thy Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” In these words, according to the author of the *Mishnah*, one accepts upon himself “the burden of the kingdom of heaven”—*i. e.* he expresses his belief and his implicit confidence in the One and Almighty God, and his unlimited love to the Sovereign of the universe. If this is the BURDEN of the kingdom of heaven, “the kingdom of heaven” itself could signify but one thing—the acknowledgment of the sovereignty and sole dominion of God over all persons and things that were, that are, and that will be. The claim for Jesus, that he should return and establish the kingdom of heaven in connection with the throne of David, could signify only one thing, viz: that by his coming, either by his miraculous re-appearance from the realm of death, or by his supernatural influence upon the hearts, he should

convert all persons in Israel to "accept upon themselves the burden of the kingdom of heaven," as the pious did twice daily; and every one should truly believe and confide in God, and love Him with infinite love.

Whatever commentators and expounders of the Gospels may have made of the words, "kingdom of heaven," when they were uttered by Jesus or the Apostles, they could only be intended to convey the ideas which those words then did convey; and this we can learn only from the literature of that time and that people. Then and there "kingdom of heaven" conveyed the ideas communicated above.

We will not undertake to decide whether the Apostles expected the immediate return of Jesus, the re-establishment of the throne of David and the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven in place of any other; or whether they expected the catastrophe of the earth, and the last judgment day to be right on hand; or whether in all these matters they spoke of a distant future in allegorical language; each proposition has its proof in the New Testament, so that it appears very likely all these things were believed by various persons in the apostolic age. We will not decide on these disputed points, because they are immaterial to our object. It is likely enough that with the visible decline of Israel's earthly glory, the expectation of a revolution in nature took hold on fanatics then as in our days; but

we have no historical notices to substantiate it.

*The Second Doctrine in the Apostles' Creed must have been concerning the remission of sins, so to say, by the proclamation of a general amnesty from on high.*

Sins can not be forgiven; they must be removed. The rust will not fly off the polished steel; it must be rubbed off, it must be removed. Nature offers no analogy to the idea of the remission of sins, without removing the cause and the effect thereof. God is just, and the forgiveness of sins is unjust. The grace of God, which is only another name for the most sublime manifestation of divine justice, is revealed in human nature by the innate ability, to remove the cause and effect of sins, hence also sin itself. The means of expiation and atonement are within every man's reach.

Still the prophets who predicted the return of the Hebrews from the Babylonian exile and from other lands of their dispersion, and those prophets who encouraged the hopeless captives, announced to them the divine messages that by their sufferings in foreign lands, by the very humiliation which they had experienced at home and abroad, their national sins were expiated, God had forgiven them, and they should be restored to their national glory. So the second Isaiah opens his sublime message: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith

your God! Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim unto her that the days of her sorrow are full, that her iniquity is atoned for; for she hath received from the hand of the Lord double for her sins." These two verses contain the quintessence of all the following chapters; they announce the entire mission of that prophet. Once more he gives utterance to the import of his mission, and almost in the same strain. He says:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

"To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."

The same words of consolation and encouragement are preserved in the forty-fourth chapter:

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee: thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy

transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

“Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.”

Let us read one more passage from the same prophet, in which he announces precisely the same thing. In the forty-third chapter he says:

“This people have I formed for myself; they shew forth my praise.

“But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

“Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings; neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

“Thou hast brought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

All these passages have but one meaning. The time of redemption from the Babylonian captivity has come, the national sins are forgiven and the principal one (idolatry) was removed, the suffering of the people was the punishment; now God is nigh to redeem, to lead back his people to the holy land and restore it to its ancient glory. This would certainly have been literally fulfilled had they all gone back and laid a



solid foundation to a strong and durable nationality; but they refused to return, and so Israel never reached again its ancient national glory.

The second Isaiah in this respect only repeated what the patriotic Jeremiah had said twice before him. He said (Jeremiah xxx, 10 and 11; and xlvi, 27 and 28):

“Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

“For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.”

The same voice resounds from the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel xi, 17 to 20):

“Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

“And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

“That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

He repeats the same strain of ideas in

the thirty-sixth chapter in still more forcible language. The Minor Prophets are full of this very voice of consolation, and express it in language as eloquent as Isaiah's.

This is the שנה רצוין *Shenath Ratson*, "the year of acceptance," the acceptable year, the year of grace, or whatever other expressions were used to denote the remission of sins and the consequent peace of the mind. With the prophets, the remission of the national sins precedes immediately the שנה גאולה *Shenath Gueulah*, "the year of redemption," which comes to pass in consequence of the removal of the national sins. The évangélical scheme follows a reversed order, the redeemer comes first and the remission of sins follows after his death. This was foreign to the prophets.

The Hebrews of that age may have connected with their messianic hopes also a marvelous remission of sins, analogous to that predicted by the prophets to the Babylonian exiles. If they expected restoration to the ancient splendor and glory of Israel, they must have believed God would forget and forgive all their national sins. But there exists no positive proof that such hopes were indulged in, or that such a belief was entertained. The Messiahs mentioned by Josephus "deluded the people under pretence of divine inspiration," they also "went before them into the wilderness as pretending that God

would there show them the signals of liberty," he narrates (Wars ii, xiii, 8): He tells us moreover that a Messiah came to Jerusalem from Egypt who pretended to be a prophet. Having succeeded in collecting about him on Mount Olive thirty thousand warriors, he pretended that at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down, and he would thus procure them an entrance into the city through these walls when they were fallen down. (Antiqu. xx, viii, 6.) But nowhere is mention made of the remission of sins. The last and most remarkable Messiah of that eventful age, Simon Barcochba, wrought no miracles, made no pretension at divine inspiration, and proclaimed no remission of sins.

In the *Mishnah*, the oldest Hebrew document after the Bible, the messianic hopes are not mentioned at all. The expectation of a coming Messiah is noticed but once by Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, a cotemporary of the Apostles (See *SOTAH* conclusion.) But there is no mention made of the remission of sins; on the contrary, it is predicted by that sage that universal depravity will precede the coming of the Messiah.\*

\* Among the various vices and crimes which he predicts is also this *למינות יהפך*, which according to *Tosefot Yom Tob* must be rendered; "And the government (of Rome) will turn Christian" before the Messiah can come. This appears correct, for it is said elsewhere of the same Rabbi, that the Apostle James caught him over *למינות*. If the word there signifies Christianity, why not also in this passage?

Jesus himself did not proclaim any remission of sins, if we are to believe the synoptics; John the Baptist did. According to the author of "The Acts," it is Peter, he who proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, also proclaims the redemption in connection with the remission of sins through Jesus, viz: by repentance and by being baptized in his name.†

It is quite natural that Peter, having proclaimed the crucified one the Messiah, must also have announced the remission of sins through him, on account of the prophetic passages which connect the redemption from the Babylonian captivity with the remission of the national sins; then, on account of the kingdom of heaven which was expected, in which only the pure and pious ones could claim citizenship; then, on account of the prevalent expectations among Hellenists and Essenes, that the Messiah should bring about the final triumph of truth and virtue; and, lastly, because he could not offer any thing else to the believers. Therefore it is likely that the Apostles adopted as an article of their creed the remission of sins to those who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus. It is with this article as with the Messiah. Neither can be legitimately traced back to the biblical sources, while each has its foothold in peculiar standpoints of scriptural exegese, and in the then domineering prejudices.

† Acts ii, 38; iv, 12; v, 31.

Paul, as we shall see hereafter, did away with repentance as a condition to the remission of sins, and made faith the entire condition (Romans iii.) Therefore the 16th verse in the last chapter of Mark, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," was not said by Jesus or his Apostles; it was said by one of Paul's disciples.

The non-patriotic Hebrews might have accredited all these allegations of Peter and his co-laborers in behalf of their master; but the afflicted and suffering Messiah, the crucified Redeemer, the vanquished Savior, these were notions too foreign and eccentric to the Jewish mind and too contrary to the ideal of a Messiah that many Jews could possibly have adopted it.

The Messiah which they supposed to have discovered in the Bible was certainly an oriental ideal of lofty personage, appearance, strength, address and energy, a victorious and dictating prince of peace, a luminous representative of the royal dynasty of David, decorated with all the shining merits, distinguishing graces, and supernatural virtues and powers of an ideal prince, prophet and priest.

The Jesus of the Gospel is of itself an occidental cast of character, something like an ideal Roman priest; the crucified Jesus has lost all his charms to the oriental fantasy, and becomes an occidental phantom. The decline and weakness of the

Greco-Roman spirit, the effeminated energies and the eccentric morals, both morbidly sensitive, are visible in the entire delineation of character, and reach their climax in the catastrophe. Jews could not imagine such a drama, least of all could the hearty mountaineers and fishermen of Galilee conceive such a Pantheon phantom of a sickly age. The inflexible and diamond energies of Moses, the heroism of Joshua and David, the lofty imagination of the royal bard, the wisdom of the gifted Solomon, the burning and glowing eloquence of Isaiah, the valor and the successes of the lion-like Maccabees formed the prototypes of the Jewish ideal of the Messiah. The crucified Jesus could not have the least charm to the Hebrews of Palestine, and could not expect any number of admirers.

Therefore, while it is certain that it took a century, at least, of intimacy with the Greco-Roman sentiments and notions, after the death of Jesus, before that cast of character which we meet in the Gospels could have been produced; it undoubtedly took many years after the crucifixion before Peter and the other apostles could have formed and brought to maturity in themselves the idea that their master, although vanquished and crucified, still was the Messiah, and that he resurrected from death to finish his work of redemption. They must have bestowed much attention to the Greco-Roman sentiments of the

Hellenists, and upon the Scriptures for years, before they succeeded in convincing themselves of an executed Messiah. But it was all in vain. When they came with this their conviction before the Hebrew people, there were very few, if any, to believe them. The idea was too foreign to them.

Still more foreign and still less acceptable must have been to them the idea of a crucified redeemer and savior which Peter must have advanced, as the author of "The Acts" actually maintains. Peter was obliged to give a good reason why his Messiah was crucified, and he could only say, because he came to establish the kingdom of heaven, he must effect the remission of sins, and this he could only do by giving himself up as a sacrifice for all, so that by his death atonement is made for all sins.

This argument, however, could not prove successful among Jews who loathed the very idea of sacrificing human victims, as being one of the crimes of their heathen neighbors. They must have argued, if it is loathsome to us, must it not be more so to God to see an innocent person victimized? If Israel knew and knows that God abhors human victims upon His altar, how can Peter tell us now that God finds delight in it, so much so that our sins should be forgiven? Besides, if it is correct what the evangelists have Jesus say: "If you have sinned, why should a victim die?" and

this certainly was the doctrine of the Essenes, the question fell with much more weight on Peter's doctrine, "If we have sinned, why should any innocent man die? or what good will it do us, how can it improve our hearts, if an innocent man was killed?"

Besides all this the Jews could point to Scriptures where the remission of sins, connected with the redemption from the Babylonian captivity, appears unconditional after the nation had received sufficient punishment for its sins. No victim was required. The misdeeds were punished, the sins forgiven. Then they could point to passages like this: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no deity formed, neither shall there be after me. I, EVEN I, JEHOVAH, AND BESIDES ME NO SAVIOR. I have declared, and I have saved, and I have caused to hear, and there is no strange god among you; and ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am the Lord." (Isaiah xliii, 10 to 12.) "Israel is saved in Jehovah, an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded in all eternity." (Ibid, xlv, 17.)\* At the close of the same chapter the prophet says:

"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath de-

\* This is an imitation of the words of Moses. Deut. xxxiv, 29.



clared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me.

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

“I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

“Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

“In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Then the same prophet says: “Our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah xlvii, 4.)

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Ibid. lxxv, 6 and 7.) The prophet Ezekiel is most explicit on this topic. He says:

“Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them; he shall surely live.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

“All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

“But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

“Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

“When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die.

“Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

“Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

“Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

“Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn

yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

“Cast away from all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”

All inferences, however ingenious and striking, fall to the ground before these positive statements of the prophets, which admit of no redeemer, no savior, no atonement and no expiation of sins by either the blood of animals or much less by the blood of a human victim. Therefore the Jews, acquainted with their sacred literature, could not possibly consent to the doctrine of a crucified redeemer, a savior who suffered for them, whose blood had made atonement for their sins, or a Messiah who suffered and died to fulfill his mission. This is the very rock on which the new religion was shipwrecked among the Jews.\*

In this dilemma Peter and his co-laborers were forced to the adoption of a third doctrine in their creed:

*The Messiah was crucified, and thus taken away temporarily from them that they repent their sins, and be prepared for the kingdom of heaven, when he shall come back to establish it for those who believe in him. Then he will appear in all the glory which the Jews expected of their Messiah.*

\*The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and similar Scriptural passages will be fully explained in the appendix.

This belief based upon no sort of argument must have appeared quite fantastical to the Hebrews. Therefore it took no root among them, and the Christian congregation was very small in Jerusalem as late even as 70 A. C.

Here another question rises: Of what should they repent? What is a sin? These important questions are not answered either in the Gospels or in "The Acts." Still it is evident if people were admonished and expected to repent, if they were promised remission of sins, the first thing necessary for them to know was, which deed, thought or feeling is properly called a sin. It must not be advanced: Jesus and his apostles, or rather their biographers, thought this requires no definition, for whatever a man's conscience tells him to be wrong, this and this only is a sin. Had this been the case, they must have plainly stated it, as it was a doctrine entirely new in Israel, the people of the book; but no such statement was made. Besides, if the conscience alone was to decide who was a sinner and who was none, then those who crucified Jesus, and those who persecuted the apostles and slew the martyrs, were no sinners, for their consciences told them certainly they were righteous.

Therefore we are naturally left to believe, Jesus and the apostles believed in the Law of Moses as the rest of Israelites did. This made it entirely superfluous for them to define the nature of sin, as the Law does it

in every particular case. Only where they went beyond the letter of the Law, was it necessary to make such statements as are preserved in the sermon on the Mount. Neither the apostles nor the rest of the Hebrews could imagine a kingdom of heaven or the restoration of the Davidian throne without the Law of Moses. Obedience to the Law was for them identical with obedience to God.

There is, indeed, ample material on record to prove that Jesus and his disciples before the advent of Paul considered the Law to be divine and unalterable, and salvation dependent on obedience to it. They considered the motives of obedience paramount to the observance of the Law, and held mere observance without good motives to be hypocrisy, as all the prophets and every good man after them did. This is true, although it was not new.

Matthew informs us (v, 17) that Jesus said in imitation of Isaiah (lv, 10 and 11,) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That ex-

cept your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Luke also records a similar expression of Jesus (xvi, 17): "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

These passages are positive and directly to the point. The very fact that they are an imitation of the words of Isaiah fixes their meaning beyond a doubt, even if verse 19 in Matthew could be explained to mean any thing but the strict observance of the Mosaic law as the condition to enter the kingdom of heaven.

We know that this is an old passage, adopted most likely from the Gospel of the Hebrews; for it is quoted almost literally in the Talmud in connection with Rabbi Gamliel of Jamnia, who succeeded Rabbi Johanan ben Saccai as prince of the Sanhedrin. 74 A. C. (See Sabbath 116 *a.*)

After this direct and emphatic declaration no more proof is actually necessary to establish this point. Nevertheless we will refer to some others.

The argument of Jesus about the Sabbath is recorded by the three synoptics so much alike that little doubt can be left as to its origin from the older Gospel of the Hebrews.\* It is narrated there that the disciples of Jesus going on Sabbath through a field, plucked ears of corn to satisfy their

\* Comp. Matthew xii, 1; Mark ii, 23; Luke vi, 1.

hunger. The Pharisees taking offence on this, accused the disciples before Jesus of having violated the Sabbath. Here it was proper for Jesus to reply that the Law was abrogated, and one day was as good as another, as Paul has it. But he did no such a thing; he argued his case like a sagacious and casuistical rabbi, proving that his disciples had done no wrong. He first refers to David and his followers, who, when hungry, ate of the holy shew bread, which, according to the Law, should be eaten by the priests only, to prove that necessity knows of no law; and then he quotes the fact that the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath by making fire, burning sacrifices, &c., to prove while one is engaged in the performance of divine duties—as he and his disciples supposed to be—he may dispense with minor laws if necessity require it. This leads him to the double conclusion, not only that his disciples were guiltless, because the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath, he and they being engaged in the discharge of solemn duties; but also “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,” hence none need hunger on this day on account of any law.

Thus we know that Jesus taught his disciples the observance of the Sabbath, according to the Law, precisely as he broke the bread and pronounced the benediction over the cup of wine according even to rabbinical law, and ate of the paschal

lamb as all Israelites did. According to Matthew (xxiii, 1,) Jesus went even so far in his respect before the Law that he said to the multitude "and to his disciples": "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not." Now these Scribes and Pharisees who occupy the seat of Moses are the Sanhedrin, as we have stated before. They were the highest authority not only in all matters in regard to the Laws of Moses, but they were also the "pillars of the traditional laws," as they were called, and gave decisions according to the so-called rabbinical laws. If Jesus said this, he respected not only the biblical laws, but also the rabbinical traditions, as THE authority which must be obeyed in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. We shall see hereafter, however, that this must be understood with certain qualifications in regard to the rabbis. The very fact that John mentions neither of these incidents, sayings and arguments, proves that the Gentile Christians and the Paulites among the Hebrews ignored them, because they prove that Jesus did teach strict observance of the Law, which they considered abrogated and superceded by faith.

The only anecdote in the Gospels which would show that Jesus disregarded the Law, is the one of the *adulteress*, which John (viii, 1) narrates thus: Jesus teaching



the people in the temple, the Scribes and Pharisees presented to him a woman accused of adultery, and put the question to him, "Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" To this Jesus answers: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This reply so discomfits the accusers that they leave the woman and the temple. Jesus then addresses the culprit and tells her, since the accusers left and there is none to condemn her, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." In this case the Law is entirely set aside by an ill-becoming mercy to a criminal.

The fact, however, that John only records this anecdote, renders it spurious on account of his outspoken anti-law tendencies. Aside of this consideration, the genuineness of this piece was and is much doubted by some of the best critics who suppose it was not written by John the Evangelist, not only because its style differs from other compositions of John, but also because it was missing in some of the most ancient manuscripts of the Gospel. "Ecclesiastical writers of the second-half of the fourth century," says Mr. Wislicenus, "make mention of this story, but state that it was omitted in many old manuscripts."

If we were ignorant of those facts, we would know, after all, that the anecdote before us is fictitious. The Scribes and Pharisees bring an adulteress not before the

lower Sanhedrin of twenty-three judges, where, according to the laws, they must have accused her; they present her and her case to one man who has no jurisdiction in the matter. This can not be true, because it is a downright violation of the criminal law. We can not for a moment suppose that those Scribes and Pharisees were the judges themselves who added Jesus to their number, which the law allows to hear his judgment in the case; because they could not have run away, out of the hall of judgment, without giving a verdict, as the anecdote represents them to have done; the law obliged them to render final judgment. Again, -in this anecdote it is supposed all the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of adultery, therefore the reply of Jesus put them so to shame that they ran off. This, again, is impossible; a whole class of people or a considerable number thereof can not be guilty of the same crime. If all those men were so conscientious that the answer of Jesus had the effect to put them to shame, then they were none of the worst sinners, and might have well undertaken to give a verdict. But the worst part of the anecdote is, that it sets forth a sinner must not condemn a criminal, nor testify against him; hence all men being sinners, nobody must testify against a criminal, and none be his judge. Again, the criminal must not be punished at all, nor must he promise to lead a holier life afterward; it is enough plainly to tell

him, "Go and sin no more." No man with any respect for justice and the safety of society can utter such nugatory doctrines; certainly nobody will admit that Jesus did so, who was a Jew and a disciple of the Law.

A peculiar document from the apostolic age is, "The General Epistle of James." This is scarcely savored with Christian doctrines, it is Jewish all over. He waits for the "coming of the Lord," and admonishes his brethren, "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (v, 8); but in all other respects he is perfectly Jewish. He adheres scrupulously to the Law of Moses, and states "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," (ii, 10.) He argues against the theories of Paul. "What doeth it profit, my brethren," he states, "though a man say he has faith, and have no works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble. But

wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead."

Every word of this pointed admonition was directed against Paul. Here then we have a prominent apostle, who knows of but one God and no divinity of Christ, who adheres to the Law and to works and not to faith. He is the full expression of the apostles and disciples of Jesus.

The rabbis of the apostolic age, we have mentioned before, stood in close connection with the Apostle James. They call him in the Talmud, "Jacob, the man from Kephars-Sekania," "One of the pupils of Jesus of Nazareth." His home Kephars-Sekania is identical with Kephars-Samiah, a town in the vicinity of Nazareth. The rabbis never treated him like a man who abandoned the Law; on the contrary, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, it is narrated, was so far misled by him into the tenets of Christianity, that, under the edict of the Emperor Trajan, (Pliny the younger's epist. x, 96,) the rabbi was arrested and accused of siding with the Christians.\*

This Rabbi Eliezer† was a strict, law abiding, traditional Pharisee, the pupil of Rabbi Jochanan ben Saccai, and the founder of the rabbinical college at Lydda, in the southern part of Judea. He was one of the admirers of the system of Shammai, clinging tenaciously to the rabbinical tra-

\* See Aboda Sára 16 and 17; Midrash Coheloth i; Tosephta, Chulin ii; compare Graetz's Gnosticismus p. 24 note.

† See Graetz's Geschichte, Vol. 4, chap. 3.

ditions in preference to all other methods of expounding the Law of Moses, so much so that he maintained, "I never said any thing which I had not heard of my teachers." His close connection with the Apostle James is of itself an evidence that the latter also was a law abiding Pharisee, who believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the pupil does in his master.

The question which the apostle asked the rabbi, and which, it is maintained, brought him in trouble, is also characteristic. It reads literally thus: "I remember that once when I walked over the mart of Sephoris I met one of the pupils of Jesus of Nazareth, Jacob—a man of Kepharsakaniah—is his name; and he said to me: It is written in your Law (Deuter. xxiii, 19,) 'Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, &c., into the house of the Lord thy God'—how about making for such money a privy chamber for the highpriest? I made no reply; but then he continued: Thus Jesus, the Nazarene, taught me, It came from an unclean place and goes to an unclean place." Without believing for a moment that this was the subject of discussion between the rabbi and the apostle, it rather looks like mystification; still we can not help seeing that the author of that passage considered Jesus as a teacher and expounder of the Law, and not as one who rejected it. The rabbis of the Talmud never say of Jesus or his apostles that they rejected the Law. They call Jesus תלמיד

שְׁמַקְרִיָּה תַּבְשִׁיל, "The pupil of Rabbi Joshua ben Perachia who spoiled his dish," *i. e.* who defamed his school (Sanhedrin 103 *a.*) They accused him, (the above-named Rabbi Eliezer did,) of having brought necromancy from Egypt (Sabbath 104 *b.*) and because he believed in it, they called him a fool. (Ibid.) שׁוֹטֵה הִיהוּאִין מְבִיאִים רְאִיָּה מִן הַשּׁוֹטִים; they maintained that he rejected the laws of the rabbis and characterized his disciples in these words: "Who are the disciples of Jesus? Those who refuse the authority of the rabbis." (Rashi to Chagigah 5 *b.*) But they never say that he or his pupils rejected the Law of Moses. This is an undeniable evidence that the primitive Christians, the apostles and the first congregation, the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, adhered to the Law of Moses, or else their opponents, the rabbis, would certainly have preferred this grave charge against them.

The disputes of Paul with the apostles on this topic, as chronicled by himself and also by the author of the "The Acts," ought to be mentioned here as proper points in support of our position; but we can only allude to them, as we must treat on them more at length in another chapter; especially as we believe our assertion sufficiently proved.

Mosheim admits that the church was troubled with early disputes concerning the Law of Moses and the Jewish rites.

“Those, however, who considered the observance of the Mosaic rites as necessary to salvation had not, in this first century, proceeded so far as to break off all communion with such as differed with them in this matter. Therefore they were still regarded as brethren, though of the weaker sort. But when, after the second destruction of Jerusalem, under the Emperor Adrian, these zealots for the Jewish rites deserted the ordinary assemblies of Christians, and established separate meetings among themselves, then they were numbered with those sects who had departed from the pure doctrine of Christ.”

Mosheim only forgets to add that these were the original Christians, the real disciples of Jesus and the Apostles who were overruled by the Gentile Christians whose religion came from Paul and Barnabas. They were called Ebionites and Nazarenes, as sects, by Gentile Christians, but in Palestine and among the Hebrews they had these and no other names right from the beginning, and they were never known to the rabbis as Christians. In this point, then, the apostles had nothing to add to their creed. They believed in one God and in the divinity and obligatory character of the Law of Moses, as all other Israelites did.

The main point which the apostles urged in opposition to the Judaism of those days was their rejection of the rabbinical authority. Jesus, as has been stated already,

recommended obedience to the Sanhedrin as well as to Cesar; he recognized both the authority of the body legally constituted and of the existing power. He was no rebel and preached no rebellion, although he was crucified like others who counteracted the authority of Rome. The apostles, however, not only disobeyed the Sanhedrin, but constituted a Sanhedrin among themselves, a Sanhedrin of seventy members, over which Peter and John, and afterward James, presided. They claimed all the attributes, and exercised the prerogatives of that body. They held communication with the "Holy Ghost," as the members of the Sanhedrin did with the "Bath kol;" like them they claimed the knowledge of all the languages and the dominion over the evil spirits; and like them they enacted and abrogated laws. Thus the apostles formed an opposition Sanhedrin to all their religious intents and purposes. The Hebrews were not used, in matters of religion, to submit to the authority of one; they looked up to the *Beth Din Haggadol*, "the Great House of Judgment," for decisions in all matters of law or polity, ethics or religion. Therefore when Peter and his co-laborers had returned from Galilee with the intention of reforming the religion of Israel, it was necessary to organize a new Sanhedrin to give authority to their doctrines.

During the lifetime of Jesus to a time shortly before his crucifixion, although



Judea had been a Roman province for many years, the Sanhedrin may have possessed all its prerogatives; for it was only forty years before the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, that the right over life and death was taken from that body.\*

In the lifetime of the apostles, however, the authority of the Sanhedrin was considerably reduced by Roman usurpations, by the Herodian scions, by the highpriests and by the disputes of the various schools, so that it had become much less dangerous to offer opposition to that ancient body.

The disputes of the various schools proved most fatal to the authority of the Sanhedrin among the Hebrew people. The Talmud tells the following: "In the beginning disputes could not increase in Israel, because the court of seventy-one members sat in the hall of hewn stones, and two more courts, each of twenty-three members, sat respectively, one at the gate of the temple mountain, and the other at the gate of the temple court; and other courts of twenty-three members met in all towns of Israel. If it became necessary to ask any question, it was proposed to the court of that same town. If the decision was agreeable to the parties, the question was decided; if not, they had a right to appeal to any court meeting in a place next to the said town. If the said decision also was unsatisfactory to the parties, they could

\* (Vide Talmud Sabbath, 15 a and elsewhere.)

appeal to the court at the gate of the temple mountain. If also this decision was unsatisfactory to the parties, they could appeal to the court meeting at the gate of the temple court. If also this decision was unsatisfactory to the parties, they could appeal to the high Sanhedrin, who, by a rule of the majority, gave the final decision. But after the increase of the pupils of Shammai and Hillel, whose knowledge was deficient, the disputes increased in Israel, and the Law was made to appear, as though there were two different laws." (Sanhedrin 88 b.)

This passage clearly tells that with the growth of those two schools and the increase of the superficial students, the authority of the Sanhedrin was defied; there was a state of anarchy among the doctors who were led by scholastic authority in place of the legal one; and thus the unity of the Law was destroyed. The founders of these two schools, Hillel and Shammai, were elevated to the dignities of President and Vice-President of the Sanhedrin, after the battle of Actium, one hundred years before the fall of Jerusalem. Their disputes were continued to a time after the fall of Jerusalem. Therefore this state of scholastic anarchy existed during the lifetime of Jesus and his disciples. This fact explains the opposition of Jesus to the Pharisees and Scribes, although he admonishes his disciples to obey the Sanhedrin. He directed his polemics only

against the corruption in high places, but also against the disputing scholasts who "made the law of God to naught," or as the Talmud has it, "who made the law appear as though there were two different laws." This state of scholastic anarchy impaired the authority of the Sanhedrin in the estimation of the people, so that the organization of an opposition Sanhedrin by Peter and his co-laborers was not very difficult.

This, however, completed the rupture between the new sect and the rabbinical laws. It does not say that the apostles rejected the traditional laws or doctrines of Israel; for there is a fixed difference between the two. The very fact that they organized a Sanhedrin for themselves, shows that they adhered to the traditional laws. All the prerogatives of Christian synods, and all the claims of the Church as an aggregate body are based upon the Jewish traditional laws. They rejected the rabbinical laws, and maintained that Jesus did the same.

Let us explain the two terms. It can scarcely be doubted that a people with a history of fifteen centuries and a written code of laws intended to govern every action of mind and body, and venerated as the gift of the Most High, should have juridical and ecclesiastical traditions, decisions in particular cases or by particular persons, customs run out of man's memory, observances and prejudices crystal-

ized to divine laws by long usage. The Common Law of England took its authority from a similar source long before parliaments legislated for Anglo-Saxons. The Hebrew people had the advantage of the art of alphabetic writing, and must have saved from oblivion many of those traditions in the "secret rolls," *Meguilath Setharim*, which the Talmud frequently mentions. Besides all these points, that people always had legally organized courts of justice, a supreme tribunal and a priestly organization with scribes to write down their transactions. Many of those documents must have been saved, although in the main the traditional laws, doctrines and customs were transmitted verbally from sire to son and from master to pupil. It was prohibited to write them down, most likely from the obvious reason not to attach to them the importance of the written laws of Moses.

The existence of such traditions can not well be doubted. The rabbis claimed for them, for some if not for all, a divine origin, and said God delivered the verbal explanations of the Law to Moses, who communicated them to Joshua, he taught them to the elders, of whom the prophets learned them, through whom they reached the men of the great synod under Ezra, and so they were handed down authoritatively to the great Sanhedrin who are "the guardians of the verbal law and the pillars of justice; the statutes and judg-

ments for all Israel originate with them, and the Law points to them in stating, 'And thou shalt do according to the law which they will teach thee.' Whosoever believes in Moses, our teacher, and in his law, is bound in duty to abide in all matters of law by them, and foot upon them."\*

This precept, however, would exclude all rabbinical scholasticism, for if all the traditions were finished with Moses, those prophets and sages who succeeded him had nothing to add. Therefore they maintain furthermore that many of the traditional laws were forgotten at different times, three thousand of them, they say, were forgotten already when Israel mourned over the death of Moses. (Temurah 14 b.) The teachers after Moses only restored the forgotten traditions by their research and by logical inductions on principles which they had fixed. They could not have maintained that the whole body of rabbinical laws and doctrines was included in this one category; they could only think of certain traditions which were then well known. For Moses Maimonides himself who, as a rabbinical jurist, was unquestionably orthodox, maintains: "There never was a dispute on traditional matter. Wherever, in the rabbinical works, there is a difference of opinion on any subject, this proves that this matter is not one of the traditions from Moses. In matters of legal induction, if the Sanhedrin sanctioned it, it was a

\* Maimonides, *Yad, Mamrim* i, 1.

law. If a majority of the Sanhedrin did, it also was a law."† So the ancient rabbis must have considered the matter, for Maimonides only repeated what they said. Therefore there was a traditional law, on which there was no difference of opinion besides the enactments of the Sanhedrin ; and the rabbinical law, or that portion of the traditions which they maintained to have ascertained by scholastic inductions or deductions, against which the Sadducees, the Essenes, Jesus and his apostles protested, and which was the apple of contention between the two schools of Hillel and Sham-mai.

The apostles went but one step beyond Jesus. Like their master they believed in both the Mosaic laws and the traditions as the means of salvation and rejected the rabbinical scholasticism; they replaced the authority of the Sanhedrin, the living source of the traditions and the perpetual development of the Law, by a Sanhedrin of their own, the apostolic synod, for which they claimed the same authority, powers, and prerogatives as the legal Sanhedrin did.

Those of our readers who are unacquainted with the scholasticism of the mediæval ages, as it was produced by Christian philosophers who discussed not only fictitious points, but even absurdities and small matter, with a hair splitting sagacity

† Yad, Mamrim i, 3.

and an artificial sophistry, have no correct idea of the discussion among the followers of Hillel and Shammai. It is for their benefit that we quote here some points of dissension between those schools to afford them some insight into the matter.

We open the collection of the *Mishnoth*, and (Berachoth v) we read the following: "These are the matters (of dissension) between the Shammaites and the Hillelites regarding meals. The Shammaites say, one pronounces first the benediction over the day (Sabbath or holiday) and then he speaks the benediction over the wine. The Hillelites say, one pronounces first the benediction over the wine, and then over the day. The Shammaites maintain, one must first wash his hands and then fill the goblet with wine. The Hillelites maintain, one must first fill the goblet with wine, and then wash his hands. The Shammaites maintain, one must wipe his hands with a cloth and then lay it on the table. The Hillelites maintain, he must lay it on the chair. The Shammaites maintain, one must first clean the house of the fragments and then wash the hands after meal. The Hillelites maintain, one must wash his hands first, and then clean the house. The Shammaites maintain, if one eats on Saturday evening, and night sets in before he has pronounced the benediction after meal, he says the benedictions in this order: on the light, on the food, on the odor of the spices, and on the parting Sabbath. The

Hillelites maintain this order, on the light, on the odor of the spices, on the food and on the parting Sabbath. The Shammaites say in the benediction on the light, 'Who has created the light from the fire.' The Hillelites say, 'The Creator of the light from the fire.'"

We add nothing, we only translate. In *Pesachim* xi, 6, for instance, there is recorded a dissension of the two parties on the topic how much of a certain psalm must be read on the eve of Passover. In *Bezah* I and II another series of disputes of the same nature are recorded, starting out with the problem: "If an egg is made on a holiday (after Sabbath, hence it was finished on Sabbath,) the Shammaites say, it may be eaten on that same day. The Hillelites say it is prohibited."

Most all the subjects under discussion by the parties appear trifling, and one can hardly realize how men and scholars could hit upon such small things, and spend their time on such trifles. But it was with them as with the scholasts of the medieval ages; it was not the subject, it was the manner and method of discussion, the sagacity and sophistry brought into play, which had the main charm for them. But the people who saw their scholars engaged in the discussion of such small matters, believed they were important, and that led to the minutiae of the rabbinical laws.

The parties were not as innocent as they might appear from their subjects of discus-



sion, or as the *Mishnah* maintains they were. (Yebamoth i, 4.) They went over certain eighteen points as far as disputants can go, viz: to blows, and this was in the Sanhedrin at a very dangerous period. The Shammaites were the zealots against whom Josephus has so much to say.\* But it is not our object to write their history. We merely wish to show that the scholasticism of the rabbis must have appeared ridiculous and profane to the uninitiated, or also to the impartial observer. There was plenty of good reason to protest against this corruption of the understanding, and the profanation of the words of the Bible and the laws of the land. The complaints of the other rabbis against "The pupils of Shammai and Hillel who had not practiced enough, and made the Law appear like two laws;" the protests of the Sadducees, Essenes, Jesus and the apostles against those Pharisees were certainly just. Their objections were directed chiefly against this class of Pharisees who quibbled over the laws and traditions of Israel, and not against the matter itself.

After we know that the first teachers of Christianity observed the laws and traditions of Israel and taught them as the necessary means of salvation, we understand well what John the Baptist, Jesus and his disciples understood by the term sin, viz: non-obedience to the laws and traditions of Israel, or a mere outward compli-

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\* See Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, Vol. 3, p. 544

ance with the law without pure motives—hypocrisy, which is so often stigmatized by Moses and the prophets. We also know what they understood by the terms repentance and remission of sins; they understood them as the rabbis of the Talmud did the term *Teshubah*, “the returning,” from the dark path of wickedness to the sunny avenues of righteousness and godliness, back to obedience to the laws of God, which is effected by true repentance, prayer and humiliation of soul and body before God, to which Peter added the belief in the crucified redeemer and in his second advent, without dispensing with the former. Paul who declared the Law itself abrogated could retain but one thing, viz: faith.

Knowing this, the question rises, What was the apostles' doctrine concerning the main object of the Law? Is the knowledge of God and the communication of the soul with Him, or is the benefit accruing to man from the provisions of the Law, the main object thereof? Is the Gnosis or is LOVE the first principle of religion? This question engaged the minds of the most thoughtful and most earnest men of the time, in which Christianity originated. The contemplative life, as the most eminent of all human virtues, is the superior excellency, to which even the Brahmin of India aspires, and did aspire long before the origin of Christianity. He ascends the summit of a hill, or climbs to the top of a tree, to be as nigh to God and as far from this sen-

sual and sinful world as he possibly can be, and sits there for days without food, the head between his knees, and dreams himself into the Deity, to be submerged in him by contemplation and by abstraction from the physical world. In this idiosyncrasy the Brahmin receives communications from the Deity, and becomes "Brahm himself," as he maintains. He goes consistently so far in this visionary life that the earth with all its charms, nature with all her beauties, offer no attraction to him, life is an involuntary exile of the soul from the original abode, and every human action, feeling or thought, good, bad or indifferent, is sinful, because it disturbs the contemplative life. This characteristic trait of Brahminism, like most all Indian products of the mind, is traceable throughout all ancient and modern Asiatic paganism. It is differently modified, variously expressed, and more or less predominant in all the systems of heathenism. The Essenes of Egypt, the monks and nuns of the Chinese Buddhists, as well as the monks, nuns, and eremits of Christendom, are all the offspring, in this respect, of the Brahminic doctrine on the contemplative life.

Although the mysteries of the Essenes and the Therapeuts were known to the initiated only, still their very mode of living must have betrayed to the observer the importance which they attached to the contemplative life. Therefore the question itself, whether the Gnosis was superior to

Love as a main principle, must naturally have been asked among thoughtful Hebrews long before the advent of either Jesus or Philo, who is so often charged with the origination of Gnosticism. As a philosophical product, Philo may have shaped it to a great extent; but the matter itself, like all the material of philosophy, existed long before logic attempted to subject it to philosophical discipline.

Gnosticism itself may be analyzed to the following elements: The knowledge of God and the communication of the soul with him is the highest perfection which man can reach on earth. Communion is held with God by reduction of the body and its passions to the lowest claims, and in the same ratio, by the elevation of the soul to the contemplative life. The soul receives communications from God himself, not in the form of logical or demonstrable thoughts or conceptions, but in the form of an ecstatic disclosure of truths comprehensible and evident only to the soul who receives them. So far all Gnostics are alike, but here they necessarily differ, for the disclosures or revelations necessarily differed widely among Heathens, Hebrews and Christians, and each had their Gnostics.

Beginning with these elements, Gnosticism then runs up from the original dualism of knowledge and love, through the mystic speculations of the *æones* to the dualism of the Deity. But we, in this place, have nothing to do with its theoso-

phy. We must discuss this point, when we shall treat on the *Logos* and the *Son of God*. Here we only wish to call attention to the Gnostic source as far as it effected the anthropology of those days.

The Gnostic speculation, which in form is the direct opposite of the Hellenistic school of logical concepts and thoughts, and in substance places knowledge, THE GNOSIS, above love—at the time in which Christianity originated, had many admirers and many opponents. It engaged the minds of the thoughtful persons. The Talmud has preserved numerous traces of Gnosticism, also in its anthropological bearing. We notice first a passage which occurs twice in the Talmud.\*

The original passage is in Sanhedrin, and reads thus: "Rabbi Eliezer (the son of Pedath) said, knowledge (*or the Gnosis*) is so great that it was placed between two names of the Deity, as it is said (I. Samuel ii,) 'For the LORD of KNOWLEDGE is GOD.'" Here is almost the apotheosis of the Gnosis. Then the same rabbi continues, "Great is the sanctuary (the temple) for it was placed between two names of the Deity; as it is said (Exodus xv,) 'Thou hast wrought, O LORD! the SANCTUARY, O LORD! which thine hands have established.'" Again the same rabbi continues, "Every man who possesses knowledge (the Gnosis) is as worthy as if the sanctuary had been built

\* (Sanhedrin 92 a and Berachoth 33 a.)

in his days." This places the holiness of knowledge on the same level with the holiness of the temple. The same rabbi then continues, "The man who possesses knowledge will eventually get rich. It is prohibited to show mercy to a person who possesses no knowledge. Whoever gives his bread to one who possesses no knowledge, will be visited with afflictions." So we know of one prominent teacher, and a cotemporary of the apostles, who placed KNOWLEDGE higher than LOVE. In all these passages the word דעה *Deah*, the literal translation of *Gnosis*, is used. The Talmud contains a couplet to express this idea.

דעה קניית מה חסרת

דעה חסרת מה קניית

"Thou hast gotten knowledge, what lackest thou?  
Thou lackest knowledge, what hast thou gotten?"

This idea must have been deeply rooted among the inquiring portion of the community, to prompt the poet to give it so brief and finished an expression.

Another and still more remarkable passage in the Talmud, from cotemporaries of the apostles, must be quoted here. It occurs twice† and reads thus: "At a meeting of Rabbi Tarphon and Elders, in the hall of the house of Nithzah in Lydda, the following question was proposed to them: Is the study (knowledge) greater, or is the action (love) greater? Rabbi Tarphon answered the action is greater; but Rabbi Akiba answered, the study is greater.

† *Kiddushin* 40 b and *Siphri*, Section *Ekeb*.

Then all agreed on the answer that the study is greater, for knowledge leads to the proper actions."

Although the reply made to this question decides nothing, for after all knowledge has only the secondary merit of leading to righteousness, and the actions have their merits in themselves; still it proves two things; first, that they looked upon knowledge and not upon love as the prompting cause to righteousness; and secondly it proves that the question was asked and debated in the time of the apostles.

In the passage before us Rabbi Akiba decides in favor of Gnosticism; to which he, in his earlier days, was much inclined. Rabbi Tarphon decides precisely as Simeon, the distinguished son of Hillel did, and he having been prince of the Sanhedrin, his decision has traditional authority. He said, "All my days I have grown up among sages, and I found nothing better for a person than silence. And again, not the inquiry is the main thing, the action is. And again many words are the cause of sin." (Aboth I.) This statement of Simeon re-echoes in the words of Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah, another cotemporary of the apostles, who makes piety and righteousness depend on wisdom, and *vice versa*; and he then continues: "Like what is he whose wisdom is greater than his deeds? He is like to a tree with many branches and a few roots; the wind comes and overthrows

it. Like what is he whose deeds are greater than his wisdom? He is like to the tree, with a few branches and many roots; if all the wind in the world blow against it, the tree will not be moved from its place." (Ibid. iii.)

It must be stated here that the knowledge, wisdom or learning, of which the rabbis of the Talmud speak, must not necessarily be the mystic knowledge of the Gnostics. Still the principle involved in the discussion is the same precisely: Is the *Gnosis* or is *Love* the first principle of religion? The rabbis by no means agreed on this topic. Their treatment of the ignorant portion of the community, the *Am Ha-arets*, depended on their philosophical view of first principles. Those who inclined to the *Gnosis* looked upon the ignorant as the equal of the beast who deserved neither mercy nor compassion, although their most noted teacher, Hillel, had pronounced as the main law, "Whatever hurts thee, thou shalt not do to thy neighbor." They overcame that difficulty by calling only the student or the learned man a *Ha-bar*, the term used for neighbor. Those who held *LOVE* or the action, the righteous deeds, to be the main cause and effect of religion, like the rabbis Simeon, Tarphon, Eliezer ben Azariah, Gamliel of Jamnia and many others did, looked upon the ignorant, the *Am Ha-arets*, in the light of charity and good will; to them the giving of alms, the instruction of the ignorant, and all other



works of charity were of more importance than all the learning.

It is quite natural, therefore, that the apostles were compelled to decide in favor of the one or the other side of the question. They decided in favor of LOVE. If their creed ever was couched in words, the fourth article thereof must have read somewhat to this effect:

*Love and not Knowledge is the Active Cause of Man's Goodness, Righteousness and Piety; Love is the First Principle of Religion.*

The reader of the New Testament meets the reflex of this doctrine almost everywhere, so that we need not quote any passages to prove it. This decision was not new, as we have seen already; it embodied the opinion of tens of thousands in Israel; still it was good, and besides this it was the popular side of the question.

The apostles do not claim the authorship of this article in their creed; they ascribe it to their master, and it appears most likely that he was the author, for they penetrated not deep enough into the questions which agitated that age.

Matthew, Mark and Luke chronicle the same decision of Jesus under different circumstances. Matthew narrates that, while Jesus was in Jerusalem shortly before his death, "a certain lawyer asked him," and he did so to tempt him, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" With

Mark it is "one of the scribes" who had no intention to tempt Jesus, on the contrary, he was pleased with his reasoning, who asks him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" According to Luke, it was long before the time of his sojourn in Jerusalem, nor was it all in Jerusalem, when "a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Thus Luke takes the liberty of placing the same story at an entirely different place and time. The answer of Jesus to this query is nearly the same, at least of the same import with the three Synoptics: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." *Matthew.*

\* Luke begins with the previous verse of Deuteronomy, "The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is One Lord: And thou shalt love," &c., adding, "and with all thy strength." Then he cites the second like Matthew, and lets Jesus conclude, "There is none other commandment greater than this." Luke has the answer thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord, &c., and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself"—giving a double translation of כָּאֵרֶךְ, like Mark.

The reply is in substance the same with the Synoptics, except that Mark also adds the passage from Deuter., which teaches the unity of God. But the close of the scene is entirely different in each Gospel. Matthew's lawyer says no more. Mark's scribe makes a lengthy reply in approbation of the answer of Jesus, repeating substantially his words and adding that "this is more than all whole and burnt offerings." Jesus is pleased with this approbation and says to the man, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Luke's "certain lawyer" is also satisfied with the answer, but he is willing to justify himself, and, therefore, asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells him the story of the good Samaritan.†

The differences of words, persons, circumstances of place and time, which surround the main point, only suggest one thing, viz: that the Gospel writers either recorded various traditions, or they themselves invented incidents to place the words of their master. This, by no means, contradicts the main point, viz: that Jesus declared somewhere and to some person against the superiority of the Gnosis and for the superiority of Love as the first principle of religion; and that he did so in the very words of Moses. He did not mean to say anything new, nor did it appear any way new or strange to those to

† (Comp. Matthew xxii, 25; Mark xii, 28; and Luke x, 25.)

whom it was addressed; he merely intended to express his opinion on a pending and exciting question, and he did it in full consonance with the laws and traditions of Israel. The apostles, as a matter of course, adopted this declaration of their master as a cardinal point of their creed.

John has no note of this anecdote, nor does he know anything of this reply. But this is not strange at all. If the "Son of God" was asked, "Which is the first commandment of all?" or, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he must have answered simply, "have faith in me." But the reply of Jesus, as the synoptics have it, tells nothing of faith and the abrogation of the Law; it tells the direct contrary. Therefore if Jesus said so, Paul and John do not teach the religion of Jesus, hence John had no room for this passage, incident, question and reply.

Onesidedness invariably leads to evil results. God said to Abraham, "Walk thou before me and be thou perfect." Moses commanded his people: "Ye shall be perfect with the Lord your God." It was certainly onesided with the rabbis who elevated knowledge or the Gnosis to the highest good of man, to the detriment of love and charity; as it was onesided with the apostles who elevated love and charity to the highest good of man, to the detriment of knowledge and of the understanding. Man is an intelligent and not exclusively an affectional being; by

the grace of God, he is gifted with both understanding and affection. It is his duty to develop both gifts harmoniously, so that each may control the other. Both parties produced good and evil. Let us cast a glance upon the consequences as the materials before us present them to our observation.

The rabbis who, as we have seen, almost deified the Gnosis, and thought the largest amount of human happiness and perfection results from the greatest store of knowledge and research, promulgated an intense desire after knowledge and wisdom, and a profound veneration for learning and for the learned. The following passages from the Talmud will illustrate this.

The social position of the sage, the learned man, is frequently fixed as superior to all persons. We copy from the Talmud Yerushalmi (*Horiath* iii, 7,) "The sage precedes the king; the king precedes the high-priest." The Talmud then continues in describing the grades of priestly officers who precede (in honors) the Levite, who again precedes the private Israelite. Then it continues in describing the grades among the Israelites, from those of legitimate birth to those of illegitimate birth, the alien and the freedman; and then it concludes thus: "When (do we regard these grades) if they are all alike (in learning); but if the bastard be a learned man, and the high-priest is ignorant, then the bastard precedes even the high-priest. 'The sage precedes the

king;’ for if the sage die, we have none like him; if the king die, every Israelite is competent to assume the royal office.” Further on the sage is compared with the precious metals: “But if they be lost, we have equivalents, if the sage die, who brings us an equivalent?” This social status of the sage is frequently fixed in the same manner in various passages of the Talmud.\*

As in the social rank so also in matters of religion, the Talmud places the sage at the head of all persons. So we read (*Baba Bathra*, 12,) “Since the day that the sanctuary (of Jerusalem) was destroyed, the prophecy was taken from the prophets, and was given to the sages. Why, is the sage not also a prophet? (or was not prophet and sage identical before that time also?) It should be stated thus: Although the prophecy was (at that time) taken from the prophets, from the sages it was not taken. Amemar says, THE SAGE IS BETTER THAN THE PROPHET.”

This is saying a great deal at once. In the first place, according to the best and oldest commentaries, it is maintained in this passage that the logical inductions of the sages are as good, if not better than the revelations of the prophets. This places the understanding on a level with revelation. In the second place it maintains per-

\* See *Yerushalmi Sabbath* xii, 3; and the parallel passages in the *Babli* and the *Midrashim*, noted in *loco cit.*

petual revelation through the understanding. And in the third place it fixes the status of the sage above the prophet, hence he is the highest authority. If the first passage expresses the highest democracy, this latter one expresses the highest rationality.

In strict consistency with the above, the Talmud maintains with the *Mishnah*, "Stricter obedience must be paid to the words of the Scribes (the older sages) than to the words of the Law;" or as the Talmud has it, "The words of the Scribes are more beloved than the words of the Law;" or, "The words of the Elders must be observed more strictly than the words of the Prophets."†

In connection with these remarkable passages, the Talmud Yerushalmi makes the following comparison: "The prophet and the senator (elder or sage) are like unto two officers whom a king sends into the province. He writes concerning the first, if he will not show you my seal and my signature, ye shall not believe him; but concerning the other, he writes, if he even shall not show you my seal and my signature, ye shall believe him anyhow. The same is the case with the prophet and the sage. As to the prophet, Scriptures say, 'And he will give thee a sign or a wonder;' but as regards the sages, it is commanded unconditionally, 'And thou shalt do ac-

† *Mishnah Sanhedrin* xi, 5; *Talm. Yerushalmi* *ibid.* xi, 6, and the parallel passages in the Babil.

ording to the law which they will teach thee.'"

Again in strict consistency with the above, the *Mishnah* (*Peah* i, 1) counting the principal laws, of which "man enjoys the fruits (the interests) in this world, and the main capital in the next world," to which also belongs, "to honor father and mother, charity (to the living and the dead,) to feed the hungry, to visit the sick, to bury the dead," &c—it concludes, "But the study of the Law is equivalent to all of them." Therefore if one does none of those acts of charity, but he studies diligently, he is yet as good before God and man, as the one who does all possible charity. Maimonides in his commentary to this passage thinks this preponderance of the study of the Law is maintained, because, as Rabbi Tarphon and the elders with him concluded, "knowledge leads to virtue," hence not the study *per se*, but as the sure means and active cause of virtue and piety, is given the preponderance; but the passage appeared differently to the *Yerushalmi*, quoted by Rabbenu Asher, where it says not only all things in this world, but also the commandments of the Law themselves—*i. e.* the observance of all of them is inferior to the act of studying the Law. This is the perfect Gnosis in the rabbinical form.

Study and knowledge were not limited with them to Sacred Scriptures and commentaries; they were very zealously attached to profane learning, as is evident



from the large number of them who were physicians, surgeons and mathematicians; from the fact that every Grecian system of philosophy, from Pythagoras to the New Platonics and from Thales to the last outgrowth of Epicurism, has left some fragment in the Talmud; and from passages like this: "Bar Kapra" (an elder contemporary of the apostles) "said, Whoever understands to calculate the orbits and the planets, and does not do so, is included under those of whom the prophet said (Isaiah v,) 'And they behold not the working of God, and they see not the work of his hands.'" Samuel, a sage of a later date, was not satisfied with this; he must have a positive commandment of the Bible that such is the duty of every body, and sure enough he finds it: "How so do we know that man is commanded to calculate the orbits and the planets? Because it is said (Deut. ii,) 'And ye shall observe them and ye shall do them, for this is your wisdom and your intelligence in the eyes of the nations.' Which is the wisdom and intelligence *in the eyes of the nations*? This is only the calculation of the orbits and the planets." (Sabbath 75.)

To the scholar they were exceedingly tolerant and liberal. They said the Samaritan or even the Heathen who studies the Law is as good as the highpriest. They maintained that some of the brightest scholars were descendants from Heathens, and mention especially Shemaiah and Ab-

talion, who presided over the Sanhedrin; Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Mair, two great lights in their respective days. They supposed the latter to be a descendant of the Emperor Nero. They were also exceedingly forbearing to the student and maintained, "If a sage commits a sin at day time, thou shalt not think hard of him at night, for he certainly has already repented his misdemeanor." They recommended again and anon to honor the saven, and went even so far that they placed this duty equal to the fear of the Lord. They advised the young men that one should rather sell all he has and marry the daughter of a sage; and they advised parents to give their daughters in marriage to students only. They went so far that they stated, "Study the Law, even if it be not with the intention to observe it; for if first the motive be bad, it will be good afterward." They maintained, the wisdom of the sage steadily increases as he advances in age; and the folly of the illiterate progresses in the same ratio.

This moral encouragement given to the study of the Law and the acquirement of knowledge in general could not fail to stimulate a popular desire after instruction, and to inspire respect of the Law, its expounders and administrators. This produced two good effects, respect before the laws and love of knowledge. These are certainly two mighty pillars to the prosperity and progress of any peoplè. But it

was outdone, it became onesided, and produced evil effects. It produced the rabbinical scholasticism, which pressed the divine commandments into the narrow forms of laws, and imposed the letter in place of the spirit thereof. This was fraught with perversion and hypocrisy. It surrounded the scholasts with the veneration and the dignity due to the legal authorities and especially to the Sanhedrin. This almost destroyed the influence of that body, and produced a scholastic anarchy, as we have seen above. It made the students haughty, vain and aristocratic, to look down upon the ignorant masses with contempt and selfishness, and to esteem virtue herself as a secondary matter.

The opinions of this class of rabbis on the ignorant masses, the *Am Haarets*, are truly revolting, especially those of the Rabbi Eliezer, whom we have mentioned above. He expressed himself that it was prohibited to show mercy to an ignorant man, and maintained that he who gives bread to the ignorant will be visited with afflictions. He went so far as to deny a soul to the ignorant, and to place him on a level with the beast. That same rabbi said, "The ignorant live not." (Kethuboth 111.) He thought (Pesachim 49 b,) "If we were not useful to the ignorant in trade and in business they would surely kill us." The same rabbi stated, "It is allowed to cut the throat of the ignorant on the

Day of Atonement, even if it happens on a Sabbath."

But it was not this Gnostic rabbi alone who raged against the ignorant masses, the rabbis enacted a law reading thus: "Six things are said concerning the ignorant. None must even testify for them; nor must their testimony be received; no secret must be entrusted to them; they must not be appointed guardians of orphans, or of public funds, and none must go with them on the high way. Some maintain, their lost things must not be advertised."

Also the author of the *Mishnah*, Rabbi Jehudah, the prince, was guilty of this terrible mistake. It is told of him (*Baba Bathra*) "Rabbi (Jehudah) opened his treasures in the year of scarcity. He said, let there come in men who read the *Mishnah* (statute law,) men who read the *Talmud* (commentaries,) men who read the *Hagadoth* (moral treatises on Scriptures); but let no ignorant man come in. One, Jonathan ben Amram, pushed himself through and entered. He said, Rabbi, give me support as to a dog, give me support as to a raven! Rabbi gave him some support. But when the man was gone, the rabbi was sorry and exclaimed, woe to me, I have given of my bread to the ignorant! Then Simon, his son, said, perhaps this Jonathan ben Amram is one of thy pupils who would not claim support on the merits of his

knowledge. The matter was investigated and it was found to be so; the rabbi said, let enter who may come. Rabbi thought: Evil comes upon the world on account only of the ignorant."

Also the enlightened and liberal Rabbi Mair said: "Whoever gives his daughter in marriage to an ignorant man, does the same as if he would bind her and cast her before a lion."

It is true they maintained: "The hatred with which the ignorant hate the sages is greater than the hatred of the heathens to Israel; and the hatred of their wives is still fiercer." Rabbi Akiba, who was many years one of the ignoramuses and then inclined for some time to gnosticism, testifies that he himself felt this hatred for the sages. But it may be set down as a holding rule, the hatred of any lower class against a higher is the result of oppression or negligence; it is merely a natural retaliation.

The haughtiness and vain pride of the Gnostic rabbis, and their indifference to virtue and charity, roused the indignation of the illiterate masses, and led to the hatred and to the division of society into two hostile factions, the *Haber* and the *Am Haarets*.\*

The number of the ignorant must, from the nature of things, have been very large in the time of the apostles, because there

\*See *Bechoroth* 30 b; *Abodah Sarah* 6 and 35; and *Tosefta Demai* 58.

were but few public schools. The rabbis state, " Verily, the memory of that man is for good, and his name is Joshua (or Jesus) the son of Gamala. If it had not been for him, the Law would have been forgotten in Israel. For in former days whoever had a father who understood the Law, was taught; who had none, was not taught. The law, 'Ye shall teach them (the laws) to your children,' was interpreted to the effect that schools for children were established in Jerusalem, because it says, 'For from Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem.' Who had a father (who was able and willing to do it) was sent to school to Jerusalem; who had no father (or he was not able or not willing to do it) was not sent to school. Then a law was enacted that teachers for children should be appointed for every district, and the young ones were brought there at the age of sixteen to seventeen. If the teacher got angry against a pupil and chastised him, the pupil left school. But when Joshua, the son of Gamala, came, they enacted a law that schools were established in every town and in every province, and the young ones were sent there at the age of six to seven years." (*Baba Bathra* 21 a.)

This Joshua ben Gamala was appointed high priest by Albinus, 63 or 64 A. C., six or seven years before the fall of Jerusalem. This law may have been enacted by the Sanhedrin by the influence of Joshua before he was appointed high priest; anyhow

the public school system for children outside of Jerusalem did have no existence previous to 50 A. C. To send pupils to Jerusalem, or to the distant schools, was both expensive and inconvenient. Only the rich classes could make use of this benefit. The matter being left altogether to the option of the parents, not only the children of the poor, but also many children of the rich, if they had no learned parents, received no education at all. Therefore the class of the *Am Haarets* could not have been small in the age of the apostles.

Therefore the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles in favor of the ignorant and the poor, to whom the kingdom of heaven was promised, while it was denied to the rich and to the learned, was a retaliation against the Gnostic rabbis, which would have electrified the masses and gained ground and favor with the ten thousands of Israel, had the doctrine not been first preached in Jerusalem, where ignorance was not common, and had not the other rabbis, Pharisees and scribes adhered to anti-Gnostic and sound principles of justice and charity without discouraging knowledge, study and research.

Be it said in honor of that age and of the Talmud that the most sublime principles and doctrines of charity, justice, love and humanity went side by side with the Gnostic extravagances, and are recorded side by side with them in the Talmud. We have

already quoted some sentences of anti-Gnostic rabbis ; but their number is legion and we can only quote some more of them to afford the reader a clear insight into the spirit of that age.

Hillel, the humble, meek and learned Hillel, laid down the great principle, "Be thou of the pupils of Aaron, to love peace and to pursue after peace, to love the people and to attach them to the Law." (*Aboth* i, 12.) This is the source from which Jesus drew his decision as to the most important of all laws. Based upon this, Simon, the son of Hillel, said, "Knowledge is not the main thing, deeds are;" and Simon, the great grandson of Hillel said, "The world stands upon three things—justice, truth and peace." These three men were Presidents of the Sanhedrin ; they expounded the import of the traditions. Rabbi Johanan ben Saccai, the pupil of Hillel, and President of the Sanhedrin at Jamnia from 70 to 74 A. C., opposes the selfish doctrine of his Gnostic cōtemporaries in the following words : "If thou hast learned much of the Law, do not imagine thyself any better for that ; for it is the object of thy existence." (*Aboth* ii, 8.) To the same purpose it is stated in the Talmud, "Whoever studies the Law in order to observe the commandments, it will be to him a balm of life ; and whoever studies the Law without the intention of observing its commandments, it will be to him a poison of death." (*Taanith* 5.) "Whoever studies



the Law and teaches not is like to the myrtle in the wilderness, where there is none to enjoy its odor." (*Rosh Hashonah* 23.) "A sage who is not candid and honest is not a sage." (*Joma* 72.)

In all these cases, and there are hundreds more of the same import, it is not the knowledge which gives real value to the man; it is much more true piety and charity, resulting from an enlightened will, which elevate him to human excellency.

Another cotemporary of the apostles, Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, whom we have noticed before as the man of many miracles, says this: "He whose good deeds are more than his wisdom will retain possession of his wisdom; but he whose wisdom is greater than his good deeds will not retain possession of his wisdom. Whosoever is beloved by the people is also beloved by God; and whosoever is not beloved by the people is not beloved by God." (*Aboth* iii, 9, 10.) In the same sense another rabbi says concerning the learned and the ignorant: "I am a creature, so is my neighbor (the less learned.) I have my business in the city, he has his in the field. I rise early to go to my business, so he rises to go to his. He covets not my position, nor do I covet his. Therefore his merit is no less than mine, provided the fear of the Lord guides his steps." (*Berachoth* 17.) Here is none of the vanity and overbearing assumption of the Gnostic rabbis; on the

contrary, all these words breathe a pure spirit of humanity.

One of the finest and most enlightened fragments of rabbinical literature is the following of the learned Rabbi A kiba, who, although ignorant to the age of forty and then addicted to gnosticism, came out after all a great and good man. He said: "Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God. It is a particular love to make known unto him that he was created in the image of God, as is said, 'In the image of God he made man.' Beloved is Israel who are called sons of God. It is a particular love to make known to them that they are called the sons of God, as is said, 'Ye are sons to the Lord your God.'" (*Aboth* iii, 15.) Further on he says this: "All is seen (Providence,) and freedom is given, and the world is judged with goodness (by God,) and the whole depends on the majority of actions," (if these are good, the world is; if not, not.) To our recollection there is not a more liberal, more humane or a wiser expression of opinion any where in ancient literature; and he who uttered it was the man who shaped and formed his age. He affords the index to the traditions as they were.

These rabbis represent the better side of knowledge, wisdom, research and enlightenment, not only in general principles, but also in particular laws and maxims on justice, charity and moral purity.

In regard to charity the following story

is illustrative of rabbinical opinions: "King Munabaz spent all his property in giving alms to the poor. His relatives sent him word, 'thy forefathers increased their property and their fathers', and thou spendest thy property and thy father's.' He replied, my fathers amassed upon earth, and I amass in heaven; my fathers amassed treasures which bear no interests, and I amass treasures which bear interests; my fathers deposited them in places which human hands might reach, and I deposit them in a place which no human hand can reach; my fathers gained money and I gain souls; my fathers collected in this world, and I collect for the future world."\* Munabaz is reported to have quoted a scriptural passage in support of each of his statements. Be this as it may, it exhibits the conceptions of his age in regard to charity and to the Scriptures. The following rabbinical sentences are of the same import: "He who gives secret alms is greater than Moses our teacher." "He who gives a penny to the poor is blessed with six blessings; and he who consoles him with soothing words is blessed with eleven blessings." "Whoever makes it a rule to give alms, will be blessed with sons who will be wise, wealthy and eloquent." "All the benevolence and charity which Israel do in this world will bring them great peace and great pleaders before their

\* *Yerushalmi, Peah i; Babli, Baba Bathra ii; Tosefta Peah iv.*

Father in heaven." They continue in this wise to praise the greatness of charity ; but we will quote only one more passage, because it comes from a cotemporary of the apostles : " Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiba, if your God loves the poor why does he not support them ? The rabbi replied, in order to save us from the judgment of hell (by giving them alms.) Rufus said, that will do just the contrary, it will condemn you to hell. I will tell thee a parable : This is much like to a human king, who, being angry at one of his servants, sends him to prison, and commands to give him neither food nor drink ; but a person goes and gives the prisoner food and drink, will not the king be angry at him ? Ye are called servants, as your Law says, For to me are the children of Israel servants. Rabbi Akiba replied, I will tell thee another parable. This is much like to a king who, being angry at his son, commands him to prison, and orders that neither food nor drink should be given him ; but a person goes and gives to the son food and drink. The king on learning this, sends presents to that person. We are called God's children, " Ye are sons of the Lord your God."

Higher still than alms, the rabbis value personal charity and benevolence ; such as visiting the sick, burying the dead, (Jesus said, " Let the dead bury the dead,") consoling the mourners, cheering the bride and bridegroom, &c., which they call *Gue-*

*milath Hessed:* In all this, they manifest not only the practical application of the rule of Hillel, "Love the people," but their conception of the Law in the strictest sense of humanity, entirely contrary to their Gnostic cotemporaries.

We must dwell a little longer on one more topic, viz: on the divine command, to honor father and mother. The Evangelists, in their usual attempt to tell stories of Jesus which make him say or fulfill Scriptural passages, place him in an awkward position opposite his mother and his brothers, whom he abuses in harsh words. All this the Evangelists† do, to have Jesus act and speak as Moses says the Levites did when the people had made the golden calf, and which, he thought, they would always do under similar circumstances (See Deuter. xxxiii, 8 to 11.) The difference however is, that the mother and the brothers of Jesus had made no golden calf, and Jesus was no Levitical guard of the sanctuary.

We do not maintain that Jesus was guilty of the gross violation of the divine law, the story only suggests to us the conceptions of the Evangelists on this topic. In this as in many other respects the rabbis maintain a moral superiority over the Evangelists. We quote the following rabbinical story of cotemporaries of the apostles: "The mother of Rabbi Tarphon came down to walk on Sabbath in her yard;

†See letters of Rev. Dr. Guinzburg, ISRAELITE Vol. xlv. Nos. 6-25, &c.

Rabbi Tarphon put his hands under her feet till she had reached again her bed. Once, when she was sick, the sages came to see her. She said to them, pray for my son Tarphon, for he has honored me more than enough. When they asked her what he had done for her, she told the story. Thereupon they said to her, if he had done for thee a thousand times thousand times more, he had not yet done half what the Scriptures command concerning honor to the mother." (*Yerushalmi, Peah i.*) Stories of this kind are frequent in the Talmud. The question is not whether they are true; the main question is the moral lesson they contain.

This will suffice to show that, while the Gnostic rabbis preached immoral lessons, and clung to knowledge and research only as the highest good to man, the other rabbis clung to humanity and liberality, to justice, charity and moral purity, without underrating the value of wisdom and knowledge. The reader of the Talmud must not forget that it is an encyclopaedical work of large dimensions, which embodies the wisdom and the folly of six centuries, of a sagacious, impulsive and cultivated people.

The lessons of love and humanity which the apostles preached in the name of their master were not new either in Jerusalem or anywhere else among well-informed Israelites. They were drawn from precisely the same source and by the same means, as

those of the rabbis, from the Scriptures and traditions of Israel. The protests against Pharisees and Scribes were directed against the scholasticism and gnosticism of some rabbis, and against the hypocrisy and corruption of others, especially in high places.

Therefore the liberal and humane tendencies of the apostles created no particular sensation in Judea; nor were they any way sufficient to render acceptable to the Hebrew mind the novel doctrines of a vanquished and crucified Messiah and Redeemer and a resurrected Savior who should appear again, after his death, to restore the throne of David, the kingdom of heaven and the glory of Israel.

New in the apostles' creed, was their supposed contempt of the learning and the learned, of wealth and the possessors of wealth. In direct and diametrical opposition to the gnostic Pharisees, they pressed the principle of love to its utmost consequences. There was great wealth in Jerusalem and great corruption among the wealthy, in which the royal family of the Herodians took the lead. Therefore, it was natural to identify wealth and corruption, as the apostles did. We have seen already a number of causes, additional to the common one, why the wealthy portion of the Hebrew people had a much better education than the poor. This state of affairs, so easily discernible to the readers of history, identified in the minds of the apostles, wealth, knowledge and corruption;

and they opposed each of the three from the principle of love which needs no knowledge and no wealth: being wealthy enough and informed enough within itself, and in consequence of its self-sufficiency loathes the corruption of man.

The apostles are not supposed to have invented this new feature of their creed, they, indeed, invented very little—it is ascribed to their master. John fails not to narrate an incident with an opportunity to state that Jesus never learned any thing. He tells us (vii, 14) that Jesus, about the midst of the feast of Tabernacles, went up to the temple and taught. "And the Jews marveled, saying: How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." All this is intended to state that Jesus had not learned any thing; whatever he knew or spoke was direct revelation from on high, or rather knowledge, *eo ipse*, appertaining to the nature of the *Son of God*. Jesus himself certainly never alleged the absurdity, that a person may know every thing without having learned any thing. The synoptics knew nothing of this story. They knew not that Jesus ever was or preached in Jerusalem, previous to his last days, except Luke, who (ii, 41) informs us that the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem annually to be there during the



feast of Passover. When Jesus was twelve years of age he went with them to Jerusalem. When they left, he remained there, and was found after three days in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Luke evidently intends to tell us that Jesus did learn of some doctors whom he heard and understood, and praises his inquisitiveness and quick perception, no less than his natural talents.

John, however, insists upon his theory, and not only maintains that Jesus himself learned nothing, but also that his followers were a class of ignorant persons. So he says (vi, 45), in a story again unknown to the synoptics, that the officers who were dispatched to arrest Jesus refused to do so, and returning to the chief priests and Pharisees, who had sent them, they said: "Never man spake like this man." This is the cause of the following admonition to them: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? Only this people which know nothing of the law; may it be accursed."\* The intention of John in this statement is manifest. He tells us that the learned were the enemies of Jesus, and the illiterate were his followers and admirers. *Homimitates*

\* The common English version made havoc of this verse, so that it is devoid of all sense. A glance upon the Greek original will convince any scholar that our translation is correct.

well in this passage the very words, which a gnostic rabbi would have spoken, concerning the *Am Haarets*, the people, "which know nothing of the law;" but he forgets that not all the chief priests and Pharisees belonged to that class.

Matthew also calls the people of Nazareth to witness, that Jesus had learned nothing. He tells us (Matthew xiii, 54),

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said: Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?"

"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"

"And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?"

"And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them: A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house."

It is rather naive of Matthew to inform us in conclusion, "And he (Jesus) did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief," to convince us that the critical understanding and practical knowledge had nothing to do with the doctrines and miracles of Jesus. They were matters of faith, intelligible to the ignorant and credulous only.

Take the gist of all these statements and turn to Matthew xiii, 10, where it is nar-

rated that the disciples asked Jesus, why he spoke in obscure and unintelligible parables to the "great multitudes," who "were gathered together around him," for the specific purpose of listening to his words. To this he replied: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Expound this as you please, and it will always say the same thing, viz.: Only the ignorant, the *Am Haarets*, who believe on me unconditionally, know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The rest of the people who think, doubt, inquire and judge, in fact the knowing ones, will never understand or believe those mysteries.

Consistent with this theory, Matthew informs us (Matt. xi. 25) that Jesus prayed: "I thank thee, O, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight." So Jesus himself, we are told, thanked God, the source and center of all understanding, for the ignorance of the people, especially of the ill fate which he prophesied over the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, as we read in the preceding verses. The gist of the prayer is, that the ignorant babes know more than the wise and prudent.

We turn, now, to the sermon on the mount, and hear Jesus utter as the first of

all blessings, to be ignorant: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew v, 3.) There is no possibility to understand this any way but to the one effect, viz.: the kingdom of heaven is for the ignorant, for the *Am Haarets* only and exclusively. Thus, ignorance is the first condition of salvation.

Luke, who has Jesus learn of the doctors and let him be a marvel at the age of twelve does not like this idea altogether; and as he has taken the liberty to change the sermon on the mount to the sermon on the plain, on another occasion, at another place and time, to omit, to add and to change *ad libitum*, he changes also this blessing into "Blessed be you, ye poor, for your's is the kingdom of heaven." (Luke vi, 20.) But we have seen above that the ignorant and the poor were nearly identical with the Evangelists. It is not only the learned man who is excluded from the kingdom of heaven; the rich man suffers the same fate. "Verily, I say unto you," said Jesus to his disciples, "that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xix, 23.) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon and a host of other Scriptural worthies were very rich; but it makes no difference, the kingdom of heaven is only for the poor and ignorant.

From all this, it is evident that the Evangelists considered ignorance and poverty the necessary attributes of a person to enter into the kingdom of heaven; that they report Jesus to have said so on various occasions; that ignorance and poverty swayed a sovereign scepter in Christendom when the Gospels, or those portions thereof, were written. But the question with us is, Did the apostles advance, or indorse, or enlarge this doctrine?

The author of "The Acts" takes particular occasion to inform us, that it was known to the rulers, elders, scribes and chief priests, how Peter and John, the chiefs of the twelve, "were unlearned and ignorant men." (Acts iv, 13.) Still, this proves not that they were. It is Luke who says so, and he did not see them. It proves that in the time of Luke both Jesus and the apostles were considered ignorant men. James (Epistle I, 2) says: "Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor (*Ebionim*) of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to them that love him?" Then he exhorts his brethren, because they despise the poor. But here no mention is made of the ignorant. Paul, as we shall see hereafter, went to the extreme in this matter, and he had good reason for it.

It is but natural to suppose that Jesus was not an ignorant man. It is unnatural to suppose that a Hebrew rabbi, traveling about the country with his disciples, as

other rabbis of those days did, in an age when it was held that "the crown of the law" was greater than the "crown of the king and the crown of the priest," should be ignorant, or if he was, that he should confess it. It is no less unnatural to suppose that the teacher should call his disciples ignorant, or that the disciples of a venerated teacher should consider themselves ignorant. Whatever Mr. Renan says in this respect is the result of a romantic imagination, not of historical research. Ignorance, as we have seen before in numerous quotations, was ignominy at that time and in that country. If Jesus and his disciples had been ignorant, their opponents, the rabbis, must have brought this charge against them. In this matter their silence amounts to a demonstration.

The fact appears to be this: Jesus, in opposition to the scholasticism and gnosticism of one class of rabbis, teachers, judges, priests, senators, leaders and others, having decided in favor of Love, and against the Gnosis, naturally favored the poor and the ignorant. His disciples may have been poor from the very beginning, and ignorant; but after having received instruction from their master for several years, they could have been ignorant no longer. After his death, the apostles must have greatly enriched their stock of knowledge before they entered upon a public career. When they came before the public, they appealed to the poor and ignorant, because the rich and the learn-

ed would not listen to them. This appeal was in perfect consonance with the doctrine of their master. In consideration of what we know already, how small the disputes of the scholastic rabbis were; it was not very difficult to ridicule them and expose them to contempt in the estimation of the masses. Again, in consideration of the hatred which the gnostic rabbis expressed against the *Am Haarets*, the ignorant masses, it must have been easy to gain their attention and their affections. Therefore, the apostles appealing to the poor and ignorant, assumed voluntary poverty with the poor, and ignorance with the ignorant. But when Paul came to the Gentiles, where poverty, ignorance, crime and infamy were the rule, while purity and wisdom were the exception, (See Romans i, 18, etc.) and their knowledge itself was a crime, because it was a lie; then and there ignorance became a virtue, and it was sanctioned as such by Paul. The Evangelists, as they frequently did, gave to Jesus that which belonged to Paul, or to Peter that which belonged to Jesus.

The good of all that was, to preach humanity to the barbarians and semi-barbarians. Love, humanity, charity and liberality, justice and righteousness can not be preached too much or too emphatically. Lessons of this kind are intelligible to the simplest man, even to the child, and convey a principal lesson of true religion to the mind and to the heart. However corrupt

the Church was in after times, when crusades, inquisitions and fanatics spread death and desolation in the name of religion, strangled, roasted or buried alive the victims of mad fanaticism in behalf of religion; Jesus and the apostles taught no such things. They clung to *Love* as the first principle. The fault was in the excess and oneness to which the principle was pressed. If ignorance is a virtue and the understanding is a nonentity, then judgment is suspended and the passions supported by the imagination reign supreme.

Therefore, Celsus (Origen. c. Celsus i, 9) accuses the primitive Christians that they demand blind faith, that they declare wisdom as an evil, and laud folly as a desirable possession. Origenes denies this, but his argument is feeble, after one has read the passages of the Gospels which we quoted before, and the words of Paul (Epi. I. Cor. iii, 18, etc.), where he says: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise."

Therefore, Tertullian, another early father of the Church, says, concerning philosophy: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? The academy with the Church? Our institution is from the porch of Solomon, who has himself taught to seek the Lord in simplicity of the heart. May those who got up a stoic, platonic or dialectic Christianity, look out for themselves. We have no curiosity besides that of Christ;



we need no research besides the Gospels. When we believe, we need no more; because we do believe that we must not go beyond this belief.—Let all curiosity be subjected to faith, and all glory to salvation. To know nothing against the rules of faith (the dogmas) is synonymous with knowing every thing.\* Therefore, the same Tertullian could exclaim: "I reverence it (Christianity), because it is contemptible; I adore it, because it is absurd; I believe it, because it is impossible."†

Therefore, the Christian emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, commanded, "that all writings adverse to the claims of the Christian religion, in the possession of whomsoever they should be found, should be committed to the fire."

Therefore, also the pious Mosheim (Eccles. history, 4th centu.) feels obliged to state, "It is certain that the greater part both of the bishops and presbyters, were men entirely destitute of learning and education. Besides, that savage and illiterate party, who looked upon all sorts of erudition, particularly that of a philosophical kind, as pernicious, and even destructive of true piety and religion, increased both in number and authority. The ascetics, monks and hermits augmented the strength of this barbarous faction, and not only the women, but also all who

\* Tertull. de præter, haeret, 7, 8, 14.

† Tertull. de Carne Christ, Seml. Magdel, 1770, Vol. 3, p. 352.

took solemn looks, sordid garments, and a love of solitude, for real piety, (and in this number we comprehend the generality of mankind) were vehemently prepossessed in their favor."

Therefore, the Church always was the great enemy of free thought, free research, original ideas and novel doctrines, and constituted herself the superior and chief arbiter to sovereign understanding. All these lamentable and melancholy crimes of the Church, however, are the legitimate offspring from the onesided principle of *Love*, to the detriment and disregard of understanding, knowledge, learning and philosophy.

It is as it were but yesterday that a Christian defender of the Christian dogmatics, by appointment of the Oxford (England) university, rendered the following verdict on philosophy:

"It has done little for the world. It has not one practical triumph to show. It has discovered no new truth; it has inaugurated no new principle; it has produced no new element of good. It can not point to one of life's many evils either removed by its strength or alleviated by its influence. It has achieved no triumph of civilization, no trophy of human happiness. Were the whole swept away, we should not lose any abiding or substantial benefit. Were all else swept away and it left alone, we should sink into absolute ignorance; and should not possess one fixed truth to elevate human nature by its dignity, or bless it by its beneficent influence.‡

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‡ The Dogmatic Faith; an inquiry, etc., by Edw. Garbet, M. A.

If it is deplorable that the scholastic and the gnostic rabbis have inflicted burning sores on the cause of true religion, and the latter have declared war to one of the holiest interests of humanity; it is certainly no less deplorable that the apostles gave sanction to a doctrine which, by its corruption, has cost mankind more blood and tears than all the battle-fields, and has arrested a thousand times the wheels of progress. With the apostles the adoption of this principle was partly a policy, partly a sacred heritage, and partly a necessity. But coming centuries made a curse of it, which still hangs heavily upon the entire Christendom.

Being acquainted with the cardinal points in the apostles' creed, we have but little to add to enable us to proceed with the examination into the further developments of primitive Christianity. They believed in the resurrection and a last day of judgment, as all the Pharisees did, and like them expressed it, vague and indefinitely, so that neither the Gospels nor the Talmud afford any insight into the precise nature of that doctrine. The rabbis of the Talmud maintained that the prophets themselves failed to have a definite idea thereof, and say: "All the prophecies of the prophets reach to the days of the Messiah; but the future world, 'No eye hath seen except thine, O, Lord.'"

The rabbis of those days held conflicting opinions in this matter. Some believed

that the coming of the Messiah, the resurrection of the dead and the last day of judgment will be simultaneous events. This appears to have been also the belief of the apostles, that the second advent of Jesus would also bring on the resurrection and the judgment; and based upon this they admonished the living to repentance; whereas the day of judgment was considered nigh, at least to some of them. Other rabbis of that age who considered the Messiah a political personage, of course, detached those events into different periods of time; and this became afterwards the orthodox doctrine of all rabbinical Jews.\* There were, undoubtedly, representatives of this opinion, also, among the earlier disciples of Jesus, who did not expect the resurrection and the judgment to come on with the second advent. Both these doctrines are expressed in the New Testament; so that it is impossible to tell what the twelve taught in this matter.

The belief in, and the frequent correspondence with, angels as well as the cenobitical and communistic mode of living, the apostles took from the Essenes who, as Josephus informs us, were quite familiar with the host of heaven. The Pharisees also had their extensive angelology; but their admission, that "the names of the angels were brought up from Babel," that they knew nothing about them through

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\* Maimonides, Yad. H. Theshubah.

the prophets or other Hebrew sources, must have depreciated the mystic knowledge in their own estimation.

Thus we may put it down as a fact that the apostles and their followers in no wise distinguished themselves from other Jews, either in their mode of worship, living and teaching, or in their religious belief, pretensions and superstitions, except in the point of the crucified Messiah and the doctrines which they connected with that event. Like all persons who live in and for an idea—especially a religious one—they became very pious, taciturn, thoughtful and visionary. Like many other sons of that sunny climate they were governed more by the imagination and sentiments than by legitimate thought. Like all other Galileans, they must have been looked upon as being ignorant, especially on account of the jargon, the corrupt dialect, with which all Galileans were reproached. In all other respects they were orthodox Jews.

If the apostles had been ignorant men (they must have learned something of their master during the years they were with him) they could certainly not have been stupid persons; for they followed up a fixed purpose—to graft a new element upon the religion of their country. This requires both knowledge and forethought. It requires much more deliberation and study than one might suppose, after a cursory glance on the subject. It is true, they

did not succeed among their countrymen, and we have seen the reasons of this failure; but they did not fail altogether. They succeeded in forming a congregation, however small it was, in Jerusalem, and under the very eyes of all her learned citizens. There were Christians outside of the capital also, in Palestine, and there were some in Damascus, among the Jews, before the advent of Paul. Most important, however, in this respect, is the admission of the Talmud: that the great Rabbi, Elieser ben Hyrcanus, was almost converted to Christianity by the apostle James, who was reputed among them for healing diseases, and as a disciple of Jesus. The Midrash (Rabbah to Koheloth) also tells the story of one Hanina, the nephew of the celebrated Rabbi Joshua, who joined the Christians of Capernaum, and was reclaimed by his uncle. Further on the same book mentions many other converts: Rabbi Aisi, of Cesarea, it appears, knew several of them among the learned rabbis. The apostles gained Paul over to their side; and this shows that they were not altogether unsuccessful. Josephus mentions not the successes of the apostles, because in his time Christianity was in its very infancy, and must have appeared scarcely worth notice among the numerous large sects which he saw. The first activity of the apostles, as we have seen above, must be set about 50 to 60 A. C., and their main work begins still later; hence, Jo-

sephus, who did not return to Palestine after 70 A. C., could know but little, if any thing, of them. Still to attract the attention of Paul and Rabbi Elieser, to gain the former and almost win the latter, knowledge and deliberation on the part of the apostles must be admitted by all who do not ascribe such things to miracles. The apostles spent years in Galilee after the death of their master, to mature their plan; and when they returned to Jerusalem, to enter upon a public mission, they must have come prepared in a certain measure.

This leads to another inquiry. Did the apostles possess a written Gospel, a biography of their master, or an abstract of his lessons? One might conjecture, that during their stay at home, in Galilee, they may have prepared such notes or such a synopsis. The passages, especially in the three synoptical Gospels, which are almost literally alike, point to an older Gospel from which all copied those passages. Was such a synopsis in the hands of the apostles? The prejudices of that age did not favor such a work. Among the rabbis, as we have mentioned before, there was a settled prejudice against writing down their own words, so much so that they called the notes which were made by some *Megüllath Setharim*, "secret rolls." Still, on the other hand, we are informed that Hillel wrote a large compendium of the statute law, and a book on the Macca-

bees. Although there being no trace left of those works, it is by no means certain that Hillel actually did write any thing; still the assertion proves that the prejudice against writing was not considered a general rule without exception. Besides the *Megullath Taanith*, "the roll of the fast days," the book in which historical events are described, which were the cause of days of fast and other days of feast, Rabbi Joshua ben Levi mentions two kinds of books which existed in his time, *Siphrei Berachoth*, "the books of benedictions"—prayer books—and *Siphrei Agadah*, "the books of moral treatises," especially sermons and exhortations based on Scriptural texts and historical events, or, also, on legends and fables.\* The rabbi expresses himself strongly opposed to those books; nevertheless, they existed, and this rabbi was a cotemporary of the apostles, and like them he wrought miracles. Again, the casuistic controversies in the *Mishnah*, as to which books may be saved from a conflagration on Sabbath, and which may not; which books render the hands impure, and which do not; and the *Sepharim Hachitsonim*, "the profane books," mentioned by Rabbi Akiba, testify to the fact that many books circulated among the

\* Yerushalmi, Sabbath XVI. In one of these books Rabbi Joshua ben Levi saw the statement, which did not at all appear new to him, that the Pentateuch was divided into 175 chapters, and the Psalms into 147 chapters. The division of the Pentateuch into chapters and verses is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; as for instance, *Pareshath Melech*, *Pareshath Achere Moth*, *Pareshath Hakhei*, &c.



Hebrews of those days, although the rabbis entertained no great admiration for them.

It is, therefore, possible enough that the apostles wrote some biographical sketches of their master and a synopsis of his teachings; but we have no testimony on hand to prove the fact. On the contrary, Paul invariably maintains that he had another gospel, not received of man, hence, also, not of the apostles. Not only his doctrines but even his account of the resurrection differs entirely from those of the apostles. Had they been in possession of any written accounts, Paul could not possibly have produced a new gospel with new doctrines, entirely different from those of the eye-witnesses, who had lived with their master for years and had heard his lessons.

Two ancient passages of the Talmud must be considered in this connection. The first occurs in three different works with some slight variations.† It reads thus:

“The rolls of parchment (consecrated to write the Pentateuch thereon) and THE BOOKS OF THE TSADDUKIM (OR MINIM) are not saved from conflagration on Sabbath. Rabbi Jose adds; On week days the holy names (of God) should be cut out (of the books) and removed, and the rest should be burned.” But Rabbi Tarphon, whose name we have mentioned before as a younger cotemporary of the apostles, he said:

† *Yerushalmi Sabbath XVI; Babil Sabbath 116 a; Tasephta XI* (in some editions XIV.)

“If they (those books) should ever come to my hands, I would surely burn them with the holy names in them. Even if a man should pursue one to kill him, or a serpent pursue him to bite him, he should rather seek refuge in a temple of heathens than to enter the temples of those; for these know and deny, and those know not and deny.”

These books of the TSADDUKIM, or MIN-IM, as the *Yerushalmi* has it, are called by Rabbi Mair, AVONGELION; and by Rabbi Johanan, EVANGELION.† This notice is, of course, an addition from a more recent date; still there can be no doubt that this ancient passage of the Talmud refers to the existence of some Christian Scriptures in the age of the apostles. The tone in which they speak of it leads us to believe they referred to the epistles of Paul. They start with a law, which shows neither hatred nor even any objection to those Christian Scriptures. They recognized them as existing books, and treated them neither better nor worse than other books, as they would not allow to save any from a conflagration on the Sabbath, not even prayer-books. But then comes Rabbi Jose, who lived after Paul, who wants to see them burned after the holy names are cut out. But then without reference to chronological order, Rabbi Tarphon's decree is in-

† See *Babli Sabbath*, 116 a. Edit. Amsterdam, 1645. It is omitted in the edition, Vienna, 1844, and is only mentioned in part in the large *En-Jacob*, edit. Fuerth.

troduced, to burn all those books, i. e., he would do so, with the holy names therein. He could only have referred to the epistles of Paul, in which the son of God and the abrogation of the Mosaic laws was taught; while the older law referred to some apostolic Scriptures, probably such as the epistle of James and the like, which have been lost.

The BOOKS OF THE MIRAS also mentioned in the Talmud (*Yadain*) proves nothing, for it may refer to any as well as the Christian sect of that name, according to the signification of the Greek term.

Another ancient passage of the Talmud is highly interesting in this direction. In the *Yerushalmi*, (Sabbath xii, 4,) where the rabbis discuss the question of what may be called writing on Sabbath day, which, of course, they forbid under the penalty of death, there the decision is made: "If one scratches letters on a skin, he is not guilty. But Rabbi Elieser (our gnostical acquaintance) said to them: "DID NOT JESUS (BEN SATDA) BRING NECROMANCY FROM EGYPT IN THIS VERY SAME MANNER OF WRITING?" (Hence it must be readable writing.) Here is an undoubted reference to a something like a manuscript of Jesus himself, then well known among the rabbis. They made him to a pupil of one Rabbi Joshua,<sup>2</sup> with whom he went to Egypt and learned necromancy there.

<sup>2</sup> The "ben Perachiah" was added by some ignorant transcriber.

What that necromancy was, nobody can tell in our days ; but that Jesus was a pupil of one Rabbi Joshua, that he went with him to Egypt, that he learned there much of the Therapeuts, and that in the days of Rabbi Elieser something like a manuscript of Jesus, scratched on skin, was extant, can not well be denied ; as the Talmud, the most impartial witness in this matter, and there again, cotemporaries of the apostles state these facts. It appears, even, that Jesus wrote in that peculiar manner, on account of the prejudice among the rabbis against writing books or notes.

Still the Christians of the first and second centuries were so careless about manuscripts, that nothing can be found older than the epistles of Paul. It would even appear that with the progress of Paul's doctrines and the decline of apostolic Christianity, ancient books and manuscripts contra Paul were destroyed or got out of the way of the Gentile congregations. So no trace is left of apostolic documents, although the above passages from the Talmud show, beyond a doubt, that something of the kind must have existed.

On the whole, Christian critics of the New Testament having entirely neglected the Talmud, the only written documents from the apostolic age, could not give the reader a clear insight into the origin of Christianity. They have, more or less, carried modern idéas into ancient Jerusalem. So is Mr. Renan's Jesus a Parisian

fantast, and his apostles are mediæval monks.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

The most notable persons among those who attached themselves to the primitive Christians, were Joseph Hallevi, whom the apostles called *Bar-naba*, the "son of eloquence." The next was Mason, whose Hebrew name was most likely Manassah. After him is mentioned one John Marc, the cousin of Barnabas and son of a wealthy woman, called Mary, whom we mentioned in the sixth chapter. Next to them two proselytes of weight are mentioned, Stephen or *Stephanos* and Philip.

The name *Stephanos*, "the crown," is entirely unknown to Jewish nomenclature. The name *Kathriel*, "the crown of the Lord," is known in angelology only; as the name of persons either in its Hebrew or its Grecian form, it occurs nowhere in the annals of ancient Jews. This Stephen with his novel name is introduced by the author of "The Acts" (vi and vii) as the first steward or deacon of the seven appointed to control the secular matters of the primitive congregation, an Evangelist or one who preached the new religion, and the first martyr; the story of Peter and

James reviewed at the close of the sixth chapter, in chronological order, succeeds the story of Stephen's martyrdom.

The author of "The Acts" intends to inform us that sometime after the apostles had been beaten before the Sanhedrin and commanded not to teach the name of Jesus, especially not in the thaumaturgy and necromancy, of which they stood accused, hence sometime after 50 A. C., this Stephen had exciting discussions, not with the Pharisees or the Sadducees, as usual, but with the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians and some from Asia Minor, or in short words, with Helenists, Greek proselytes and liberated slaves who had separate synagogues in Jerusalem. We are not informed of the subject matter, on which their discussions turned. Their disputes may have been concerning politics, national economy, family affairs, or any exciting topic, as well as concerning any religious doctrine. They could not resist Stephen in the argument, and so they had resort to a mean plot of revenge. They employed profligate persons to accuse Stephen of having heard him "speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." (Verse 11.) The laws of Israel took no cognizance of blasphemous words against Moses, but the author of "The Acts," it appears, did not know it, and he continues thus: "And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him (Stephen,) and caught him,

and brought him to the council." We are not told what kind of a council or court it was, before which Stephen was to be tried. It appears, however, from the first verse of the seventh chapter, that a council of priests was intended by the author. In this council of priests these profligate men set up FALSE WITNESSES, which said: "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and this law." It is no longer blasphemy against Moses and against God, as before; the matter is changed into a much milder form. Blasphemy against God is a capital crime according to the laws of Moses; but blasphemy against the temple and the law is no crime mentioned in the penal code of the ancient Hebrews. The case, however, loses all its force by the explanation which the false witnesses add: "For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." There can be no blasphemy in this statement. Jesus was dead and could not destroy the temple, and if Stephen said so, it was foolish, but it was no crime. Customs changed so frequently in Israel that nobody could feel offended at such a prediction. The main questions here are these: If false witnesses were hired, why did they not make out at once a strong and sure case, and say, this Stephen blasphemed the Lord in saying Jesus was the Son of God, and God Almighty himself? *Answer.* Because

the author of "The Acts" knew well enough that nobody before Paul said so, and because he did not know the Jewish laws. The accusation of destroying the temple, he copied from Matthew (xxvi, 61) and Mark (xiv, 58) and the formula of accusation is taken from I Kings xxi, 10, as the whole matter is an imitation of the story of Naboth who was stoned on the secret instructions of Queen Jezebel. It is not history; it is imitation. The next question is why did the witnesses not say at once, we have heard Stephen say, the Law of Moses is abrogated, hence we need neither temple, altar, priest, king, ruler or court; why speak of the customs? Again because Luke knew well enough that nobody before Paul ever preached such a doctrine. The next and probably most important question is, why did Stephen not contradict the statement of these false witnesses? Was it true what the witnesses stated, then they were no false witnesses; was it false, then Stephen defended a falsehood. The author of "The Acts" is here in a threefold dilemma.

Next we are informed: "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, (Stephen,) saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." This expression is borrowed from Genesis xxxiii, 10, and suggests here another query: If the face of Stephen made so extraordinary an impression upon all that sat in the council, how in the world could they half an hour later



fall upon him like brutes or fiends, drag him out of the city and kill him? Human nature is incapable of such violent and sudden transitions. He who appears now an angel to us, can not be deadly obnoxious to us in half an hour.

Most extraordinary, besides the admission of the false testimony, is the plea of Stephen. He stands before the high priest and his council, the very flower of the priesthood, accused, as the author of "The Acts" intended to make out the case, accused of blasphemy, and begins his plea, as though he was addressing a number of schoolboys, or ignorant heathens, with telling them the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, and then he breaks out in a flood of thoughtless invectives. In this brief and tasteless sketch of early history in the place of a plea he makes one blunder after the other. He says (vii, 2) that God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, of which the Bible has no record. Then he calls Palestine (verse 4) "the land wherein ye now dwell," as though he had been in Rome while speaking thus. Then he says (verse 15) Jacob came down to Egypt with seventy-five persons, when the Bible repeatedly states, he came down with seventy only, including himself and Joseph with his sons, calling every person by name. Next he states (verse 16) that the remains of Jacob and his sons were brought up to Sychem and buried in the place which Abraham bought of the sons of

Hamor, the father of Sychem, for money; when the Bible states plainly that Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah near Hebron, a place known as such to this very day, from Ephron, the Hittite, and not from Sychem who was killed together with his people by the sons of Jacob; when the Bible furthermore narrates that the remains of Jacob were buried at Hebron, and only the remains of Joseph were brought up from Egypt and buried in Sychem by Joshua. Then he continues in reviewing the story of the Egyptian bondage, which, according to his statement, lasted only during the reign of the last Pharaoh, which arises from a misunderstanding of the verse in Exodus, "And there rose a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph." Then without any good ground or valid reason, merely because one Hebrew said to Moses, "Who set thee as a man, a prince, or a judge over us?" he charges on all the people (verse 35,) "This Moses whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler or judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."

Any reader will be ready to admit that this part of Stephen's speech comes not from the pen of a Jew. Any, even the illiterate Jew living in Palestine, where all those Bible stories are living traditions connected with well known localities, must have known better. None can suppose for a moment that one could rise before a coun-

oil over which the highpriest presided and make such awful blunders in things known to the children in the streets of Jerusalem, without exciting the judges to laughter and pity.

Being through with the historical sketch Stephen gives us an exposition of his exegetical skill which is no less unhappy than his historical knowledge. He continues that Moses said to the children of Israel (verse 37,) "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear." We can not tell what connection this has with the praise which he wishes to bestow upon Moses, when he quotes the words which Moses spoke of himself. Nor does it say any thing in favor of Stephen, unless he considered himself a prophet, which he does not say. Nor does it justify his belief in Jesus, as that prophet to be like Moses could not be superior to Moses. But he continues in the praise of Moses, (verse 38) "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." According to the Greek original this verse should read thus: "This is he who in that assembly in the wilderness stood as a mediator between the angel who spake to him on Mount Sinai, and between our fathers, and received the words of life, to communicate them to us." This is an imitation of Deuteronomy v, 5, "I

was standing between the Lord and between you at that time, to announce to you the word of the Lord," with the only difference that where Stephen speaks of an angel, the Bible states plainly *JEHOVAH* which never signifies any being besides the One and ineffable God. Stephen insists upon this theory and states again (verse 53,) "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." This was either a mistake or it was copied from the Gnostics. It may have been plainly a mistake. He who has a place in Sychem for the cave of Machpelah in Hebron, and has all the fathers buried in Sychem in place of Joseph alone, may also have an angel in place of Jehovah as a mere oversight. But then it must not be maintained that a Jew said so to Jews, when it is stated repeatedly that Jehovah spoke from Sinai and not an angel. It may be taken from the Gnostics who believed in the dualism of the Deity. Agreeable to pagan conceptions they believed in the ineffable and incomprehensible Most High God *Anotatos Theos*. But he is too exalted to stand in any connection with the physical world. He becomes in a second nature the *Demiourgos*, the creator and the lawgiver of the Jews or *Nomothetis*, whom the later Gnostics, like Valentine, made "a god-like angel." If this angel of Stephen is the result of either ignorance or gnosticism, it proves definitely, that he never spoke that speech. A Jew in Palestine could not be

so ignorant, nor could he say what gnostics maintained a century later.

But Stephen is not through yet with his speech. Having said all that in praise of Moses, he charges on "our fathers" the wickedness that they would not obey Moses, "but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt." Then he continues, how they said to Aaron, to make them gods to replace Moses, and how they sacrificed to the golden calf. Therefore, he continues, God turned aside from them, "and gave them up to worship the host of heaven," that is to say, because they committed one sin, God forced them to commit so many more. This injustice is not stated anywhere in the Bible. Still Stephen finds a passage in Amos v, 25, which he did not know exactly, nor did he understand the sense thereof. The prophet opposed to sacrifices says very properly, "Let justice roll along like water, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and meat offerings in the wilderness, during forty years, O house of Israel?" The prophet intends to say that God wants justice and righteousness and neither sacrifices nor meat offerings. But how miserably does Stephen turn and twist this passage to make of it the bare nonsense, that God punishes one sin with another. Then in verse 46 he comes with Moloch, the Remphan stars and other words of which the prophet says nothing. The reasoning of Stephen which

he puts into the shoes of the prophet is very absurd; because some of the Hebrews made a golden calf in the wilderness, therefore, nearly one thousand years later, God sent the people into exile. This is too absurd for a prophet. Still more absurd it is, however, to think that a man being tried for his life should defend himself in the most insulting terms against the ancestors of a people before whose judges he stands, especially when those are at the same time also his own sires. Could not Stephen find some virtues in the history of his people? Can a Jew speak of his ancestors without mentioning some of their excellencies? But the author of that speech was no Jew, he knew little about them and had no connection with them. Only such a writer can make such blunders and speak so meanly of a whole people and of a thousand years of history.

Stephen then comes to speak about the temple. He says that Moses built the tabernacle as God had shown him, and Solomon built the temple anyhow. But God dwells not in temples, in support of which he quotes Isaiah (lxvi, 1.)

Standing accused of a new doctrine, his belief in Jesus and his statements that Jesus would destroy this temple and abrogate the customs of Moses, Stephen speaks of the early history of his people and never touches the main question. At last he says something about the temple which Isaiah and Solomon had said long before him, and

every schoolboy in Jerusalem must have known. He admits the accusation by his silence on the main subject, without making any thing like a defence or a declaration of principles. This is not the speech of a man and a teacher upon trial for his life and his religious doctrines ; so speaks a second rate writer to fill up a vacuum in an old manuscript.

Worse, however, than the whole speech is the valedictory. Like a man excited to madness Stephen pours forth the following string of invectives: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears ; ye do always resist the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Is there any mad man in this country who, before a high court of justice, will thus plead his cause, or thus disgrace and abuse his own ancestors ? Can any man of common sense believe for a moment that any person of sound mind will break forth in such passionate insults in place of a plea ? Besides the imprudence in the matter, the statements made in this valedictory are positively untrue. The Hebrews have not received any laws by angels, and they adhered to their national code with scrupulous conscientiousness ever since

they had returned from the Babylonian captivity. The very cause of their misfortunes was their adherence to their national laws, and the repugnance they felt to foreign laws, dominion and rule. The Jews have neither betrayed nor murdered Jesus; a mob may have done so, and this is very doubtful, and a mob is no people. All the prophets were persecuted by the kings and not by the people, the supposed ancestors of Jesus were guilty of this crime, and one of them killed Zechariah in the temple. Throw such invectives into the face of a people, heap upon them such falsehoods and insults, and what must they do? Gnash their teeth—yes, the author of "The Acts" says: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." He must have evidently considered all those dignitaries and attendants a very mild and gentlemanly class of people, if they only gnashed with their teeth; in our days a man making such a plea before a court would either be sent to jail for contempt of court, or to the lunatic asylum.

This gnashing of teeth proved fatal to Stephen. We are told (verse 55) that he "being full of the Holy Ghost," (so the madness, the blunders and the falsehoods were not his,) "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing (not sitting) at the right hand of God (as though God had a hand) and said, Behold! I see the heaven open



and the son of man standing at the right hand of God." For the first time in his long speech he mentions Jesus. This excited the passions of all of them to such an awful pitch that all of them cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, ran upon him with one accord, cast him out of the city and stoned him. They could stand all the insults; but when he spoke of the son of man, highpriest, council, judges, bailiffs and audience suddenly turned into a frantic mob, but not so frantic that somebody killed him on the spot; they dragged the poor man out of the city, and there was nobody in that city to arrest a frantic mob, and stoned him to death. Where were the people, whom the chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees, &c., always dreaded? Where was the Roman authority? Where were the 5,000 Christians of Jerusalem? Where were all the angels, miracles and the Holy Ghost? They were nowhere, when the highpriest of a nation with his council run mad with a mob to kill an innocent man. It requires more than common faith to believe this.

It was a mob, say the rational expounders of this story, which overpowered the highpriest and his council, seized the accused man, dragged him out of the city and killed him. The highpriest and his council could not or would not resist the fanatics. Mr. Renan, as on many other occasions, takes this matter very easy. He thinks it was quite natural that it should

be so, and it was either in 36, 37 or 38 A. C. But while Mr. Repan has not the least proof either in favor of his fluctuating dates, and we have proved above that it was after 50 A. C. which upsets his reasoning in regard to the Roman authority; the rationalists can not tell why the martyrdom of Stephen must be a fact at all. The speech is clearly a late production of which Stephen did not utter a word; why not also the trial and the whole story? The real cause of dispute between Stephen and his opponents is unknown; the statements of the false witnesses is an absurdity; the defence is an invention; the catastrophe an improbability next to an impossibility; what supports the main fact? The statements of Paul recorded in "The Acts" rest on no better authority than this story itself, and in the epistles, *i. e.* by Paul himself this event is not mentioned.

Besides all this it is evident that the author of "The Acts" had in view to tell a story leading to Paul's conversion. He states, without any other reason, (verse 58) "And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul." Then again he states (viii, 1,) "And Saul was consenting unto his death." Besides all this the author of "The Acts" who, as we have stated before, begins with the end, and has a large congregation around the apostles in Jerusalem right after the death of Jesus, while a few years afterward there was nothing of the kind in

Jerusalem—must dispose of that body as best he can. Just as well as he invented miracles, speeches, large meetings, public trials, resting on some facts of years *post festum*; he invented also persecutions to show how the congregation of Jerusalem was dispersed. Stephen's story is not only an introductory to the conversion of Paul, but also to a general persecution against the church at Jerusalem; "and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and of Samaria, except the apostles." The question here is, why were the apostles tolerated in Jerusalem? The apostles, one should think, must have been the very first to be scattered abroad. But the fact was that the apostles were in Jerusalem about this time, and there was no congregation beyond the few persons who lived in one house with the apostles. This fact becomes known through Paul, and could not well be changed. Therefore we can see no reason why the Stephen story should not be an invention to serve the above purposes.

Josephus who notes the death of James, the brother of Jesus, must have noticed also the death of Stephen and the apostle James, if either was historical; but he does neither. The statement of Josephus, regarding the execution of James, that the law-abiding citizens of Jerusalem were so alarmed by that act of violence that they successfully attempted the removal of the highpriest by Roman authority, proves that the martyr

and persecution stories are not true. We have seen in our last chapter that the stories could not well be true. The difference between orthodox Jews and apostolic Christians was so insignificant, the connections among rabbis and apostles were so amicable, and both Jesus and his apostles were considered so harmless a class of people who were foolish enough to believe in necromancy, that the persecution stories rest on air and not on solid fact, notwithstanding all theories and hypotheses of the rationalists and Mr. Renan to the contrary.

The story before us was written by a Jew Christian. The cause of the persecution and the violent death of Stephen is charged upon the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and to them of Cilicia and Asia who excited the ire of the community by false reports. The Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and chief priests, in fact all Jews are omitted. It is a plot and a mob of foreigners in Jerusalem. The high priest and his council play no part in the matter. This looks of itself like a Jew Christian. The speech of course was written much later and by another man entirely. Only a Jew Christian could think of the crime of changing "THE CUSTOMS which Moses delivered to us." A Gentile Christian must have stated "the laws" and not "customs," with which he had nothing to do. This word "customs" refers to the traditions which we have mentioned above, to which Jesus and the apostles clung. Stephen, ac-

according to our writer, was not guilty of any such thing. "Jesus **STANDING** on the right hand of God"—"I see the **SON OF MAN STANDING** on the right hand of God," are the expressions of a Jew; a Gentile must have said "sitting" and "son of God." The angels sit not around the throne of God, they "stand" invariably in all Jewish scriptures; while the heathen deities "sit," "recline," or take any comfortable position in the Olympos. Jesus was to his Jewish admirers the son of man, and to the Gentiles the son of God. The last words of Stephen, in imitation of what Jesus said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," informs us of the object which the writer had in view, viz: to soften the hatred of the Gentile Christians against the Jews, an object which Luke had not.

Therefore it appears that there was a tradition in the early church to the effect that the first cause of Paul's conversion was the death of some righteous man. A Jew Christian shaped this story and called the martyr *Stephanos*, whatever his name may have been in the tradition, because Stephanos is "the crown," "the diadem," either because he received the crown of martyrdom, a common expression, or because he was the first martyr in the cause of Christianity. The speech was written by the author of "The Acts," and changed by somebody long after Luke who was not so entirely ignorant of Scriptures.

This tradition is actually found in the

rabbinical literature, only in another form. One Rabbi Judah HANNAHTHUM (and this word signifies the steward, the deacon, one who bears or keeps the seal) was condemned to death by a decree of the foreign government. One Ben Kuphia\* resorted to a dangerous stratagem and disguise to save him, but he was discovered, and both were executed in a most terrible manner. The dogs dragged about the tongue of Rabbi Judah Hannahthum. When Elisha ben Abuiah saw this horrible sight, he was so shocked that the tongue which had uttered so many beautiful and ingratiating words of truth should be dragged by dogs that he despaired of the justice of God, and rejected the religion of Israel.†

If from a Christian point of view the death of Stephen was the original cause of Paul's conversion to Christianity; the same story from a Jewish point of view must have made of him an infidel and a skeptic. This must certainly be admitted. The martyrdom of Stephen and of Rabbi Judah Hannahthum are narrated from two points of view, from a Christian and a Jewish; so the former ascribes it to *foreign persons* in Jerusalem, and the latter to a *foreign*

\* So *Seder Haddoroth* calls him. *Yehemoth* 103 a he is called *Bar Kiphuph* (edit. Vienna); in *Moed Katan* 25 b he is called *Bar Kiphuk* (edit. Amsterdam.) Still *Seder Haddoroth* points to both as identical with his *Ben Kuphia*, whose story he tells from an ancient *Midrash*, Psalm lxxix, which we possess not.

† *Midrash Rabba Koheloth* טוב אחריית דבך and  
do do Ruth ליני הליה as also in both  
Talmuds Hagigah and elsewhere.

*government.* It is undoubtedly the same tale. We shall see hereafter that also the *Ben Kuphia* of the Talmud is mentioned in the New Testament. The only question can be, what connection has Elisha ben Abuiah, the ACHER of the Talmud with Paul? but we maintain their identity. THE ACHER OF THE TALMUD IS THE PAUL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. We will prove this novel hypothesis in the next chapter.

Thus the Stephen story foots upon an old tradition which was differently narrated by Jews and Christians, which the Jew Christian author narrated in favor of the Jews and the Gentile Christian embellished with a speech to a contrary effect. It is a martyr story borrowed from rabbinical sources, which both Jews and Gentiles used to their peculiar purposes, as is often done with legends and old traditions.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### PAUL—ACHER.

The identity of the PAUL of the New Testament and the ACHER of the Talmud, if successfully established, is of great importance to historiography, both as regards the origin of Christianity and the tendencies of the Talmud. A large number of notices concerning Paul may be gleaned from the Talmud which are of special value to church history, as nothing is known of him beyond his stay in Rome; and a con-

siderable number of passages from Paul's epistles will render excellent services in expounding obscure passages and peculiar laws of the Talmud. The importance of this investigation is greatly enhanced by the fact that Paul, notwithstanding the fierce opposition of his cotemporaries and the earlier fathers of the church to his peculiar doctrines, was the actual founder of Christianity. He conceived it, he named it, he nursed it, and he carried it to the Gentiles. The teachings of Jesus and the creed of the apostles are not the Christianity of history; the teachings of Paul with the Alexandrian philosophical commentary of John's Gospel and the attempted conciliations of Luke in his Gospel and the Acts, are the basis on which the Christianity of history was reared. No student of history will deny that Christianity was a mighty factor in the history of mankind, to much good and so much evil. Therefore all the facts relating to Paul which we can discover in the Talmud are a clear gain to historical knowledge. On the other hand again the identity of Paul and Acher defines the relations of primitive rabbinism, from and after Rabbi Akiba, to primitive Christianity. Paul's mystical and anti-law tendencies, so often and so clearly stated in his epistles, impressed rabbinism with a directly opposite nature, viz: rationality and law, law for every human thought, feeling or action. One drove the other to the extreme and to



onesidedness. We know what primitive Christians and fathers of the Church thought of or said about rabbinism; but we know not what the ancient rabbis, the founders of rabbinism and the originators of the Talmud thought of or said about Christianity; either, however, is important to the historical investigator. The identity of Paul and Acher once established, and this vacuum in the historical knowledge is filled with a large number of explanatory facts.

The real existence of the Paul of the New Testament and of the Acher of the Talmud was never seriously doubted, nor can it be legitimately questioned. Therefore we have nothing to say on this topic and assume it as a certainty. Paul was a man who passed under a fictitious name, another than his proper one which, according to Luke, was Saul. (Paul signifies the little one.) Acher also was a man who passed under a fictitious name, for *Acher* signifies "another," who, according to the rabbis, was called Elishah ben Abuah. Both passed under fictitious names, and the Hebrew *Acher* is the proper and exact designation for a person who passes under another name than his own. The first cause of Paul's conversion was the death of an innocent man (Stephen); so the first cause of Acher's apostacy was the death of an innocent man (Judah Hanathum,) and conversion, in the sense of the Christian writers, must have appeared apostacy to

the rabbinical authors, as we stated above. Whoever reads the genuine epistles of Paul in the original will admit that he was a Greek scholar; the very same acquirement is ascribed to the Acher of the Talmud. The Talmud (Hagigah 16) speaking of persons whose evil propensities were noticeable already in their early days says also of Acher, "Grecian poetry did not fail upon his lips. It is said of Acher whenever he rose in the academy (when still a student) many books of the unbelievers dropped from his lap."\* Paul before his conversion was a learned Pharisee, so was Acher previous to his apostacy, so that even after that the distinguished Rabbi Mair sought his wisdom and his company and defended him to the very last. Paul did not receive the degree of Rabbi, nor did Acher (*Aboth* iv, 20.)‡ Paul states that he was a pupil of Gamliel, so undoubtedly was Acher; for he is always brought in close connection with Rabbi Akiba, and he called Gamliel his teacher (*Berachoth* 37 a.)† This was the second Rabbi Gamliel, exactly the same who must have been the teacher of Paul. The first Gamliel succeeded the son of Hillel as

\* זמר וזני לא פסק ממוסיה וז'

‡ His name is also mentioned *Moed Katan* 20 a; but the *Seder Haddoroth*, Art. Elishah ben Abuah, corrects this mistake. Also there he is not called Rabbi, although he appears at the head of a school.

† אמר ליה רבן גמליאל עקיבא ער מהי אחת מכניס

גו אמר ליה רבינו אף על פי שאתה אומר כן וחבירך  
אומרים כן למרחתו רבינו יחיד ורבי הלכה כרבים.

prince of the Sanhedrin before the days of Paul, and the Gamliel mentioned in "The Acts" was simply a member of the council, and not the prince. Still it can hardly be doubted that Gamliel was introduced with that liberal speech on his lips, because he was the teacher of Paul. We know of Paul that he was known in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome, hence over the largest portion of the Roman empire; precisely the same we are told of Acher in the Talmud, (Hagigah 15,) † whose name was "known all over the earth." Paul was a Christian after his conversion; so was Acher after his apostacy according to the Talmud. This is evident from the *Midrash Rabbah*, where he is named not merely among other Christian converts, but agreeable to the rabbinical style he is mentioned last as the most important of them. ‡ It also appears there that riding

‡ אמרה ליה לא אלישע בן אבויה אחח ששמך יצא

בכל הארץ.

† Compare *Midrash Rabbah Koheloth* to Ecclesiastes vii. 26, with *ibid.* to Eccl. i. 8. In the former passage Rabbi Aisi of Cesarea mentions certain rabbis in juxta-position to *Minim*, viz:

Rabbi Eliezer—and James of Kaper-Geburia;

Rabbi Eliezer ben Dama and James of Kapersamia;

Hananiah, nephew of Rabbi Joshua and those of Capernaum;

Judah ben Nekisah and the *Minim*;

Rabbi Nathan and his pupil;

Rabbi Eliezer and Joshua—and ACHER.

Turn back to the other passage marked above, and you find there the James who nearly converted Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos to Christianity; the James who wanted to heal the nephew of Rabbi Joshua with the name of Jesus, whose name was Rabbi Eliezer ben Dama; Hananiah who was converted at Capernaum, as the place says, could be a Christian only; the pupil of Rabbi Nathan went to the very same place to be converted. Thesame is the

publicly upon an ass or especially upon a horse on Sabbath day, was one of the practices among primitive Christians, contrary to the opinions of the rabbis who prohibited this on Sabbath. So we read there of Hananiah, the nephew of Rabbi Joshua, when he was converted at Capernaum, it is told of him as a characteristic distinction, that he rode upon an ass on Sabbath. This fully harmonizes with the words of Jesus, "the Sabbath was made for man," hence not for the animal. The very same thing is particularly noticed several times of Acher, who rode upon an ass or upon a horse on Sabbath, and even on the Day of Atonement when it occurred on Sabbath.† Another incident mentioned of Acher points into the same direction. The woman who asked him whether he was Elishah ben Abuah, whose name was known all over the earth, received no verbal answer of him; "he pulled a raddish out of its bed on Sabbath and gave it to her, then she said thou art Acher." This points too directly to the plucking of ears of corn on Sabbath by the disciples of Jesus, to leave a shadow of doubt that the Talmud meant to state that Acher was a Christian.

Recapitulating what has been stated on

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case with the controversies of Rabbi Judah ben Nekisab. Therefore we know from the second passage that the first refers to Christians, among whom *Acher* mentioned last must have been considered the most prominent.

† Compare *Yerushalmi Hagigah* ii, 1, with the parallel passages in the *Babli*, also *Rabba* to Canticles i, 4; *ibid.* Ecclesiastes v, 5; *ibid.* Ruth iii, 3; *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* 974 and Siphri *ibid.*

Paul and Acher, we have before us the following similarities from two different kinds of coteremporaneous literature. 1. Both pass under a fictitious name. 2. Both are learned Pharisees, Greek scholars, pupils of Gamliel, and did not attain the degree of rabbi. 3. Both were converted to Christianity and in consequence of the same incident. 4. Both are supposed to have a world-wide reputation in matters of religion. These accidental similarities amount almost to an evidence of identity. There is no person mentioned in the rabbinical literature who is any way as nearly Paul as Acher is; and there is no person mentioned in the history of those days who is any way approaching Acher as nearly as Paul does. Take to this that it is, indeed, wonderful that the Talmud should make no mention of Paul. It speaks of Jesus and his disciples. It mentions every Persian or Roman ruler or general who any way effected the fate of the Hebrews. How does it come, we must ask, that they omit the name of Paul, the most successful opponent of rabbinism, who, under the very eyes of the oldest and most influential teachers of the Talmud, propagated a new creed from Damascus to Athens and from Jerusalem to Rome? This argument *e silentio* in connection with the above similarities ought to amount to an evidence of identity, especially if we know that the rabbis could not well call Paul otherwise than Acher, "the other," or the one who passes under

an assumed name. Therefore, after having disposed of the chronological difficulties and the differences of names and places, we might close this chapter and take for granted the identity of Paul and Acher. But we will not stop at accidents when essentials are at our command; especially as by the exposition of the essential or intrinsic arguments in favor of the identity of Paul and Acher, we will be enabled not only to establish our proposition beyond doubt or cavil, but also to expound, concerning those personages, passages which, to our recollection, have not been sufficiently elucidated, although they are of paramount importance to a proper understanding of Paul and Acher.

The following passage of the Talmud\* deserves our particular attention: "Four went into the Paradise. One saw and died. One saw and was insane. One saw and cut the scions. One went in and came out in peace. Ben Azai saw and was insane. Regarding him, Scriptures say, 'If thou findest honey, eat enough.' Ben Zoma saw and died. Regarding him, Scriptures say, 'Precious in the eyes of the Lord are those who die for his pious ones.' Acher saw and cut the scions. Akiba went in and came out in peace."

That the word *Pardess* used in this passage signifies "Paradise" admits of no doubt, notwithstanding all the suggestions

\* *Yerushalmi Hagigah* ii, 1, *Babli*, *ibid.* 15 *Midrash Babbah Ruth* and *Talket Corchoth* as above.

of some commentaries to the contrary. These four worthies are supposed to have visited the Paradise. Another rabbinical celebrity, Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, is also represented as having been in Paradise by the special kindness of the "Angel of Death," whom he deceived in a most cunning manner. It appears that it was not considered an impossibility to enter alive into Paradise, although few could do it, and the fewest came out in peace.

This Paradise was no terrestrial abode; it was somewhere in heaven, or at least beyond the earth, where the angels and the souls of departed ones live; where one could behold the mysteries of existence, and ascertain the nature of a higher world and a higher sphere. We have quoted above from the Talmud that Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch expounded the heavenly scenes, the throne of the Almighty, before Rabbi Johanan ben Saccal, his teacher, and fire came down from heaven and enveloped all the trees which broke forth in psalmody, and an angel exclaimed from the midst of the fire: Truly this is the description of the heavenly scenes. Again we have seen the same Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, in imitation of the above, expounded the mysteries on high so that the angels assembled to listen "like human beings who assemble to see the games played before bride and bridegroom."

This is neither parable, nor allegory; it is the record of an existing superstition,

prevalent in the days of the apostles, that one could look into the interior of heaven, behold the throne of God and the surrounding angels, and even transport himself alive into Paradise, although this was connected with great dangers to soul and body. By what secret art, by what mysterious knowledge or practice was this achieved? Was human nature then different from what it is now? The historical records answer with an emphatic No! Man then and now had the same capacities, the same virtues and the same vices, precisely the same attributes, and committed the same follies; they were the same creatures. Was it all imagination, the illusions of a glowing oriental fantasy? The orient is the same country as it was thousands of years ago, no change in the climate, degrees of heat, luxuriant vegetation, all yet the same; imagination also has not changed. Look upon the modern Syrian and you have an ignorant and perverted man whose fantasy is unable to produce anything like the lofty angelology of the Talmud. The time is past when ignorant or lazy men leaped across these phenomena of human mind, of spiritual and mental exertions, with the convenient pole of "rabbinical trash." It is a piece of the history of the mind, a part of the whole; and we know the whole by its parts. It is the key to the origin of Christianity, because it is cotemporary history. Stephen sees the heavens open, sees the throne of God and Jesus



standing before Him. Paul has visions, all the apostles have visions of angels and of Jesus. Acher, Ben Azai, Ben Zoma, Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi transport themselves alive into Paradise; others see the angels, hear them speak, describe their nature and their services around the throne of God. The one looks like the other, both tales are of the same nature, originate in the same place and time, serve to the same purpose; they must be identical, and one must explain the other. Let us attempt an explanation.

The passage from the Talmud quoted above was expounded by Haya ben Sherira, Gaon or head of the academy of Pumbedita from 989 to 1038 A. C.; hence by one to whom the rabbinical traditions were no dead matter. He had undoubtedly the best opportunities to know and to understand them. Besides all this he was so extensive and successful an author and so enlightened a mind that his opinions naturally have great weight, and his veracity in the statement of facts was never questioned. He having been asked to expound the above passage gave the following epistolary answer:

“Know that it never was our method to search after a thing and expound it contrary to the intentions of him who said it, as others sometimes do. So also in this case we will expound for you the idea of this teacher, his veritable intention, what he in truth meant to say, without deciding

now whether there is a law involved therein.

"There are undoubtedly many passages (in the Talmud) which contain no law, and we expound them agreeably to the intentions of him who made them. It is maintained that one who has attained certain moral excellencies may be permitted to look upon the divine throne and see the palaces of the angels on high by the following means: He fasts many days, then he sits with his head bent down between his knees, and murmurs to the earth numerous hymns and prayers of adoration known to them, and thus he looks into the inside of rooms, as if he would see into seven adjoining palaces, and it would appear to him as if he was going from one palace into the other and see what is in each. There are two books which ancient teachers wrote on this subject, the one is called *Hechaloth Rabbathi*, "the large palaces," and the other is called *Hechaloth Zutrathi*, "the small palaces." This is publicly and well known, and upon such visions is based the statement of the four who entered the Paradise. They expressed the celestial palaces by the word Paradise, to which they rose, and supposed to have looked on the divine throne, and went through the palaces on high."

Here we may stop, as we know enough for our purpose. We know that those rabbinical luminaries practiced precisely the same self-deception as thousands in the

Orient have done before and after them. The fasting itself, if one takes no food for several days, brings on a delirious state of the brain. The peculiar position of the body, the head bent down between the knees, changes the natural circulation of the blood, and excites the wildest fantasies in the brain. To this comes the murmuring of certain hymns and prayers of adoration, the prejudices with which one comes to the unnatural exercise, the solitude and most likely also the dim twilight in which he remains for several successive hours, to ignite the imagination. This is enough, more than enough, to excite one to madness as it did Ben Azai in our case, or kill a person of weaker nerves, as it did Ben Zoma in our story. These, however, are the extreme cases; the two others, Rabbi Akiba and Acher, experienced other and contrary effects. Akiba came out in peace of this terrible self-deception, and became a sober and strong reasoner in the Law, although he believed in it in former days, and said, "If the evil spirits come to him who fasts, and spends the night on a burial ground, so much easier will the clean spirits (the angels) come to him who fasts on their account," which undoubtedly refers to this practice of self-deception. But Acher, the Talmud maintains, who practiced the same self-deception and also believed to have been transported into Paradise and to have looked into the palaces on high—cut the scious, erred, went

astray, became an apostate and heretic, as the rabbinical expression in the *Babli*, "he went forth to the increase of evil" or to "evil increase," *Turbuth racuth* must be understood. This self-deception, this is the moral of the passage, is the cause of untimely death, of madness, of apostacy and heresy, while in one case out of four it is harmless.

But be this as it may. This tale affords us the key to the mystical knowledge of those days. It informs us how the people in those days came to see the angels and to converse with them, to describe their numbers, divisions, functions, names and positions about the throne of the Most High. After one had repeated that practice several times he must have become visionary and deluded enough for a life time, to see and to hear the angels anywhere almost. To all this must be added that tens of thousands, besides the authors of the New Testament and the primitive Christians believed in those visions. The author of the above letter, the Gaon Haya ben Sherira, had not the moral courage to reject the superstition connected with the practice which he so minutely describes. He closes his epistle with the statement that in former days these matters and the other miracles recorded in the Talmud were firmly believed. But when Rabbi Samuel was Gaon, a man who read much foreign literature and encouraged the reading thereof, those miracles were generally dis-

credited. Finally he leaves his friend to choose between belief and disbelief in this matter; but admonishes him to prefer "the halls of the law." It is wonderful, indeed, that the head of the academy, the highest authority among the Hebrews of those days, in the tenth century or in the beginning of the eleventh, had the moral courage, to express doubt in those visions and that practice. No pope and no caliph of those days would have ventured a similar opinion on their religious literature respectively.

Toward the end of the third century, Rabbi Berechiah, a celebrated doctor among the Babylonian rabbis, expressed his implicit belief in this mystic art and the angelology derived from it. In another version of this story\* Rabbi Akiba is reported to have made the sensible statement that he did not escape unhurt from the Paradise, or rather from that deranging practice, because he was any way greater or better than others who did the same, but because he had arrived at the conviction that the sages were right in saying, "Thy deeds will bring thee near to or thy deeds will bring thee far from (God,) and concerning this, Scriptures state, 'The king brings me into his rooms.'" This is plain enough. After he had comprehended the wickedness and the folly of that self-deceptive practice, he taught others not to do it, and to choose the path of righteousness

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\**Rabbah* to Canticles i, 4.

as the only means to approach the Eternal to enter the "rooms of the king." Rabbi Jannai, in the passage before us, confirms this view by another proof. But then comes in conclusion, Rabbi Berachiah, with a plain protest against the two former, and confirms that there are secret means to look into the mysteries of heaven, and in proof thereof he states, "How else could Elihu, the son of Berachael, the Buzite, (in the book of Job,) come and describe to Israel the halls of the Behemoth and the Leviathan? or how could Ezekiel come and uncover to them the halls of the divine throne? This is the true meaning of the words, 'The king brings me into his rooms.'" The Talmud and the *Midrash* contain plenty of evidence that the demonology, the angelology and the mystic arts connected with either, are no allegories, no parables, they are intended to represent solid facts. Although tens of thousands never believed in them, nevertheless there were tens of thousands in Israel, and there are plenty to-day, exactly as among the Christian writers and disciples, then and now who believed the entire compendium of mysteries. It is perfectly useless for either Talmudist or Christian interpreter of the New Testament, to view the mystical portions of the New Testament or the Talmud in any other light but that of alleged facts, and to believe or reject them as such.

The belief in secret arts and mysterious

sciences is natural to the ignorant and to the lazy. Those whose knowledge is limited to a small compass, if perchance they become aware of the insufficiency thereof, in nine cases out of ten, will resort to superstitions in preference to a legitimate research after cause and effect. The same precisely is the case with those who are too lazy to think and reflect. In dim mystery, they guess replies on queries to which only patient research and diligent study afford a proper and satisfactory solution. Therefore, as a usual thing, superstition in individuals or communities stands in a fair ratio to their ignorance, or to their laziness in mental exertions caused by superabundance, or by relaxing influences natural or artificial. But there are still other causes which favor the spread of superstition. Helplessness and despair are pregnant with it. Over-exertions of the mind in one direction cause a relapse into the opposite extreme. The Hebrews of those days suffered both. The Roman power was pressing down upon them with crushing weight. National despair and individual helplessness were the natural consequences. They saw their country and with her their laws, their institutions and their religion, as they understood it, sink lower and lower and rapidly approach the brink of destruction. Many of the learned doctors had exhausted their minds in one direction, the natural tendency of the Hebrew people, in rationality and law. It is quite natural

that they relapsed into the opposite extreme, mystery and superstition, to which neighboring nations supplied them with abundant material. This is the key to a proper understanding of the morbid pulsations and the awkward phenomena in the age which gave birth to Christianity, the Messianic hopes and speculations, the angelology and the demonology, the secret arts and the mysterious sciences, together with all the other superstitions of marvelous cures, private or public miracles, as recorded either in the Talmud or the New Testament; the one is as valuable or as worthless as the other. This explains fully the sense of the passage, "Four went into Paradise," &c., and all similar passages in the Talmud and the New Testament.

We have seen that ACHER was one of the four who went "into the Paradise." He was the only one of them who, in consequence thereof, deserted the religion of Israel and turned an apostate. This, as we have explained above, would signify, in the sense of a Christian writer, that Acher, in consequence of his having been "in the Paradise," was converted to Christianity. If Acher and Paul were identical, then we are informed of the original cause of his conversion; the death of Stephen or Judah Hanahthum was the external impulse which roused the latent conviction to practical activity. If Paul himself did say that he was in "Paradise," then the identity of Paul and Acher is established, not only by



an additional accident and the testimony of Paul himself, but also by the essential and intrinsic argument of the sameness of mental tendency. Let us hear then what Paul says of himself (II Corinthians xii, 1): "It is not expedient for me to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I can not tell; or whether out of the body, I can not tell, God knoweth) was caught up to the third heaven. And I know that this man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I can not tell, God knoweth): Nay, I KNOW THAT THIS MAN WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE, AND HEARD UNSPEAKABLE WORDS WHICH IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO UTTER.† Of such a one will I glory, yet of myself will I not glory."

Nobody has yet supposed that Paul in this instance did not speak of himself. Thus he corroborates the rabbinical tale of the four who were in Paradise, confirms his identity with the Acher of the Talmud and teaches us what it means "to be in Christ;" it is the same art as "to be in Paradise," as the Gaon Haya ben Sherira describes it.

We could conveniently stop here, and all critics would be obliged to admit the identity of Paul and Acher. But we have even more conclusive evidence and will produce it, especially as it elucidates the secret history of Paul.

† Luke also xxiii, 43, knows of the rabbinical Paradise in place of heaven.

Whether the Logos of John's Gospel is taken from Philo, as *Daehne* and other writers on the Alexandrian eclectics advance, or whether the Philonic works were enlarged by Christian hands, and the *Logos* of Philo is of Christian origin, as *Kirschbaum* and others maintain, is of little consequence to our purpose. It suffices us to know that Paul never mentions the *Logos*, although he frequently speaks of "the Son of God," as he called Jesus. The application of the Logos to the Son of God belongs to John, the last of the Gospel writers, so much is certain; and this marks the third phase in the development of Christian theology.

Paul's "Son of God" is entirely different from John's "Logos," as much so as it is from Peter's "Messiah." These three words, Messiah, Son of God, Logos, mark three successive epochs in the history of Christianity, preceding the adoption of the Trinitarian doctrine, of which neither Peter, nor Paul, nor even John had any knowledge. As Paul, agreeable to his vocation as apostle to the Gentiles, *heathenised* Peter's Messiah into a "Son of God" without erasing from him all traits of the Jewish Messiah; so John *philosophized* Paul's "Son of God" into the Logos of the Alexandrian eclectics, without erasing all traits of Paul's "Son of God," but destroying every feature of the Jewish Messiah. If Mr. Renan had investigated these marked epochs of theological development,

he would not have fallen into the mistake of preferring John's Gospel as a historical source to the Synoptics, and even to Matthew and Mark.

John's "Logos" differs radically from Paul's "Son of God." To use a Christian phrase, John's "Logos" is a person in God himself, equal to the Father and co-eternal with Him. "In the beginning was the word," hence the beginning begins with the *Logos*; "And the word was with God," hence it was not apart or outside of him; "And God was the word," hence the *Logos* is equal to and co-eternal with the Father.\* This is now the doctrine of orthodox Trinitarians, although few of them know that it was promulgated by John only. The *Logos* of the Alexandrian eclectics is "THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND THE MATERIAL WORLD, THE SON OF GOD, THE FIRST-BORN, AND THE WISDOM OF GOD FRUCTIFIED STILL ALWAYS VIRGIN."† It is by far more likely that John copied from Philo than to suppose that Philo's works were interpolated after John. Be this as it may, both are identical in the abstract, and have their origin in one source, Grecian mythology. The Greeks had two Zeus; one was the eternal and incomprehensible, and the other was the son of Chronos, a finite child, holding a position between the finite and infinite, between time and eternity, who is

\* Compare John i, 1 to 5, and 14; iii, 18; v, 20; vi, 38, 36, xvii, 5, 24.

† See Philo De Cherubim,

destined to overcome time and the finite, his own father Chronos. The Theogony (v, 465) has it thus: "Chronos knows that he will be conquered by his own son Zeus, *agreeable to the will of the great Zeus.*"‡ The first and eternal Zeus became in Christian theology the Father, and the second Zeus became the Logos of the Alexandrian eclectics and of John, one who is Zeus or the highest deity himself, but in relation to the world, he is the son of time which he conquers. The abstract speculation is always the same; it is God accommodated to the imperfect conceptions of man in ages of gross pantheism. The absolute and infinite was beyond the horizon of their reason. Nature, with all her phenomena, appeared to them the direct and immediate effect of the Deity. Unable to think of finite effects from an infinite cause, they felt the necessity of a connecting link between the finite and infinite, something which is both finite and infinite. Therefore, without observing the contradiction in the terms themselves, the Greeks had their second Zeus, the son of Chronos, the Alexandrian eclectics and John had their "Logos," both of which, in pure English, signify the laws of nature.

The purely Jewish doctrine in this point was expressed by Paul in his address to the Athenians (Acts xvii, 22 to 29.)

‡ A remarkable passage for Christian dogmatics is in Hesiod's poem, "The Shield of Hercules," verse 39.

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars-hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth; dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”

The above passage shows that Paul was no Trinitarian, and that his “Son of God” was not God himself or a person of the Deity. He draws a distinct line of demarcation between God and Jesus. He serves God with his spirit, “in the Gospel of his Son” (Romans i, 9,) and does not worship Jesus. He speaks of a day, “when God shall judge the secrets of men” (ibid. ii, 16,) hence God will judge, and not Jesus who will only be instrumental thereto. The Jesus of Paul did not raise himself from the dead, which he must have done if

he was God himself; it is God whom Paul calls "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead." (Ibid. viii, 11.) The "Son" is subject to the "Father," to whom he will deliver the kingdom, after certain objects are attained. "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, shall the Son also himself be subjected unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all?" (I Corinthians xv, 28.) The resurrected Jesus "liveth unto God," (Romans vi, 10) and not in God. He is no God himself, but the "ONE MAN" (Ibid. v, 15 to 17) who was to bring the gifts of grace.

Two passages in I Corinthians (iii, 23, and xi, 3) explain beyond the shadow of a doubt that Paul's "Son of God" is no god, no part of god, no person in god and no logos. Paul said to the Corinthians, "And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." This signifies that as the Corinthians belong to Christ, so he belongs to God; again as the Corinthians are not Christ himself, so he is not God himself. He states this still clearer in saying: "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; *and the head of Christ is God.*" Inasmuch as nobody can be his own head, Jesus, in the estimation of Paul, can not be God himself. In the same spirit he speaks in saying (Corinthians xv, 27): "For He (God) hath put all things under his (Jesus) feet. But when he saith all things are put under him,

it is manifest that He (God) is excepted, which did put all things under him."

The expression "baptized unto Christ" is fully explained in I Corinthians (x, 2,) by the expression "baptized unto Moses." He thinks the ancient Jews were baptized unto Moses by the pillar of cloud and by the sea. So the Christians were baptized unto Jesus by water and the Holy Ghost. It signifies in both instances to be devoted and dedicated to the doctrines and precepts of a man. It is evident from I Corinthians (xv, 30) that Paul represented Jesus as the first man who resurrected from death, "the first fruits of them that slept," whom all should follow on the day of resurrection. His resurrection is no exception from the general law of God; it only came a little sooner, in order to warn others of the approach of the day of judgment. Common sense will never succeed by honest research in the reconciliation of John's "*Logos*" with Paul's "*Son of God*," as little indeed as either can be identified with Peter's "*Messiah*" or "*Christ*." Nothing is too difficult to faith and fancy, or impossible to theological whits; but common sense and honest research will never succeed in the reconciliation of these conflicting and contradictory representations of the nature of Jesus.

Paul's "*Son of God*" is precisely identical with the "*Metathron*" of the rabbinical mystics. The only question in this regard can be, whether Paul adopted the *Metathron*

of the rabbinical mystics or *vice versa*. All the angels mentioned in the Talmud and the Midrash bear either Hebrew or Chaldaic names, except two, viz: *Metathron* and *Synadelphon*. The former is undoubtedly derived from the Greek *meta* and *thronos*, signifying one who is "with" or "by" or "near" the throne, the angel next to the throne of God; and the latter is derived from the Greek *syn* and *adelphos*, like sympathy, symmetry and the like, and signifies a "with-brother," "co-brother" or "fellow-brother," an angel who stands in intimate or brotherly relations to the Deity. *Synadelphon* (סנרלפון) is also called *Akathriel*, "the crown of the Lord," because he is supposed to stand behind the throne of God, and make crowns or wreaths of the prayers and hymns of man for the head of God.

*Metathron* (מטטרון) is called the king of the angels, the prince of the countenance (שר הפנים) and many other distinguishing names. He stands before God next to His throne and is the archangel who, like *Synadelphon*, receives the prayers to bring them before God. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, in the Talmud (*Berachoth* 51 a) calls this angel, viz: the "prince of the countenance," *SURIEL*, who divulged to him some important secrets. But according to a doctrine of the rabbis, one angel performs no two duties, nor do two angels perform one and



the same function.\* Therefore these four names, Metathron, Synadelphon, Akathriel and Suriel appear to point to one angel.†

Who was that angel? where and when did he come into existence? Here the opinions are divided. Some of the rabbis think the angels were called into existence when God created the world. Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos (in *Pirke R. E.*) and Rabbi Johannan ben Saccai state, the angels were created the second day of creation; but Rabbi Hanina thinks, they were created on the fifth day (*Bereshith Rabba iii.*) and in the *Yalkut Hadash* it is stated the angels were created prior to this world:

Some of the rabbis, however, did not believe that any angels were created, because Moses makes no mention of them. So it is stated in the Talmud (*Hagigah 14 a*): "Ministering angels are created every day from the stream of Dinur. They sing the praise of God and perish." A later rabbi, Jonathan, said, "From every word, issuing from the mouth of God, an angel is created." (*Ibid.*) The former statement gave rise to the following anecdote: "Hadrian asked

\* אין מלאך אחר עושה שתי שליחות ולא שני מלאכים  
עושים שליחות אחת.

† This will explain a peculiar passage in the *Talkut Reubeni, Bereshith*, where it is stated מטטרון היה הומר מנעליים "Metathron was a shoemaker." Set Sandalphon in the place of the former, and in Hebrew without vowels you may read Sandalphon as well as Synadelphon, and then take to it that the Greek *sandal* means something akin to shoes, and the wit is explained. They interchanged those names.

Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, Do you maintain that no host of angels twice sing the praise of the Almighty, but that God creates daily new hosts of angels who sing his praise and perish? The rabbi affirmed and then the emperor asked, where do they go to? To the place from which they were taken. And where are they taken from? From the stream of Dinur. What is the nature of the Dinur? It is a stream like Jordan which never ceases to flow, not by day and not by night. Where comes the Dinur from? From the sweat of the holy animals which bear the throne of the Most High." (Bereshith Rabba 78.) Here then is a rabbi who evidently did not at all believe in the existence of angels, and he is the same man who exclaimed in the academy of Jamnia, "We pay no attention to the *Bath kol*," i. e. to the Holy Ghost. This anecdote, however, shows that all those rabbis who maintained the daily creation of angels, in fact believed not in their existence, and symbolized the constant progression of creation by the daily creation of angels. In after times Rabbi Helbo and others attempted to harmonize these conflicting views of the ancient rabbis, and maintained that daily new angels are created except those mentioned in the Bible besides Metathron and Synadelphon (Yalkut Reubeni 125); but it is with this as with all other harmonizing attempts, they violate truth on two sides.

Those rabbis believed, nevertheless, in

the existence of angels and demons, but they thought all of them were human souls who had lived already on earth, or are to be born hereafter. They maintain, "All souls that were on earth from the days of Adam, and all those who will appear on it hereafter, were created when the world was made, and they are now in Paradise." (*Tanchuma Pekudi.*) The highest of heavens is called *Araboth*. "There are the souls of the righteous, and also those spirits and souls that will hereafter go on earth." (*Hagigah* 12 b.) "There is a treasury in heaven which is called *Guph*, there are all the souls of those to be born hereafter, and all of them were made and placed there in the beginning." (*Rashi to Hagigah* 5 a.) "The Lord held a council with the souls of the righteous, and then he created the world." (*Bereshith Babba* 8.) "The soul dislikes to go forth from behind that curtain, that place of purity, where the souls are kept;" therefore it is said, "Against thy will thou art formed, against thy will thou art born, against thy will thou livest," &c. (*Aboth* iv, 29.) "Before the child is born, it is taught the whole of the Law; when it enters this world, an angel comes and strikes it upon its mouth, and it forgets all." (*Nidda* 30 b.) "All the souls stood at Mount Sinai when God gave the Law." "The son of David (the Messiah) will not come before all the souls shall have lived in bodies." (*Jebamoth* 62 and elsewhere.) These pre-existing souls are

the angels, according to the opinion of those rabbis, and the returning souls attain different degrees among the heavenly host, according to their piety, or they become demons according to their wickedness on earth.

Therefore also Metathron and Synadelphon must be men, human souls that have lived on earth or will live here hereafter. And so they are; for Metathron is the Enoch of the Bible (Genesis v, 24) and Synadelphon is the prophet Elijah. This is not only stated in the Talmud as an old tradition (*Jebamoth 16 b* and elsewhere) and repeated often in the cabalistic works; but it was so commonly known that the pseudo Jonathan accepted it fully in his Aramaic version of Genesis\* (v, 24.)

Well, then, here we have the highest archangel, who, like Paul's "Son of God," was first a man on earth. Both are called *Saar Haolam*, "the prince of the world," who is the lord of all things, according to Paul. Both are called *Saar Happanim*, "the prince of the countenance," who stands in the immediate presence of the Most High. Both are called mediators who bring the prayers of man before God. Also the Greek *Meta thronos* corresponds precisely to Paul's "Son of God," who occupies the throne of power with God. Paul's Son of God is simply the adoption of the

\* ופלה חוק בקושטא וני' וקרא שמיא מיצטרון ספרא

rabbinical *Metathron* to Peter's crucified Messiah. He set Jesus in place of Enoch and united it with the redemption theory of Peter by the death of the Messiah. The later cabalists, indeed, called *Metathron*, Isaiah, Joshua or plainly Jesus, as it is in some Hebrew prayer-books for the New Year, in the supplication spoken during the pauses of the cornet, (*Shofar*) blown on this day, as ordained in the Pentateuch. Paul divulged the mysteries of the Pharisees on many occasions, as we shall see hereafter. This *Metathron* of the rabbis or Paul's "Son of God" is not God accommodated to human conceptions and finite creations, as the second Zeus, the son of Chronos, or the Logos; it is plainly a human being which rose to the high station of the highest archangel to a position which Paul designates by sonship and the rabbis by the co-occupation of the divine throne. The ideas are precisely identical.

This gives us another evidence of the identity of Paul and Acher. Paul was undoubtedly the man who changed Peter's crucified Messiah, of which the Heathens understood nothing, into the "Son of God," terms which were quite familiar to the Gentiles from the numerous sons of the gods in mythology. The rabbis on their part state this very same thing to have been the cause of Acher's error and apostacy. They tell of him, when he was in Paradise or in heaven, what did he see that led him into error? "He saw *Metathron* who was

given permission to sit and write down the merits of Israel," the rabbis reply, and this led him into the error to believe in two sovereign powers.† Precisely so Paul speaks of his "Son of God," who governs all things, God excepted.‡

The Gaon Haya, in the epistle quoted above, and all those who adopted his exposition, fell here into an error. He says, "Acher thought that there are two sovereign powers in heaven, like the Magii who believe in Ormuzd and Ahriman, a source of goodness and a source of evil, a habitation of light and a habitation of darkness." From this statement most all of his readers inferred that Acher believed in a good principle and a bad one, as the two sovereign powers in heaven, God and the devil. But this is incorrect; for the Talmud ascribes his error to Metathron whom he saw sitting in heaven, and Metathron is an archangel of goodness only, wherever he is mentioned in the Talmud or the Cabalah. Metathron is the direct opposite of Samael,

‡ חזק מטטרון דאחיהבא ליה רשות וכו' (Hagigah 15 a)

† It appears to us that the *Yerushalmi* (Ibid.) omitting this passage of the *Babli*, replaces it by still more explicit words. It asks first, "Who was Acher?" and gives then one answer, and then another which signifies the same as the one given in the *Babli*. It states שחיבל במעשה ידיו של אהרו האיש "He corrupted the work of Jesus." Jesus is frequently called in the Talmud, *Otho Haish*, "That man;" and Paul changed entirely the work of Jesus and his apostles. Thus we have direct proof in the Talmud of the identity of Paul and Acher.

the evil one, the destroyer, and the *Yalkut* (*hadash* 73) states very aptly, "The rod of Moses was cut from 'the tree of knowledge,' which is composed of Metathron and Samael." Acher and Paul taught two good and just sovereign powers in heaven and we will attempt to explain the idea in another chapter. It is true what the ancient rabbis said against this: אין שני מלכים עם שני סמכות "Two kings can not rule with one crown," there can not co-exist two sovereign powers in the same sphere; but this is not the only contradiction in Paul's system. He spoke to no philosophers; and his hearers were used to mysteries.

Characteristic of the deep regret which the ancient rabbis felt at Paul's apostasy is the following addition in the *Babli* to the story of the four who were in the Paradise. Paul's error, they say, arose from the fact that Metathron sat in heaven, as is intimated in the name, while usually he stands before God. This points distinctly to the two different expressions of the Christian writers, "Jesus standing before God" and "Jesus sitting at the right hand of God." The rabbis furthermore say, Metathron was permitted to sit, because just then "he wrote down the merits of Israel;" but when he is not thus employed he stands before God like the other angels. This again is directed against Paul who maintained the Law and the Covenant were abrogated. The distinction was taken from Israel and given to the believing Gentiles.

Next they add that Metathron, because he led Paul into error in not rising before God when the latter saw him, was severely punished in heaven; he was flogged with fiery rods. This is intended to express the regret of the Almighty himself at the error and apostacy of Paul. It is expressed in their own allegorical manner, but it is done impressively and clearly.

Another addition of the *Babli* to that story must be considered here. Rabbi Akiba, the same who went into the Paradise and out of it in peace, said to the other three who went in: "If you will reach a place of pure marble stones, say not water, water; because it is said in Scriptures (Psalm 101,) He who saith lies is not acceptable in my sight." This passage, being in the *Babli* only, appears at once as a later addition to the original tradition. It may be intended to caution against premature conclusions in metaphysics, not to take marble for water on account of the color, or in other words, not to be misled by accidents to hasty conclusions on the nature of the substance. It may be a caution against gnosticism with its *hyla*, as Dr. Graetz maintains; especially as we know that Paul, like Rabbi Akiba, was at one time strongly inclined to that system of which he has many a fragment in his epistles. But it changes by no means the character of the original tradition. All the talmudical passages, which Dr. Graetz



quotes\* as pointing to the dualism of the gnostics, point with much more certainty to the Paul-Christians, and to their dualism of Father and Son. This is especially supported by the term *Mee* used in connection with those dualists. Dr. Graetz himself acknowledged (*ibid.* p. 16) that this term refers to a Jewish-Christian sect in the beginning of the second century, to which he quotes the testimony of Hieronim<sup>†</sup> who, from his Roman and Trinitarian point of view, called the Minaeans, the original Paul-Christians "neither Jews nor Christians," as was done in the Church to the original Peter-Christians, the Ebionites and the Nazarenes who were excommunicated.

The story of Paul's or Acher's circumcision narrated in the *Yerushalmi*† is evidently fabulous, and is narrated to a certain purpose. It says there: "Abuah, the father of Elisha, was one of the great men of Jerusalem. On the day of his son's circumcision he invited all the great men of Jerusalem, and entertained them in one house, and the Rabbis Eliezer and Joshua in another. During the meal the guests sang, clapped hands and danced. Then

\*Gnosticisimus und Judenthum von Dr. Hirsch Graetz, Krotoschin 1846.

† Usque hodie per totas orientis Synagogas inter Judaeas haeresis est, quae dicitur *Minaeorum* et e Pharisaeis usque hunc demantus, quos vulgo Nazaraeos nuncupant—sed nec Judaei, sunt nec Christiani (Epistol. 80.)

‡ *Yerushalmi*, Hagigah ii, 1; *Midrash Rabbah* to Ruth v. *Yalkut Shimon* 974.

Rabbi Eliezer said to Rabbi Joshua, while they are engaged in their way let us engage in ours. So they began to expound the Law, from the Law they came to the Prophets, and from the Prophets to the Hierarchy, so that fire came down from heaven and enveloped them. Then Abuah said to them: Rabbis, did you come to burn down my house over me? By no means, they replied; we have been discussing the Law, the Prophets and the Hierarchy, and the words thereof have become as glad as they were on the day of their giving from Sinai, and they appeared in flames as they did appear from Sinai. Then Abuah said unto them, Rabbis, as the power of the Law is so great, if this, my son, be spared unto me, he shall be a student of the Law. But because his intentions were not purely for the merits of the Law itself (being motives of honor) the Law did him (the son) no good."

Acher himself is represented to have told this story; still it can be fabulous only. The tendency or the moral of this fable is easily discovered. Those rabbis could not imagine how a man of Paul's learning and sagacity could desert the cause of Israel, as they thought knowledge was the surest factor to lead one to virtue and righteousness. Therefore Paul's fault must have laid in the impious intentions of his father who devoted him to the study of the Law on account of the honor it confers. The *Babli*, however, asks this very question and

answers it without story and without ascribing Paul's apostacy to his father's impure motives. טינה חמה בלבו "They had a bile in their heart," it says of those who went astray, and then it states of Paul that he was, in his youth, too much addicted to Grecian literature. The *Yerushalmi* itself does not take the circumcision story for granted; for a little below it tells other stories with the same tendency precisely to account for Paul's apostacy, after it has narrated that which we stated in the previous chapter, viz: the tongue of Rabbi Judah Hannahthum or the death of Stephen as the New Testament has it. "Others maintain," states the *Yerushalmi*, "his mother (Paul's) when she was pregnant with him, passed the temples of foreign worship and she smelled from that kind (or from that apostate which may point to Jesus or Peter) and that flavor permeated his body like the poison of a serpent."

Further on, on the same page, the *Yerushalmi* ascribes the apostacy of Acher to another cause again. "He once sat and studied in the plain of Genesaret|| when he saw a man climbing a palm-tree, and

גינותו "Valley of Nosar" and not "Garden of a prince," as the Concordance has it. This valley of Nosar was in that plain on the sea, and gave the name to the whole. Not without cause the *Yerushalmi* points to this place, as the locality where Acher's doubts on the Law began. This spot is quoted in the Gospels as the place where Jesus wrought miracles. Matthew xiv, 34; Mark vi, 53 and elsewhere, and the sea of Genesaret was his favorite spot.

taking off a bird's nest, with the old and the young ones, and he escaped unhurt. Next day he saw another man climbing a palm-tree and taking off a bird's nest, but he chased off the old one and took the young. When he came down a serpent bit him, and he died. Then Acher said to himself, the Law states, 'Thou shalt surely chase away the old one and the young ones thou mayest take, that it be well unto thee and thy days be prolonged.' Where is the promised reward of this man?" This looks exactly like Paul who declared the Law abrogated, in support of which the *Yerushalmi* tells other stories of Acher, which we will review hereafter.‡ Nevertheless it is evident that all these stories are intended in reply to the one query, which the *Babli* briefly and naturally answers, viz: the cause of Acher's apostacy or Paul's conversion, notwithstanding his eminent learning, was the natural inclination and the early occupation with Grecian literature. Anecdotes are made up for a certain tendency as the fable is made to present certain moral lessons. Therefore

‡ It also reminds one forcibly of the symptoms of *Meenim*, who were Christians, although the name was afterward applied to all sorts of schismatics, viz: על קן צפור יגיע רחמיך. Those who say, "Thy mercies extend to the bird's nest." It is in the first place the plural of "Thy mercies," and in the second place the abrogation of the law quoted above, replaced by the general principle of love, an innovation which belongs to Paul and to him only.

the above anecdotes have no historical value, except in as far as they point out the identity of Paul and Acher, which must have been acknowledged by the authors of those stories. The death of Stephen or Rabbi Judah Hannahthum being among these stories has only this preference that it is narrated in two different sources, the Talmud and the Acts.

Before we conclude this chapter, we must make some remarks on dates, names and places. Paul was born about 30 A. C., therefore he never states that he saw Jesus or ever heard of him in his younger days. This can not be otherwise, for the story of Stephen's death follows the second persecution, which took place about 50 A. C., and then Paul was a young man, say about twenty years. He certainly was no older. Therefore Paul was a younger cotemporary of Rabbi Akiba, as Acher is always represented to have been. Rabbi Akiba died at an age of 120 years, the Talmud maintains, by the hands of Hadrian's executioners, in the year 134, as both *Jost* and *Grätz* have it; hence he was born 14 A. C., and was sixteen years older than Paul. The origin of Christianity took place in his lifetime.

Therefore Rabbi Mair can as well have been a pupil of Paul (Acher) as he was of Rabbi Akiba, which was never denied. Rabbi Mair died about 150 A. C. in Asia Minor, somewhere near the sea coast. (See *Yerushalmi kilaim*, the end.) If he lived to

the age of eighty he was born when Paul was forty and Rabbi Akiba fifty-six years old, and may have listened to the wisdom of both before Paul was sixty and Rabbi Akiba seventy-six. Acher, according to Dr. Graetz, lived during the persecutions under Hadrian. So may Paul have as well as Rabbi Akiba, although this statement of Dr. G. is not certain. Chronological difficulties against the identity of Paul and Acher do not exist.

But there is the other difficulty. The rabbis of the Talmud state Acher's proper name was Elisha ben Abuab, and he was born in Jerusalem, and the author of "The Acts" states Paul's name was Saul and he was from Tarsus. The question is, which of the two is right, if any of them actually knew his name and birth-place? Paul calls himself Paul and not Saul (in his epistles,) and it is much more likely that the "Saul" was made from the "Paul" than *vice versa*. He may have been born in Jerusalem and moved to Tarsus with his parents, or both may be mistakes. In the face, however, of all the accidental and substantial points of similarity which we have cited, the identity of Paul and Acher is established, and the minor points will find solution hereafter, as we proceed with the history of Paul. This chapter will enable us to point out many new facts which were unknown hitherto, and are very essential to a proper understanding of the origin of Christianity and the personal history of Paul.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CREED OF PAUL.

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, notwithstanding all the statements of Luke to the contrary; for he himself repeatedly and emphatically declares this fact, and the epistles are documents much more reliable than the Gospels or "The Acts." He writes to the Romans: "For I speak to you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office,"\* (Rom. xi, 13.) Then again he says that the grace of God was given him; "that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Ibid. xv, 16.) He continues (verse 18) that it was his office "to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed;" and he says he has done so (verse 19), "so that from Jerusalem, and round about into Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ." He writes from the prison at Cesaria to the Ephesians (iii, 8,) "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Twice he tells this very same thing to Timothy (I Tim. ii, 7, and II Tim. ii, 11,) "I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie

\* The last part of this verse should be rendered "I consider this office an honor to myself."

not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."†

Paul states his case in clear words in his epistle to the Galatians (I and II.) There he says that God revealed his son in him, "that I might preach him among the heathen." Next, in the beginning of the second chapter, he states in unmistakable terms that Peter and his co-laborers were the apostles of the Jews and sent to the Jews only; while he (Paul) was the only apostle sent to the Gentiles. He states there: "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. And when James, Cephas (Peter,) and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and to Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision."

The author of "The Acts" with his conciliatory tendencies invented stories in contradiction of Paul's statements, when, in fact, toward the end of Paul's career, the difficulties were not settled. The original apostles refused to acknowledge Paul as one of them; so did many of the earlier Christian writers; and the superstition

† There is in that chapter, verse 15, a peculiar expression of Paul which proves his familiarity with the rabbinical mysticism. He mentions there "the whole family in heaven," referring to the heavenly host precisely in the words of the rabbinical mystics  
ממליא של מעלה.



against the number thirteen is still alive in all Christendom on account of Paul being the thirteenth apostle. Therefore Paul found it necessary to tell so often and emphatically that he was an apostle. When they acknowledged him, it was only as an apostle to the Gentiles, because they could do nothing with them and Paul did, and also because they could tolerate the Gospel without the Law, as Paul preached it, only among Gentiles and not among Jews. Therefore they finally, though reluctantly, acknowledged Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.†

How did he become an apostle from the beginning? The author of "The Acts" tells a story that Jesus appeared to Paul in a most extraordinary vision on his way to Damascus, upon which Mr. Renan builds splendid air castles, and then again Jesus appeared to him in the temple of Jerusalem, and appointed him the apostle to the Gentiles, a fact which the other apostles were so slow to acknowledge. Paul himself, in his epistles, says nothing of the martyrdom of Stephen, nor does he state anywhere that he had that vision on his way to Damascus, and he flatly denies the vision in the temple. He says he was not in Jerusalem until three years after his conversion, (Galatians i, 18,) after his return

† The epistle to the Hebrews might be considered as a contradiction to this fact; but it is decided among modern critics that the said epistle was not written by Paul himself. It was written by a Paul-Christian long after the fall of Jerusalem.

from Arabia; and the author of "The Acts" leads him to Jerusalem shortly after his conversion, to have there the vision (Acts ix, 26) and communication with the apostles. Paul, in imitation of the prophet Jeremiah, (Jerem. i, 5,) says: "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." (Gal. i, 15.) Thus we know that Paul had no vision; all the visions he had were IN HIM, inwardly and not outwardly. The precise nature of this revelation or vision IN HIM has been explained above, it was when he was in PARADISE and saw METATHRON. So Paul was an apostle, "not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God, the Father," (Ibid. i, 1,) that is to say, nobody conferred upon him the apostolic dignity, which he assumed from his own choice and free will, because he considered himself called and destined to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He asked no permission and received no instruction of any human being; he acted, spoke and taught all original, notwithstanding all the protestations of the apostles and the disciples of Jesus. The author of "The Acts" tells the story all the other way; but so Paul tells it, and we naturally prefer his own statements about himself to what others said of him *post festum*.

Paul's pretensions run fully as high, if not higher, as those of the gnostic rabbis

who said, "The wise man is preferable to the prophet." He considers his words commandments of the Lord, which no prophet dare contradict. He says to the Corinthians: "What! came the word of God out of you? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." (I Cor. xiv, 37.) He claims more glory than Moses; and says, if Moses was a glorious man, "How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" (II Cor. ii, 8.) Therefore he needed no epistles of commendation to them, and letters of commendation from them. He was all in all himself, in direct communication with the Deity and his direct messenger. "I suppose," he exclaims, "I was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles." (II Cor. xi, 5.) "Are they Hebrews?" he says of the apostles, "so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more." (Ibid.) "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." (Ibid. xii, 11.) It must be admitted that he had a high opinion of himself and his mission, and a very small one of his opponents, the original apostles. He cautions the Phillippians, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision!" (iii, 2,) which refers to his colleagues from Jerusalem who preached the Law and circumcision. He exposes the

hypocrisy of Peter at Antioch (Gal. ii, 12) with the recklessness of a fierce opponent. He says of them, (II Corinthians xi, 13):

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

It appears he did not care for the Pharisean maxim: “Let the honor of thy companion be as dear to thee as thy own.”

The difficulties of Paul with the apostles were chiefly about the Law and circumcision, which he abolished and the others retained, as we shall see below. But there was also some worldly cause at the bottom. He claimed the congregations which he converted as his bishoprick, he was their apostle, their father and their head, and they were his children, his portion, his pride, his own, whom he admonished to pay good wages to his co-laborers, of which he did not forget to take his due portion. Like a good Pharisean lawyer he argues thus for the wages of those who preach the Gospel without forgetting to administer a blow upon Peter, the brothers of Jesus, and the other apostles who, living on the fat of the congregations, still stretched out their hands after his bishoprick. He says this (I Corinthians ix, 3 to 15):

“Mine answer to them that do examine me is this: Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or, I only and Barnabas, have not

we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For if it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he that plougheth should plough in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void."

It appears, indeed, that he received no wages of the Corinthians, as said in the above passage, for he tells them the same thing over in other words (II. Corinthians 7, 8), "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely? I ROBBED OTHER CHURCHES, TAKING WAGES OF THEM, TO DO YOU

SERVICE." Then he promises them that he would not call on them for any aid or comfort, as he had never done before. It appears that the Corinthians did not like the idea of paying, and he could not argue it into their heads, although the other churches paid him his wages, to which he frequently admonishes them. In this matter he respected the Pharisean maxim, "Where there is no flour (no support) there can be no instruction," and the bishops all over Christendom reverently bow at Paul's arguments for their wages.

What kind of a gospel did Paul preach to the Gentiles? In his epistles—and that is all we know about him—he evinces or assumes an entire ignorance of the gospel story. He never mentions with one word the marvelous conception, birth and youth of Jesus; not a word of all his miracles, speeches, parables, not a word at all about him or his mother, except the resurrection, and that either he or the others did not know right. He quotes always and exclusively from the Old Testament; not with one word or inference does he mention what Jesus taught, said or ordained. He argues all his questions upon biblical grounds, attempts to explain and to prove from the old Bible, and has not a word to say about or of the wisdom of him in whose name he was an apostle to the Gentiles. This is the strangest feature in the literature of Paul. That he brought and taught the Old Testament to the Gentiles who did not have it or

hear it before he came, is evident by his numerous quotations from it in his epistles. He presumes two things—that all his readers know the Old Testament, and all of them have accepted it as the word of God; or else he could not quote from it as freely as he did, nor could he argue from it without any other proof or evidence. But which is the gospel he brought and taught them?

Before his conversion, Paul persecuted the admirers of Jesus with as fierce a fanaticism, as he afterward opposed the Law and the circumcision. Therefore he could not have much of a knowledge of the gospel story. After he was converted, he states explicitly, he had no communication with any of the apostles or any of the Christians of Palestine. "I conferred not with flesh and blood," says he; "neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me." \* \* \* "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother." \* \* \* "And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea." (Galat, i, 16.) He read no account of the gospel story and repeatedly asserts that his gospel was original, not of man.

This proves, by no means, that the original apostles had no manuscript gospel; it only proves that Paul did not know it, and did not wish to know it. "Gospel" is the equivalent for the Greek *Evangelion*, which

is a translation of  $\text{נִשְׂמְעִים}$  in Isaiah lli, 7: "How beautiful are upon the mountains the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that publisheth peace, that announceth tidings of happiness, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." The apostles took this to be a prophecy, pointing directly and exclusively to them; because their main office was the publication of "good tidings." These "good tidings" consisted of the message, the Messiah has come, he died for the sins of man, he will return to establish the kingdom of heaven and the throne of David; remission of sins and salvation are promised to all who believe it and repent their sins. This was the gospel. The gospel story or the biography of Jesus and his speeches, parables, miracles, &c., were immaterial to the gospel itself. It was not at all necessary to know or to believe them in order to believe or preach the gospel. This was an alleged fact independent of the former, except the allegation of the Messiah's moral purity. This was so brief a story that Paul and everybody else who had once heard of it must have known it. It appears that this was all Paul did know of the gospel.

Next came the attempts to have Jesus teach, by word, by symbolical performances or real deeds, the doctrines which those advanced who taught in his name. The variety of doctrines and maxims taught in his name gave rise to a variety of speeches,



parables and anecdotes, which were added to the original life of Jesus. The polemics between Christians and Jews, as also among the apostles themselves, gave rise to another class of anecdotes in imitation of Scriptural passages, ("that it be fulfilled,") to vindicate the Messianic character of Jesus; and this class of anecdotes again, invented by various preachers of the new faith at different times and places, were added to the original life of Jesus. Therefore as the different teachers of primitive Christianity taught different doctrines and maxims, and had different polemics, they necessarily had also different gospels, or rather different gospel stories, so that "each had a gospel of his own," as Paul says.

The original apostles and their immediate disciples who maintained to teach and to preach only what they learned of their master, from his words or his deeds, must necessarily have had a gospel story, which each represented and enlarged to suit the doctrines he taught, and the emergencies which sprung up on his field of labor. Paul, however, did not stand in need of any gospel story, for he had neither seen nor heard Jesus himself, nor did he pretend to teach what Jesus said; he claims to announce what God revealed to him in visions or in Paradise, concerning Jesus and the entire province of religion. The author of "The Acts" narrates that Jesus appeared to Paul, but he states not that he said any

thing to the new apostle, except what concerned Jesus himself as the resurrected one. This, however, is only one point in the doctrines of Paul; the others—this also the author of "The Acts" must admit—are Paul's, and he says they were revealed to him by God, he had not heard them either of Jesus or of his apostles. Therefore Paul had no need of any gospel story, any miracles, for he considered himself a living miracle, or any knowledge of Jesus, except that he rose from death as the first fruit of resurrection. Therefore he never mentions any gospel stories or gospel miracles, nor does he pretend to have wrought any miracles, although he has frequent occasion to glorify himself, or to believe that others did. He was a remarkable conglomeration of rationalism and mysticism, like numerous prominent rabbis of the Talmud and cotemporaries of Paul.

Nevertheless, Paul preaching the gospel, must have been under the necessity to give some account of the life of Jesus to his hearers and his disciples. Although it is impossible to ascertain now his version of the story; thus much, however, is certain, that it was in conformity with his peculiar doctrines, hence in opposition to the other gospels. When after the death of the apostles, the various gospel anecdotes were collected, the original gospel story was enriched and embellished with them according to the stand-point of each compiler.

So Matthew and Mark embellished the original story from a Jewish-Christian stand-point without refusing all the Paul portions, if they were not added by later transcribers. Luke, in his gospel and "The Acts," is the conciliator. While he adopts several Paul portions and expressions in his gospel, he invents new speeches, meetings, stories and facts for "The Acts," in order to reconcile Peter and Paul, or rather their admirers in aftertimes. John's gospel, the last of that literature, represents most of Paul's conceptions, with a slight admixture of other anecdotes, so that it may properly be called the gospel after Paul's disciples with Alexandrian eclectic philosophical additions.

The sources before us enable us not to ascertain the full gospel story which Paul communicated to his disciples; nevertheless his epistles enable one to identify the anecdotes, speeches and parables of Jesus and his disciples, to which the doctrines of Paul gave rise.

Paul's personal views on the gospel stories are expressed in his words to Timothy: "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause controversies rather than godly edifying which is in faith." (II Timothy i, 3, 4.) He could only refer to fabulous gospel stories and genealogies, such as are now

prefixed to Matthew's and Luke's gospels.

Therefore in order to follow and control the statements of "The Acts," we must first be acquainted with the creed of Paul, as he represents it in his authentic epistles.

The first and principal doctrine of every religious creed is God. Paul's doctrine of God is neither new nor any wise different from that of the Jews. He taught the Gentiles the one, omnipotent, all-wise and most holy God, as the rest of the Hebrews did. In a moment of admiration, Paul wrote the following passage composed of Scriptural verses: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who approached him with a gift, and he did not recompense unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to him be glory for ever." (Romans xi, 33.) We maintain again, without fear of contradiction, that Paul was a Unitarian Jew, as strictly so as any Pharisean rabbi or high priest. He added nothing to the Scriptural doctrines concerning the GREAT I AM. All Trinitarian speculations are of post-evangelical origin, when pagans heathenized Christianity.

Paul knew of no hell, no purgatory, no hell-fire and no brimstone. He says: "For he that is dead is freed (justified or delivered) from sin." All the ingenuity of the

expounders can not change the plain sense of this passage, which is a flat denial of punishment after death, except on the day of universal resurrection and judgment. This was likewise the doctrine of some rabbinical cotemporaries of Paul. One passage of the Talmud, which occurs frequently and is of a very old date, must be mentioned here. We quote from the *Yerushalmi* (*Yoma* viii, 8): "Rabbi Mathia ben Harash asked Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah in the academy: Hast thou heard the four modes of the expiation of sins which Rabbi Ishmael expounded?" He answered, there were but three, besides repentance. There are the following four passages in Scriptures, 'Return ye froward children' — 'For this day I will be atoned unto you' — 'And I will visit with the rod their transgression' — 'I will not forgive them this iniquity until they die.' These must be explained thus: If one fails to do what is commanded, and he repents his negligence of duty, God forgives him instantly, as Scriptures state, 'Return ye froward children.' If one transgresses a divine prohibition, and instantly he repent his misdeed; the repentance partly expiates the sin, and the Day of Atonement completes the expiation, as Scriptures state, 'For on this day I will be atoned unto you.' If one transgresses biblical laws, to which

\* Rabbi Ishmael was a cotemporary of Paul. According to another version of the story, Rabbi Ishmael made this statement before the "Elders of Rome." Was it not made in opposition to Paul's theory of salvation?

the Bible threatens the punishment of being 'cut off,' or of death, and he did it with forethought; repentance and the Day of Atonement only in part expiate the sin, and affliction completes the expiation, as Scriptures state, 'And I will visit with the rod their transgression.' But if by one the name of God be profaned, repentance, Day of Atonement and affliction only partly expiate the sin, death only completes the expiation, as Scriptures state, 'I will not forgive them this iniquity until they die.' Thus we know that death expiates."

הא למינן שהקמת סמכות

This is also the doctrine of Paul, death expiates all sins: "He that is dead is freed from sin." Death is the last and most severe punishment for the wicked; the reward of the righteous comes in the resurrection, and the life after that event.

In the doctrine of resurrection, Paul is again the orthodox Pharisee. While the Pharisees maintained "All Israelites have part in the future world," although they except some evil-doers, and also think "the pious heathens have part in the future world;" Paul reversed it and maintained, all Christians will resurrect from death, and those living on that eventful day will be changed into immortal beings, without denying this particular blessing to the Jew or to the pious heathen. "We shall not all sleep," said Paul, *i. e.* we shall not all die before the day of resurrection, "but we shall all be changed." (I Corin. xv, 51.)

To this must be taken the following: "Glory, honor and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they having not the law are a law unto themselves: Which show the demands of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, while their thoughts accuse or excuse one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Romans ii, 10, &c.)

This informs us in regard to heathens that Paul held the same doctrine as the other Pharisees. The Gentiles who by nature do the thing contained in the law, are identical with חסידים עומדים בלילה "The pious ones among the Gentiles," who have "part in the future world," according to the Pharisees, or they shall be present "On the day when God shall judge the secrets of man," as Paul has it. Both expressions signify the same. The wicked Gentiles are lost according to the doctrine of the Pharisees, and "shall also perish without law," as Paul has it, which again

is identical. The Jew, however, who sinned in the law, does not perish altogether as the wicked Gentile does; he "shall be judged by the law"—"On the day when God shall judge the secrets of men." Hence we know Paul's doctrine was, that all Christians, all Jews and all pious Heathens will resurrect. What that judgment of the wicked Jews will be after the resurrection he did not tell.

No wonder that during the lifetime of Paul, Hymeneus and Philetus, besides other Christians, (II Timothy ii, 17,) and the Gnostics, especially the Marcionites, after the apostle's death, denied his doctrine of resurrection; when among the Jews themselves, the Essenes believed in the immortality of the soul only, as indeed very many Pharisees did, and the belief of the Sadducees in this matter is unknown to this day.

The resurrected or changed ones should be given an incorruptible and spiritual body, Paul teaches, notwithstanding the contradiction of terms. "Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," \* \* \* "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption," &c., then "Death is swallowed up in victory." (I Corin. xv, 50, &c.) All this sounds literally like the words of the orthodox Pharisees. We translate from the codex of Maimonides (*Yad, Hil. Te-*



*shubah* viii, 2.) "The future world is one, where there is neither body nor corporeal attributes; the souls only of the righteous without any body like the ministering angels are there. Because there are no corporeal bodies, there is neither eating, nor drinking, nor any other earthly wants. No corporeal attribute can be ascribed to them, such as sitting, standing, sleeping, dying, sorrow, amusement or the like. So said the ancient sages, 'In the future world there is neither eating, nor drinking, nor propagation; but the righteous sit, with their crowns upon their heads, and enjoy the glory of the majesty on high.' This shows that there is no body, because there is no eating and no drinking. Their other expressions are figurative."

Against this view of pure immortality of the soul, the glossaries protest, and *Rabad* says against Maimonides: "The words of this man sound to me like denying altogether the resurrection of the body, only the soul is immortal. But this is not the opinion of our teachers who maintain, the righteous will rise in their garments, and they prove it from the grain of wheat." \* \* \* "All this proves that the righteous will rise in their bodies alive. It is likely that God will change their bodies to sound and strong ones, like those of the angels or that of Elijah."

The commentaries make all possible attempts to reconcile these two doctrines without admitting the fact that both of

them are as old as the tradition, both were orthodox, each had its numerous defenders. Paul adopts the medium line between the two, as many Pharisees did before him. The question, to what purpose is all this? if the soul is happy without the body, to what purpose is the new body? is not answered by Paul or the Pharisees.

Strange it is that Paul advances the same argument from analogy on the resurrection as the Pharisees did. "The grain of wheat," which *Rabad* mentions, is the Talmudical argument: "If the grain of wheat corrupts in the earth and then resurrects in its beautiful garb, why should not man resurrect after his corruption." They add to this, "That which was not, became, why should not that which was, become again." Paul says the same: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat or some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed his own body." (I Cor. xv, 36.)

Paul is an orthodox Pharisee not merely in his doctrines of God, resurrection and judgment, but also in his construction of the principle of love in regard to law. Love is with him not what it was with Jesus and his disciples, the main principle of Deity and humanity, the essence of God-head and manhood, in opposition to the Gnosis of the Gnostics; with him faith

takes this high rank, salvation comes by faith, and not by love only. Love replaces the law and is itself the law of all laws. Whatever love dictates that is law. "The righteousness of God cometh by faith," said Paul. (Romans iii, 2.) "Owe no man any thing but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Ibid. xiii, 8.) "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Ibid. xiii, 10.) He also says, "And now abideth faith, hope, love (charity) these three; but the greatest of these is love (charity)," (I Corin. xiii, 13); but he contradicts it in the first verse of the next chapter, where he recommends prophesying in preference to love or charity, and in his own words to the Galatians, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Galat. v, 6) which he fully explains in the words, "Your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope." (I. Thess. i, 3.) His fabric of salvation is not based upon the law, which only fulfills or replaces the law. It is based upon faith, faith in the doctrines which he preached and hope for the fulfillment of the promises which he made. If that faith becomes not active by love, if one having faith and hope in the fullest measure, exclude himself from society and spend his days in devotion or contemplation; he must be saved, according to the doctrines of Paul, without any labor of

love. Love is to him nothing more and nothing less than the highest principle of the law in man's conduct to his fellow man. He claims not even love to God, as Moses did and Jesus repeated; he claims for God faith which toward the fellow man works by love.

In regard to the law, the Pharisees held precisely the same doctrine. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," was with them the main law, and the rest were regarded as the commentary of the former. We have already given some examples in the sixth chapter, and add only one more passage from the Talmud. "Rabbi Simeon ben Eliezer said, greater is he who does what he does out of love, than he who does it out of fear, for the former is promised reward to thousands (of generations) and the latter only to the thousandth generation."\*

This doctrine is elucidated at length in the *Yerushalmi* (*Sotah* v, 7,) where seven classes of Pharisees are mentioned, the last and most pious among them are the "Pharisees of love," who are compared to Abraham, "who transformed the evil inclinations to generous ones." Then the Talmud tells of Rabbi Akiba that he being led to the place of execution by the servants of Turnus Rufus, was charged by him to rise, but he made no reply and Rufus asked, whether he was deaf or crushed with pain, to which Rabbi Akiba replied:

\*Exod. xx, 6 and Deuter. v. 10; and Deuter. vii, 9. (*Sotah* 31 a.)

"All my life long I have read the passage, 'And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' I have loved God with all my heart, I have loved him with all my might, but whether I love him with all my soul, with my life, I did not know. When thou spokest to me, I read that passage and thought of that query, therefore I answered not." The *Midrash Mishli* x, and the *Babli* add to that a report of the joy which Rabbi Akiba expressed in suffering martyrdom, that he had convinced himself that he loved God also with all his soul. It makes not the slightest difference whether the story is literally true or fictitious, the doctrine illustrated therein is not changed at all.

The Talmud expresses the Pharisean principle of love much better than Paul does; for with Paul it is the undefined and undefinable love *per se*, while with the Talmud it is man's love to God, which is to become his sole motive of action. Besides the talmudical presentation of the subject is more practicable and natural than Paul's, because it presumes that not all good men act always from the pure motive of love, there are motives of the fear of the Lord, the sense of duty, the feeling of honor and others, which are by no means low or contemptible. According to Paul all acts springing from such and similar motives are worthless, which they are not; but according to the Talmud, they have their in-

trinsic merits, only that they are inferior to those springing from the motive of love. Paul, in this instance, is not explicit enough, although he intended to give expression to the same Pharisean doctrine which the Talmud elucidates.

In the fundamental principles of religion, therefore, concerning God, immortality and the moral law, Paul was an orthodox Pharisee. This accounts for the change of tone among Christian writers after Paul had become the acknowledged apostle to the Gentiles. Paul himself announces all these Pharisean doctrines as "the commandments of the Lord." This is no mean compliment to the Pharisees whom the gospel writers abuse beyond measure.

The fundamental doctrines of God, immortality, and love as the principal of law in the intercourse of individuals (States must be governed by justice,) are sufficient to rational men, to rear upon it the superstructure of religion and morals, sufficient to a prosperous and happy life here and hereafter. But this is not the case among thoughtless multitudes now, and it was not the case then. These doctrines are too abstract, too sublime for minds engulfed in labor, lust, materialism and sensuality, especially under theocratic or autocratic oppression and surrounded by inveterate corruption. They must have concrete and tangible symbols to make an impression on the uncultivated capacity of conception, and can be led only over many crooked by-

ways toward the sun of truth which the eager philosopher sees at once and directly through his telescope, and he sees it so much clearer and larger than those with the naked eye can. It is true, it is the duty of the philanthropic reformer to remove the rubbish, to enlighten the conception and level a straight path; the misfortune, however, is that a few reformers stood very high above their respective ages in their merits and demerits, and fewer still live long enough to do a complete work. They must take of the world what they can get, and give her what they have and she is prepared to receive. This leads us to the christology of Paul.

Paul preached the approaching catastrophe of the earth, the resurrection of the dead, the sudden transformation of the living, the end of the carnal nature of man, the beginning of a purely spiritual kingdom of God, to take place in his very days or shortly after it; and he preached this doctrine as the corner-stone of his christology. Holding, as he did, that all men are to be judged on one last judgment day, he was obliged to admit that such a day must come, and he only added that this last day is coming now. Furthermore, holding that on that last day of judgment the righteous and the justified ones will receive their reward of life everlasting in spiritual bodies, while all sinners, sin and death will disappear for ever; he was obliged to preach also the entire change of

this physical nature, which is now adapted to carnal bodies, and must be refitted to correspond to spiritual bodies. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus in a spiritualized body is the beginning of the universal resurrection and spiritualization of the body, to those found worthy. It came in advance to caution man of the approach of that great and tremendous day which is on hand, and to secure the special grace of God to those who believe and hope.

If one had asked Paul how he knew all that, he would have replied that God himself told him and revealed to him the son and all the mysteries connected with his nature and his fate, against which all logical arguments are in vain. Had another asked him, if man is to be spiritualized altogether, to what purpose is this earth, the habitation of man, why should it not be swept out of existence? and if the earth also must be spiritualized to correspond with the new-born man, what will become of the animals and vegetables on earth? will they also be spiritualized to correspond with earth and man in that new state or will they be swept away, being useless to spiritualized men, and not made to grow or live in another atmosphere or on another earth? Paul would have answered, this is a mystery which I can not explain to you, who must be guided by faith and hope. He began with a mystery addressed to faith.

It is impossible to ascertain whether Jesus and his disciples preached any such



doctrine. It appears not. Cotemporary literature has nothing of the kind. There is one anecdote in the Talmud which suggests that the approaching destruction of the temple was presaged. The fall of Jerusalem and the political death of Judea must have appeared evident to thinking men at that time, and this may have given rise to the belief in the approaching end of the world; but there is nothing certain about it. The talmudical anecdote is narrated thus: "Forty years before the destruction of the temple" among other miraculous and ominous signs mentioned there, "the doors of the temple were closed in the evening and found open (by themselves) in the morning. Rabbi Johanan ben Saccal exclaimed: O! Temple why dost thou terrify us! We know already that finally thou wilt be destroyed, for Scriptures say, 'Open, Lebanon, thy doors, let the fire consume thy cedars.'" (*Yerushalmi, Yoma* vi. 3.). The year forty before the fall of Jerusalem is mentioned frequently in the Talmud as fraught with misfortune to Israel, especially the degradation of the Sanhedrin and taking from them the jurisdiction in capital crimes. There may have been such a feeling or belief among some enthusiasts, and Paul made use of it; but it can not be proved. It appears that Paul is the author of this doctrine.

It has been mentioned before that one party of Pharisees believed the Messiah and the resurrection are to come simultaneously. Paul preaching the Messiah who had come, according to that doctrine,

Let us now quote some passages from Paul's epistles in testimony of our statements. He opens his first epistle to the Corinthians with all possible blessings to them for this avowed purpose: "So that ye come behind in no gift, (in) waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be blameless on the day* (of the revelation) of our Lord Jesus Christ." Well, then, the object of all the blessings and gifts is, to wait patiently for the second advent of the Messiah, and to be prepared for that event, which is to transpire in the lifetimes of those whom he addresses. He admonishes Titus (ii. 13) to preach to his flock strict laws of righteousness, and especially of "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Savior." All the work of conversion has that one object, to prepare them "for the day of Jesus Christ," he says to the Philippians (i, 6.) Again he states (I Cor. xv, 22,) "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end," &c. In all these cases he speaks of no future generation or distant day; for he states expressly (ibid. x, 11,) "Now all these things happened unto them (the Israelites) for examples; and they are written for our ad-

was obliged to announce also the approach of the latter end.

monition, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME." The beginning of the end, he thought, had come already. Luther renders this passage, "upon whom the last age hath come," which signifies the same. He said precisely the same thing to the Ephesians (i, 5 to 11) and to the Philippians (iii, 20) and when he was old and the second advent had not come, he told his faithful Timothy that he had kept the faith, sure of receiving the crown of righteousness, he and all "who rejoice in his coming again," as the conclusion of that verse (II Tim. iv, 8) reads in Greek, instead of "all them also that love his appearing." "Therefore judge nothing before the time, UNTIL THE LORD COME, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness," &c. (I Cor. iv, 5). "Every man's work shall be made manifest; FOR THE DAY SHALL DECLARE IT, because it shall be revealed by fire," &c. (Ibid. iii, 13.) Who can doubt that Paul taught the end is nigh and may approach every moment, after reading these words, "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; and we shall be changed." (I Cor. xv, 51) *i. e.* we who will yet be alive that day, we shall be changed and be made incorruptible. We will add only one more passage from many of the same nature. Having told the

Thessalonians (I Thess. iv, 16, 17) how the resurrection of the dead will come to pass, he continues: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the resurrected ones) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Then he continues in the next chapter that the precise time is not known, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night: For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Then he admonishes them to be always prepared for the approaching end.

These and a hundred similar passages in the epistles can only be misunderstood by the most prejudiced reader, and misinterpreted by the most perverse exegese. The unprejudiced reader can see in them only the end of the carnal world and the last day of judgment being nigh and expected every day and every moment.

Knowing once the key-note which Paul sounded in his mission harrangues, one can easily account for his sudden and brilliant successes. The end is nigh. This theme fraught with all the terrors which imagination can invent and the most eloquent lips can possibly utter — the unfathomable theme which comprises all the fury of the elements indefinitely increased by the excited fancy and the ignited passions, all

which man fears or dreads, all the terrors of death and all the horrors of destruction — this dread theme has always been employed with success, as we have seen even a few years ago in our enlightened century and our free country. With this awful and fertile theme, after three years of preparation in Arabia, Paul appeared before Jews and Gentiles in Syria, Asia Minor and along the Mediterranean coast, where the Jews were most numerous and the inroads of Judaism into heathenism were most considerable, where thousands of heathens loathed their shaking paganism, and turned with disgust from the idols, their temples, altars, priests and degenerated mockery. There appeared the man, well posted in the religious lore of his days, and announced himself as the special messenger of the Most High, to repeat the terrible message of Jonah, "In three days Nineveh will be destroyed," only that he enlarges the theme to its widest compass, viz. the end of all flesh is nigh. He comes prepared with all the terror-striking eloquence which the Bible offers in the history of the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the awful threats of Moses and the prophets to the wicked, and with all furious expressions of an ignited fantasy, which the Pharisees produced in the description of all the horrors to precede the coming of the Messiah תבלי כשיר, with all the poetical glow surrounding the catastrophe of all catastrophies מדינה של גידנות.

So he comes and thunders into the superstitious masses, full of skepticism against the old and with dim perceptions of a new religion to be embraced—so he comes and thunders into those masses, the end of all flesh is nigh, God has sent me to announce it and to prepare you either for death, death to all in one moment, or for eternal happiness. How thousands of those persons must have trembled and been prostrated at the feet of the horrid harbinger, although other tens of thousands may have sneered at his superstition! And having once crushed them with the first part of his message, he certainly held a terrible reckoning with them, their imaginary gods, their impotent idols, their demoralized and hypocritical priests, their own degeneration, their sins, crimes, shame and self-pollution. Specimens thereof are still extant (Romans i, 18, and Ephes. iv, 17,) in which he charges the heathens with all the following crimes :

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use

of the woman, turned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents. Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death; not only do these, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Being thus crushed with fear and terror, being prostrated with awe and horror, and hearing this overpowering flood of denunciations justly striking their guilty heads, coming with cataract force from the high rock, from the man who alleges to speak in the name of the Almighty, and falling upon sick and sore hearts; the effect must have been indescribable, however the skeptics smiled; those who believed must have been completely reduced to the condition of credulous and awe-stricken children,

Now comes in Paul's Gospel. Here is your choice. There is death and destruction; here is life and happiness everlasting. God has sent his Son, he said to the Gentiles, a name so familiar to pagan ears; not the son of Chronos, Jupiter, Apollo or

Bacchus, in whom you believe no longer, the Son of the one, eternal and almighty God. God has sent the Messiah, he said to Jews, the Christ is the Son of God, who is yours according to the flesh, and God's according to the spirit. This was well considered, to hit the conception of both, and secure their attention and appreciation. The Messiah-son was sent by the Father before the end of all flesh comes, to reveal the near approach of that end, and the grace of the Father to those who will embrace it, to live forever. Your sins, it is true, are numerous and grievous, but the son died for them, and his blood wipes them out. With Adam, the first father of the race, came the flesh, sin and death, with Jesus, the father of a spiritual humanity, comes purity and life eternal. All you need do, is to have faith in him, to consider your flesh crucified and dead with him, and you will resurrect with him who will save you from death and the terrors of destruction, change your corruptible bodies into immortal ones at the twinkling of an eye; and if any of you die before that event, he will raise you from the grave and cover you with immortal bodies. Not only you, but also the deceased relatives of those who embrace the gospel shall be saved by your faith. (I Corin. v, 29.) As long as you live, before the end of all flesh comes, the son will plead your cause before the Father; or rather the son who has been given all power to conduct this catastrophe,



will justify all who have faith in him. On the day of destruction he will watch over you, and the Father will judge you through him who will certainly justify you. At the end of this cycle of existence, sin and death, together with the body of flesh, which is the source of sin, shall be destroyed forever, the regenerated men shall live forever in spiritual bodies and eternal innocence, behold the Almighty himself, be in an uninterrupted company with the son who, after having completed the catastrophe and regenerated the race, will return the power and the kingdom to him who gave it, and God will be again all in all.

The reader can easily imagine how eagerly those longed after Paul's gospel, who trembled at the approach of the end of all flesh, and felt keenly their wickedness, their crimes, their follies and their just apprehensions. That they did not worship Paul for these glad tidings is wonderful indeed, and it was only because the worship of man was entirely averse to his doctrines. That not tens of thousands knelt spell-bound before his altar, can only be accounted for by the dominion of the most loathsome demoralization, of skepticism and epicurism in its worst form, among the heathens; by the national rationality of the Jews who would not so easily believe in the approach of the end of all flesh; and by the deficiencies of Paul as an orator, as he repeatedly states in his epistles. His Greek was probably too

much Syriac, and Latin, it appears; he did not speak. But his plan to preach the gospel was in every respect powerful enough to convert millions.

But after his hearers had declared their consent to embrace his gospel, then the question rose, what must we do now; till the day of redemption comes? How must we live to be regenerated in Christ? To this, Paul's answer was very simple. You are baptized upon the son, *i. e.* you are dedicated to his service by this symbol; then I lay my hand upon you, and you will be changed, you will be other men and women, you will receive the Holy Ghost, *i. e.* your own conscience and consciousness will be new, born again, your energies will be heightened by this new impulse, you will receive the various gifts of grace, you will eloquently prophesy, and as long as you preserve faith, hope and love, faith in the son, hope in his speedy return, and love to mankind, you will be saint. Your flesh with all its lusts, passions and propensities is dead with the body of Jesus and with your former sins; let the spirit reign, and you are regenerated in Christ. All this was so easy and so natural, although it was mystified in aftertimes that it must have delighted those Gentiles who saw themselves all at once redeemed of the terror they felt, of the crushing weight of their sins, doubts and apprehensions, and changed into persons of pure conscience,

charged with a higher mission; and inspired with the loftiest hopes.

They were indeed regenerated after Paul had laid his hands upon them. Not only their conscience, consciousness, turn of mind, ideals of the soul, desires, hopes and wishes were changed; but Paul gave them the Bible as the book of books, the word of life and inspiration, the oracles of God. In all his arguments he pointed to Moses and Isaiah, to the Patriarchs and the Prophets, to the Psalms and the Proverbs, as the living word of the eternal God. This must have regenerated those who had been cured of their wickedness by the threats of the approaching end and God's wrath against the sinner. The Holy Ghost of Paul has nothing common with the superstitions of the *Bath Kol*, the Holy Ghost of Peter.

It is clearly the regenerated conscience and consciousness of man, which lighten his energies and elevate his feelings. His son or Messiah is not the indefinite crucified savior of Peter, the sacrificed king, the weak and vanquished son of David; his Son of God is a mere instrument in the hand of Providence, whom the Father has sent on earth, to do a certain work, and who is now commissioned as *Metathron*, (the co-regent,) or as *Synadelphon*, (the co-brother,) both signifying one who partakes in the government—to carry out the work which is to be done now, and then be again a soul or angel in heaven; as God will

be again all in all. There is not the slightest similarity in Paul's Jesus with that of Peter, John, or much less with that of Trinitarian Christians. Behind the Jesus of Paul, there is God in all His majesty and glory, and Jesus is only appointed for a short time to a specific purpose, as mystic Pharisees considered angels to be appointed in the same manner, for a specific time and purpose. Through the popular word, "Son of God," he pointed the heathen mind to the eternal Father, whom they could not comprehend without some concrete and tangible aid. The son was only a messenger just now girded with power; but the Father is all in all. Precisely in the same manner he must have explained the Messianic speculations of the Jews, as we shall see hereafter. But he cared not for the son or the throne of David, and had nothing to do with it; nor did he adopt any thing from the older apostles, except the idea of resurrection and redemption.

We must remark here in advance that it appears to us Paul made use of all these means, the end of all flesh, the Son of God, and the other novelties, not because he believed in them; but because he considered them the most effectual means, to rouse the dormant and benumbed mind of the heathens to the true conceptions of God, immortality, man's responsibility to God; and the right appreciation of moral laws and a moral life. He could only suppose that minds once reclaimed from the dark-

ness of paganism, and once enlightened with the truth of the Bible, will not and can not fall back into heathenism, for they can not divest themselves of what they know—even if, in the course of time, they will find out that the end of all flesh is not coming, hence the appointment of the son for that specific time and purpose can not be true. He could not possibly suppose that theologians will pervert his words to the extent it has been done and make realities of his symbols, essentials of his means, a new heathenism of his opposition to it. Paul appears to us a man inspired with the intense desire to convert the heathen and reform the Jew, to which end he used any means at his command. He says of himself (I Corin. ix, 19):

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

Paul's "Son of God" was a reform upon the *Metathron* of the mystic Pharisees. For the *Metathron* was with them the *Saar shel Olam*, "the prince of the world," for all times; while Paul's "Son of God" occupied this position only for a very short

time to the end of all flesh, which he announced as being on hand. He could not imagine that those who will see the end was not coming, should not drop the means he used to convert the heathens, the end, and the instrument of God to that end; and cling to the pure and unadulterated word of God, as human reason understands it.

Paul did not address his gospel to the understanding, he addressed it to faith. He could not expect from sound judgment to acquiesce in his pretensions and predictions. How could they know that Paul was a messenger of the Most High? They merely believed it through faith. What evidence had they that Jesus resurrected as the first fruit of resurrection, that the latter end, the universal resurrection, the day of judgment and the change of existence were nigh, and that they could be saved by the method of Paul? not the least in the world besides their faith. Paul said so, and he attempted to prove that, which did not come to pass after all, from Bible passages, in his own and peculiar way of rabbinical wit, mystic exegese, and the separation of passages from the context, methods which, unfortunate to truth, have become common among Christian writers. If one had asked him, how is it possible that the Almighty remain the Almighty, if he yield for a time, a year, a day, a moment or an eternity, all power, or a portion thereof to any other being? and if one

would have added, can you think for one moment of God without thinking simultaneously of His being the Almighty? Paul would have simply answered, so it is written in Holy Scriptures, "Every thing hast thou placed beneath his feet," (Psalm viii, 7) and "Sit thou at my right hand, until I place thy enemies as a stool for thy feet," (Psalm cx, 1); therefore God has given all power to the Son to conduct this catastrophe. If one would have continued to oppose him and have said, because the Almighty can not dispose of his power, or rather of himself, and remain the Almighty, therefore those Scriptural passages can not relate to any such thing; Est. 8 refers to man in general, as the term *Amosh*, "the perishable mortal," in verse 5, clearly shows; and Psalm cx was addressed by a poet to King David when in Mahanaim during the Absalom rebellion, and the words quoted refer to David personally—then Paul would have said, this is the exegese of reason, the objection of the understanding; but I am not sent to baptize and preach the gospel "with the wisdom of words." \* \* \* \* \* For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." \* \* \* \* \* It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." \* \* \* \* \* "God hath chosen the

foolish things of the world to confound the wise." (I Corinthians i, 17-27.) This closed every argument for those who believed, and also for those who doubted, for reason can not overcome faith with the credulous. He cut off all debates by the very premise, I am sent to those who have faith, not to those who reason.

Paul had an excellent ground to his claim of superiority for faith, especially with those who were convinced of their gross and stupendous wickedness. Here is your wisdom, all the philosophy of your savans, and all the sagacity of your statesmen and legislators, he could tell them; but "the world by wisdom knew not God," was not protected against degeneration and corruption, oppression and slavery, wickedness and crime. "When they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." \* \* \* "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts," &c. (Romans i, 21.) Your wisdom led you to destruction, your knowledge is a crime, all your philosophy is impotent to protect you against the wrath of the Most High and the fury of the last day, he could say and did say to them, and those who believed, who admitted his premises, could only feel convinced of the superiority of faith to the understanding. In all this, of



course, two premises must be admitted, the end of all flesh to be nigh, and Paul's being the actual messenger of the Most High to preach the gospel of salvation.

The next question, however, was this, Paul attempted to prove all his claims and allegations from the Bible, why did the Jews not know these things, the very people who had the Bible for centuries, who lived and died with and for these precepts? To this Paul answered, the end of all flesh and the fabric of salvation were a mystery made known through the death of Jesus and the revelations to Paul. It was in the plan of God that this mystery should be made known just now, and in time to caution the people of the approaching end, of the wrath of God to sinners, and of his grace to the believers. The prophets predicted it, but they knew it not, they did not understand it. Now it has been made manifest not to the understanding, but to faith, and the faithful will hope.

If they next would ask him, if a mystery it is, how shall we know it is true? he would have answered, you will know this by your faith, whereas the understanding of the heathen is madness, and his knowledge is a crime, in consequence of the curse of God which rests upon them.

But why do the Jews not believe it, they are under no curse, for theirs are the law and the prophets, the covenant and the ancestors? To this Paul replied, all are under the curse of sin, the circumcised and

the uncircumcised ; the law itself is a curse, and was given to become a curse, so that when all were under the curse of sin, God was enabled to reveal fully his grace and his saving power. It is a peculiar idea that God placed a stumbling block in the way of the blind, that he stumble, in order to afford an opportunity to God to lift him up, and thus to convince him of the divine goodness. It is somewhat like that charitable man, who, being very desirous to feed the hungry, captured and imprisoned a number of men, starved them for three days, and set before them a royal meal on the fourth day, which satisfied his charitable disposition. Mankind were under the curse of sin for four thousand years, miserable wretches, to the one and sole purpose, that God could redeem them and show his grace, as if the redemption was more gracious than the perpetual care of Providence to render it unnecessary ; as if it was nobler to redeem a captive than to prevent his capture ; or as if God had found pleasure in trampling the human race into the quackmire of sin, wretchedness, crime and misery, because he was vain enough to thirst after an opportunity to reveal his full grace. But to all these objections Paul gave one answer, it is a mystery, one, indeed, which I myself do not understand : " Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are

before," (Philippians iii. 13,) that is I reason not over things past, I hope in the grace to come; I comprehend not the mysteries, but I believe in the things of the future.

If all men are under the curse of sin, the next question must have been, where is the human will and understanding? To this Paul replies, we have the understanding to know that which is good and to distinguish it from that which is evil, but we have not the will to perform that which is good. Man has no free will. He exemplifies on himself the rabbinical discussion on *יצר הרע* and *יצר הטוב* *Yetser harah* and *Yetser hatob*, "the good inclinations and the evil ones," in the following words (Romans vii, 12, &c.):

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the

law of God, after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

So the law is good and just, but Paul and everybody else is a disobedient and rebellious rogue. It must have been quite pleasing and soothing to the incestuous and degraded heathens, to learn that actually all men are rogues and scoundrels, not by their own choice, indeed, but by the will of God who has not given them the capacity to perform that which is good, so that every one has a devil in his flesh who plays diabolical tricks with a poor man. This was a capital hit of Paul, to win the heathens who felt the burden of their wickedness. You are as good or rather as bad as the rest of them, he preached to them, and rogues always love to have company. If you have sinned a little more, it was only done by God's will, that He have more opportunity to show his mercy and his grace. The rabbis maintained, the Messiah would come when either all men were righteous  $\text{כי כלי}$  or when all were wicked  $\text{כי כלי}$ , which negates not the free will; Paul adopted the latter, and negated the free will.

But if every man has a devil in his flesh and can not escape the dominion of sin, how could God justly reward the righteous

or punish the wicked? This is the very next question, and to this Paul answers, there is no such a thing as righteousness, man has not the competency to perform that which is good. He may by obedience to the law or by natural impulse do that which the law ordains; but that is not righteousness; it is obedience to the law which is itself a curse. "I had not known sin but by the law." \* \* \* "Without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans vii, 7, &c.) So to obey the law, even from the best motives, is not righteousness, because the commandments of God are not good *per se*. Righteousness is in faith only, says Paul, and faith is to believe in the resurrection and office of Jesus and the approach of the end of all flesh with the resurrection and day of judgment. Before Jesus was born and crucified, faith could not exist, as the mystery was not revealed, except to Abraham; hence there was no righteousness. Without righteousness, however, there is no wickedness, no reward and no punishment. Sin and death came with Adam and the flesh, and the human being in that flesh was neither good, nor bad, nor indifferent, nor any thing else; he could no more be rewarded or punished than the tiger or the lion.\* This is the grave of

\*Precisely as the Talmud says of the doctrine of Acher, who denied reward and punishment שְׂכָר וְעוֹשֵׁי

Paul's arguments. God had the cruel whim to create man with a body of flesh, to let him run 4,000 years through sin, misery and sorrow to death, in order to show his grace to a handful of heathens who chanced to believe a certain story from fear of the terrors accompanying the destruction of all flesh. It must not be forgotten, however, that Paul's arguments were produced *post festum*, not to convert the heathens, but to defend himself against the attacks of his colleagues from Jerusalem, long after he had founded the Christian congregations, to whom his epistles were addressed. Originally he preached the end of all flesh a-coming, the sinfulness of the heathens, the gospel and salvation through faith.

He could not command the heathens to study and to practice the law of Moses from the following reasons:

1. The law was most objectionable to the Gentiles under the Roman scepter on account of the tenacity with which the Hebrews of Palestine clung to it, so that it became the main cause of rebellion against Roman usurpation, and of Rome's violent hatred against the people of Judea. The sect of zealots established by Judas of Galilee, when Judea was made a Roman province, after the banishment of Archelaus, considered the maintenance of the national laws paramount to all other duties. This doctrine was common in Judea. It displeased the Romans to such a degree that Josephus tells us of this sect: "All sorts of

misfortune also sprang from these men, and the nation was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree; one violent war came upon us after another, and we lost our friends which used to alleviate our pains." The attentive reader can not fail to see in this statement of Josephus how violently the Romans hated the Jewish law, the cause of that determined resistance to Rome's power. This hatred found its final expression in the edicts of Hadrian, to burn all copies of the law, and to kill every one who observes it, teaches it, or qualifies judges or teachers thereof. The identity of the Jewish religion with the law was the cause of the failure in the conversion of heathens, although the Pharisees traveled over land and sea to gain a proselyte, kings and queens had embraced it, like Munabaz and Helene, and Judaism had made considerable progress among devout Gentiles whom also the author of "The Acts" mentions. The law was in the way of its progress, and final triumph over heathenism in the Roman empire, and the Pharisees would not yield an iota of the law, notwithstanding the better advice of Hillel.

Paul was sagacious enough to comprehend the situation, and prudent enough to recognize the advantages. With the death of Jesus, he proclaimed to the Gentiles, the law and the covenant of Israel are abrogated, so long and no longer, they were intended by the Almighty, to educate

and prepare us for this last age of all flesh. So one obstacle was out of his way.

The Hebrews too who lived outside of Palestine could naturally not feel that attachment to the civil and criminal laws of Israel, as those in Palestine did. Born and grown up under the laws of Rome, they may have preferred them to those of Palestine. The corruption among high priests and priests in Jerusalem, the decline of the authority of the Sanhedrin, the incessant disputes of the rabbis, especially the Hillelites and the Shammaites, about the minutiae of the law, must have considerably weakened the influence and authority of the law among the foreign Jews. They were commanded to travel three times a year to the distant Jerusalem and bring there their sacrifices and free will offerings, both of which was impossible to the poor. They could not celebrate the biblical holy days without advice from Jerusalem, and were tied to the Jewish capital for the exercise of their religion. It could not have been unknown to them that the Pharisees taught, the Hebrews outside of Palestine were not commanded to observe any of the laws not contained or implied in the Decalogue, as Moses expressly states in Deuteronomy (iv, 13, 14); and they were advised to observe those commandments only to the one purpose, "That they appear not new to you when you return" to Palestine.†

† *Rashi* to Deuteronomy xi, 18, quotes from the *Siphri* the following interesting passage: אף לאמר



Consequently there could have been no particular danger to Paul in speaking to Jews outside of Palestine of the abrogation of the law, in a limited sense of course, and it was only in a limited sense that Paul did intend it, as he wrote frequently, although he was obliged to express it before Romans as a broad generality.

The Pharisees themselves went very far in this respect. They decided that women are not commanded to observe such laws which are bound to a certain time from obvious reasons. In regard to Hebrews not residing in Palestine, they made a distinction between commandments concerning the person, and commandments concerning the soil, and declared that the former only are obligatory to Israelites outside of Palestine, which is equal to an abrogation of half of the biblical laws. In regard to residents of Palestine, they admitted that the Sanhedrin had the right to change, amend, suspend or abrogate biblical laws, and numerous cases of this description are mentioned in the Talmud.‡

שחגלו היו מצוינים כמצות הניחו הפילין עשו מנחות כרי  
שלא יהיו לכם חרשים כשהחזרו וכן הוא אומר הצידי לך  
ציונים.

‡ מצוות עשה של זמן גרמא

‡ Vide, Sotah 16, *b* מקרא; הלכה עוקבת מקרא; Maccoth 7 *a* on capital punishment; Sanhedrin 86. and 87 on the rebellious Senator; Maccoth 24 *a* on Gezeroth; Yebamoth 72 *b* on the Ammonites; do. 86 *b* on Levites; Maasar Sheni, last paragraph; Yebamoth 90 *a* and 122 *a* on abolished laws, and Sotah 47 *a*; also Maimonides, Yad, Mamrim i, 4 and iii, 4, 5.

All this could be done only on the principle that the laws of Moses were not intended to be everlastingly obligatory in letter and spirit. Time and circumstances change, and with them also many laws. The rabbis expressed the opinion that the law was not given to be its own object; it is intended, "That thou shouldst gain the knowledge of Him who spoke and the world\* was created."|| In regard to the commandments it was admitted, "The commandments were given to purify the people by them," in another version: "To purify Israel."\*\*\* In regard to proselytes, they went even so far as to state, "Whoever renounces the worship of idols is called a Jew." The Emperor Antoninus Pius, it is narrated, asked Rabbi Judah, the prince, "Wilt thou give me a portion of the Leviathan in the future world?" which means, am I, the Gentile, worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven after death? The rabbi affirmed this and the emperor asking: "How is it that here thou wouldst not allow me to eat a piece of the Paschal lamb, and there I should eat of the Leviathan?" which means, I am not circumcised and do not keep the law, how canst thou promise me a part in the future life? But the rabbi said: "What can I do, when the law says,

|| והיו חרברים חאלה"מן הרברים האלה על לבנך מתוך  
 כן אחת מכיר את מי שאמר והיה העולם (Siphri in loco  
 and Yalkut 839.)

\*\* לא נחנו מצוות אלא לצרף בהן את ישראל\*\* (in Tal-  
 mud and Midrash.)

'No uncircumcised one shall eat thereof,' (of the Paschal lamb?") (*Yerushalmi Meguillah* iii, 3.) This shows clearly that the eternal happiness was not supposed to depend on the practice of the law.

2. Paul preaching the Messiah who had come and the latter end to be approaching, as a strict Pharisee, could only declare the law abrogated. The Pharisees repeatedly maintain, in the Talmud and *Midrash*, the abrogation of the law in that future time (לקמור לנוא.) Paul's arguments on this subject are chiefly and often literally taken from ancient rabbinical sources. He argues, for instance, ye are all dead with Christ; to resurrect with him, and the rabbis say, "The dead is free from the law."\* Nearly the whole phrasology of the epistles is based upon rabbinical sentences. The rabbis supposed the latter days to come when all shall be righteous or all wicked; in neither case can the law remain, for the righteous need no law and the wicked keep none. Chiefly, however, they maintained, the latter end will not come until the human race has reached its perfection, and this view is most in consonance with the justice and wisdom of God. God created man that the race reach ultimately that perfection which can be reached under these circumstances; then, however, a regeneration of man and his place of existence becomes necessary to afford him the

\*למחרת הפשי—כיון שמת פשוט מן המצות

opportunity of reaching, under other circumstances, a higher degree of perfection. This law was given for the present circumstances, in which man lives; it is not applicable to another state of existence. Therefore then (לְקַדְּשׁ לְבָרִית) the law must be changed. Paul adopted this view in regard to the law, and maintained on the one hand the law itself was a curse, given not for blessing, but for the curse of sin; while on the other hand he advanced, the law was good, spiritual, and godly, given to educate the people of Israel, exactly as all Pharisees maintained, to educate them for the finality of all flesh. The only difference between Paul and the Pharisees in this point was, he maintained the Messiah had come, and the latter days were on hand, hence the law was abrogated; and they maintained the Messiah had not come, and the latter days were not yet, hence the law was yet in power.

3. Paul could not risk the success of the cause he represented, upon the doubtful supposition, that the Gentiles would embrace with the gospel the law also, circumcise themselves, keep Sabbaths and holidays, eat no forbidden food, travel tri-annually to Jerusalem and turn in principle against the Roman law. He could expect much of the general state of affairs, his enunciation of the latter days, the sinfulness of the heathens, and the salvation of the gospel; but as a prudent man, he could not risk too much. The Pharisee *par ex-*

cellence, Hillel the Elder, went in this point even beyond Paul. When that foolish Greek wanted to be converted, provided he could teach him the law, while he could stand on one leg, Hillel replied, "Whatever hurts thee, that shalt thou not do to thy neighbor. This is the principle, the rest is commentary, go and finish thy studies." We would not maintain that the event actually took place; nevertheless the anecdote being in vogue and ascribed to so high an authority as Hillel, shows that it was a prevailing opinion among the Pharisees, that the heathen barbarism and idolatry were to be broken down, and this was the first step to their conversion. They even maintained, if the Gentile observes the law (the ceremonial portion thereof, of course) his reward could not be much, as he was never commanded to observe it.† Well then, from a strict Pharisean point of view, Paul had no reason to risk his cause on the acceptance of the law by the Gentiles. He came among them to break down heathenism and idolatry, with all their barbarity and absurdity, and to bring them the belief in One God and the moral law connected with this belief; all other things were of secondary importance to him, as the means are to the object to be obtained. The Messiah and "Son of God," the end of all flesh and the approaching day of judgment, like the *glossalaline*, baptism, Lord's

†Vide *Abodah Sarah* 3 the discussion on מצוה ועשה, אינו מצוה ועשה

supper and holy ghost, were nothing but means to his great object, to break down heathenism and unfurl the banner of One God and pure morals.

4. He must naturally have been opposed to a large number of Mosaic and traditional laws, on account of their local nature and their limitations in time. Standing in the very midst of the scholastic disputes of the Hillelites and the Shammites, Paul may have been disgusted with their hair-splitting casuistry, the externality and accidentality of observances and the hypocrisy connected therewith. But aside of all that he was obliged to oppose all local laws, since he, in going to the Gentiles, left all ideas of locality behind and attempted universality for the province of religion. He could not impose circumcision on them, because it was a command to Abraham, his seed, and the servants he possessed, and not to the Gentiles. The Pharisees who wanted to attach the heathens to Israel, demanded circumcision and baptism; Paul who did not think of attaching, who maintained to carry out the conversion of the Gentiles for themselves, demanded baptism only. He could not command them to observe the biblical holidays, each of which has a local agricultural, and a Hebrew historical reason; for he converted Gentiles who live in different climates and have another history. The Hebrews in the Babylonian captivity did not observe the three feasts. He could not urge upon them

to adopt the Mosaic fabric of government, without expecting to be crucified as a rebel against Rome; nor could he expect of the converted heathens that they would obey the Mosaic laws with the rabbinical commentaries on forbidden food. He could not wish to impose upon them the Mosaic polity with all the sacrifices, priests, and pompous ceremonials, which were originally intended for Palestine only; nor could he expect of them to let their beards and their hair grow, wear the over-garment with fringes, or adhere to any such laws which Moses ordained originally to establish a distinct nationality of those who were Egyptians in dress and appearance. Therefore he was obliged to declare many laws abrogated, and he could do this without any conflict with his Pharisean conscience.

5. Expecting only a short time to elapse between his preaching the gospel and the coming of the last day, he could not impose on them any law which they must have studied and known before they could practice it. If he even did not expect it, he could not demand any thing that looked like permanency or like an established institution, which would have contradicted his predictions, on which he based the mission of Jesus, his gospel, and his own appeals.

Therefore Paul laid aside every thing that was in any wise in his way to success. He abolished circumcision, and stood his ground firmly against his colleagues of Je-

rusalem under James and Peter, who opposed it.\* He advanced the position that those who are circumcised must keep the whole law, something contrary to Moses and the Pharisees, as we have seen above. Circumcision is a commandment like any other; he who circumcises himself does no more take upon himself the duty of keeping the whole law, than he who is not circumcised is free of every law. Both assertions of Paul are incorrect.

He abolished the laws concerning forbidden food; exposed Peter's hypocrisy, who was afraid to eat with the Gentiles of Antioch, on account of the messengers of James, although before they arrived he had done so; and permitted them even to eat from the sacrificial meals.† On this occasion he copies almost literally from the ancient rabbis:

לבי ולבך ידעו כעבודת אלילים כדלית בה ממשא

“My heart and thy heart know that the idols are nothing.” (Yalkut 289.)

He abolished the Sabbath and the holidays, and never said that either a “Lord’s Day,” or any holiday, should be appointed in their place. (Romans xiv, 5,) “One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the

\*Romans ii, 25 to 29; I Corinth. vii, 18; Galat. v, 2, 3; Coloss. ii, 11, and elsewhere.

†Romans xiv, 14; I Corinth. viii, 9; x, 25; Timothy ii, 2.



day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." It is foolish of Christian clergymen to attempt any proof from the gospels for the sacredness of the first day of the week, when neither Jesus nor his apostles thought of abolishing the Jewish Sabbath, and Paul expressly declared one day to be as good as another.

He declared the entire law abolished, and argues most zealously against circumcision and the law. He did this certainly in broad general terms, on account of the unpopularity of the Hebrew laws among the Gentiles. But this alarmed his colleagues in Jerusalem, and they attacked him. This gave rise to the discussions, of which we possess only Paul's arguments in his epistles; the other side, the arguments of James, Peter and their co-laborers, were most likely, like the original gospel story, got out of the way of Gentile Christians by the teachers of Christianity in the second and third centuries, on account of their Jewish law-abiding contents; precisely as the original Christian sects were excommunicated. Still the opposition which Paul encountered in his own camp, and his own conviction, that there can be no morals without moral laws, as little as we can imagine this physical world without physical laws, forced him to come out of his generalities and condescend to specialities. Love, as the only foundation of law, is insufficient. Incest, self-pollution and the kindred crimes then at their very

light, can hardly be considered crimes from the pure stand-point of love. It is not a generic term that covers all specialities. But if it even did, not every body is capable to decide for himself, under all circumstances, what love dictates. The benighted widow, who sacrifices herself on the pyre, believes to obey the voice of love; so do the barbarians who kill their aged parents, because they are burdensome to themselves and others. It is foolish to think that liberty signifies no laws, when understanding itself in its unbounded freedom obeys the laws of logic. If a certain action is wrong, reason declares it to be so; hence it is a law. Say it is wrong to steal, reason declares it so, and it is a law not to steal. Is it moral freedom to be permitted to steal? The same precisely is the case with all the moral laws. All which reason has pronounced as such, is moral law, and it is moral freedom to be fully capacitated to obey them, as it is political freedom to obey only the laws springing from the idea of absolute justice. Love as the only law did very well for a short time among newly converted persons, still inspired with higher ideals, and still dreading the momentary approach of the end of all flesh. It was undoubtedly an excellent medium to arrest barbarism and cruelty, selfishness and crime, as Paul found it among the heathens; but under all ordinary circumstances of society, love can only be pronounced as the highest mo-

tive of all morality. Generalities, however, will never suffice; there must be definitions to make it clear and well understood what love requires one to do in particular cases. These definitions, however are laws. It is foolish to declaim of freedom from the law, as though it was moral freedom to reject the moral law.

Paul, therefore, in the opposition offered him by his colleagues of Jerusalem, discovered soon the necessity of law for his converts. But he had declared the law abrogated, and so he was obliged to repeat some of the laws of Moses and even traditions of Israel as his own, without system, or organic totality, and without either originality or sufficiency. His laws and rules (Romans xii; xiii; I Corinth. v; vi; vii; Ephesians iv; v; vi and elsewhere) are a poor repetition of Mosaic and rabbinical laws in no kind of order or system. Still he was obliged to confess at last: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully." (Timothy 1, 5 to 8.) But then to maintain his former position he wants to make Timothy believe that the law was made for criminals only; but who knows not that the positive moral laws are not for crimi-

nals only. Honor thy parents, love thy neighbor, support the poor, protect the weak, and the like, is law to the best and holiest ones of all ages.

This double position of abrogating the whole law in the first instance, and then being under the obligation of reinstating the moral laws of the Hebrews as laws, and not as mere love, faith or hope, led Paul into the most terrible sophistry on the law and its abrogation. It is with him both good and bad, a curse and a blessing, freedom and slavery, and God knows what not. This leads him sometimes entirely astray, to misquotations from the Bible, quibbling on words, and endless contradictions and repetitions. One of the most extraordinary blunders of his is this: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Galat. iii, 16.) Now "seed" is a collective noun which has no singular number, and is therefore never used in the plural form anywhere in the Bible. Paul knew very well that seed has no singular, and always refers to many, so that Abraham was to be told especially, "For this Isaac shall be called thy seed," because he was one, and is no seed; but in his hot debates with his opponents he resorted frequently to such small things. Paul's accommodation to the prejudices of the Gentiles in regard to the law gave him great trouble, and became

in after times the source of great confusion in the Church. The Jewish law was considered rejected, and law must exist; this gave birth to the canon laws and all the miseries springing from this source. His main point, the approach of the end of all flesh, upon which he based the entire fabric of redemption and the necessity of the Redeemer and His resurrection, gave him also much trouble in after days. His converts began to doubt the approach of the end, hence also the necessity of a Redeemer, and he admonished them frequently to hope and wait patiently. This accommodation to the weakness and credulity of the Gentiles became a source of folly in the Church after his days. There came not only the great difficulty of reconciling the "Messiah" of Peter, "the Son of God" of Paul, the "Logos" of John, and the human nature of Jesus, with the "Holy Ghost" and the "Father," which after long controversies, persecutions and excommunications, resulted in the adoption of the Trinitarian doctrine, which is heathen in its essence and Jewish in its construction; but chiefly the fabric of redemption which Paul had built up for immediate purposes, gave rise to the most unreasonable theories, of which Christianity still suffers. The end has not come, and few eccentric enthusiasts expect it to come in their days; still the Christian prays to be redeemed of its terrors, and redemption in the sense of Paul signifies nothing else.

Paul's "Son of God" has not come in his days, as he proclaimed, the resurrection and the day of judgment did not come to pass; still the Christian must believe Jesus is the "Son of God," and the Almighty is not the Almighty, for all might was given to Jesus of Nazareth, and he must wait until he will come to judge the living and the dead. These perversions of the words of Paul, the extension of his plan of redemption beyond his time, brought Christianity in gross contradiction with the understanding, which leads to absurdity only.

The moral of the thing is, great men must not resort to fictions, or to any accommodation, however efficient means they may offer for the time being. And Paul was a great man. The idea of demolishing heathenism, and to do it alone, all alone, opposed by Jews and Gentiles, opposed by those whose redemption scheme he adopted and whose master he glorified, shows a great, energetic and resolute man. The determination to bring the knowledge of the One God and the pure moral law to debased and corrupted heathens, is holy and admirable. The manner in which he carried out his determination and his brilliant successes, however numerous outside causes may have favored his enterprise, testify to his greatness. Like all brilliant and successful men in history, he understood his age, stood upon its summit, adopted the most available means to carry out his plans, felt an interest in, and an

attachment to the whole human family, worked out his own convictions and his own destiny without regard to sect, creed, country or people. However numerous his imperfections may be, he was a great, energetic and independent man, in comparison to whom Peter and James were monks, visionary Essenes, stubborn and narrow sectarians. Great men must not resort to fiction or accommodation to prevailing superstitions or prejudices, and they can not do it without injury to themselves and their cause.

So we know the principal features from the creed of Paul. It is briefly told: It is one God, one moral law and one destiny to the whole human family, the same great idea of which all prophets since the days of Moses spoke in terms of intense inspiration. The means which he used to electrify and conquer the heathens are his proclamations of

The last day approaching.

All men are sinners.

All go to destruction.

But God revealed his grace.

He sent his son to die for the sins of all.

To proclaim the approach of the resurrection.

Those who believe in him will be saved from the terrors of the last day, their bodies will be changed into immortal ones, and if dead, they will resurrect and become immortal.

Those who believe in him must do all which love dictates.

Whether Paul himself believed these means to convert the heathens, is very doubtful. To us it appears certain that he did not. He counted upon the power of truth to overcome the pernicious effect of his means in converting them; but in this he was mistaken.

We have only to add a few more remarks. Paul was no particular friend of woman. He considered her the subject of man who communicates with Christ only through her husband. "I would have you know," he said to the Corinthians (I Cor. xi, 3) "that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man." He did not consider the woman as the image of God, in saying (ibid.) "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head (while praying or prophesying) for as much as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power (one who governs her) on her head, because of the angels," (who said to her, "And he shall have dominion over

\* The custom to pray bare-headed was introduced by Paul among the Gentile Christians (I Cor. xi) most likely with the intention to separate them from the Jews and distinguish them outwardly. It is undoubtedly therefore that the Jews to this day are so much prejudiced against this custom as against every thing that came from Acher.



thee.") Here is one of Paul's small arguments from the Bible; for there it says expressly (Gen. i. 27,) "And God created Adam in his image; in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." The last member of the verse is the supplement to the whole, and taking Adam as the name of the race, it tells plainly that both male and female were created in the image of God. But this is not his worst argument on this subject. He goes on to prove, "by nature" that man must uncover his head when praying and woman must cover her head: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering." This argument is childish enough to rouse the suspicion of the critic against its authenticity. Because it was considered a shame in Corinth for a man to wear long hair, therefore nature teaches that woman must cover her head in prayer. He could just as well have argued, because nature causes hair to grow on man's head, and you are ashamed of nature's gift, therefore you are very foolish. Or, since the men of Corinth are ashamed to wear long hair, and the women of Corinth glory in their long hair, therefore they are shameless.

The worst, however, he inflicted on woman, is his command: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but

they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." (I Cor. xiv, 34.) Poor Mrs. or Miss Rev. so and so of our enlightened days, and quakeress this or that! you are all sinners, transgressors of the law according to Paul. Of course, Paul can not tell where the law enjoins this absurdity, or why he referred to the law which he pronounced a curse, and of which he emancipated his converts; nevertheless he wanted to doom the women to silence, and put his innovation into the shoes of Moses whose sister was a prophetess, and in no religious respect makes any difference between sexes.

He had not only so small an opinion of the women of Corinth, he also advised his faithful disciple Timothy, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." After referring to Eve to have sinned first, he prescribes for her this novel salvation, "She shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." (I Timothy ii, 11 to 15.) This is plain language: Woman has nothing to say, she must obey her husband, bear children and bring them up in the faith, or else she remains damned, for she was the first to sin. Christ does not save her; her husband and her children do, if she brings them up right. Unmarried and childless women, and those whose children go astray, are

not saved at all. Paul says the same thing over to the Ephesians. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in every thing." (Ephesians v, 22 to 24.) This can hardly be misunderstood. He says, the body of the man is saved, on the last day, by Christ; but the body of the woman, having nothing to expect of Christ, is saved by her husband, by conceiving, bearing and educating children in the faith. This is her destiny, her religion, her hope, her immortality. Poor maidens and childless wives! you are all lost according to Paul's doctrine. Poor wives! you are the silent tools of your husbands, and the servants of your children.

Still Mr. Renan, in "The Apostles," declaims hollow phrases on Paul's liberality to women, because he permitted a widow of three scores of years to be a deaconess in the church. It is pardonable with Mr. Renan that he knows nothing about the social position of woman among the Hebrews of those days; but it is unpardonable that he knew not the above and similar passages in the epistles.

The Corinthians, it appears, were a refractory congregation and gave Paul a good deal of trouble. There was division of

opinions, quarrel and skepticism among them, morals were at a low ebb, faith and hope on the decline. Paul had his troubles with them, although they paid him no wages. It appears that skeptics from Corinth made an attempt to out-wit him, which was not an easy task. They asked him, if the last day is soon to come, how about marriage? A last day saint in our country, after having preached on the end of all flesh to be nigh, was offered, by some rogue, a fine and very cheap piece of property, and the saint purchased it without hesitation; but he could not get it, after he had again verified the adage, no physician takes his own medicine. Paul, however, was not so easily caught; he was too shrewd for them. He answered (I Cor. vii) "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" and "I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them, if they abide even as I" (unmarried.) "For I would that all men were even as I myself" (unmarried.) Only "to avoid fornication, he would permit them to marry." The questions are, how shall those unmarried women be saved? why are the Protestants opposed to the celibacy of Catholic priests and nuns? and what must become of the human race, if marriage is abolished? Paul could easily answer these queries. The end of all flesh being nigh, therefore propagation of the race is useless. It is likewise useless for unmarried women and widows to seek salvation in marriage,

whereas the end would come before they could educate their children in the faith.

If anybody doubts that Paul proclaimed the end of all flesh to be nigh, let him take into consideration his views on marriage in I Cor. vii, and be convinced. No sane man—and Paul was a prudent man—can wish for the abolition of the institution of marriage, unless he favors free love, which Paul did not, or he believes in the close approach of the end of all flesh, as he did proclaim. But physicians never take their own medicine; so Paul married after all, and left daughters in Judea, as we shall see hereafter. We know not whether he did it to avoid fornication, or because he did not believe his own doctrine, we can not tell. He keeps his track clear, however, by stating in this connection, "But I speak this (against marriage) by permission and not of commandment."

We can imagine but one cause of Paul's contempt of woman; it appears that the heathen women were much more lascivious, noisy, and refractory than the male portion of that society, who, as Paul repeatedly states, were degraded enough. (Romans i, 18, and Ephesians iv, 17.)

All the declamations of superficial rationalists on Paul's love of liberty are air-castles, founded upon wind and imagination. The truth is that he expressed himself fully and intelligibly in favor of all governments, however despotic, in condemnation of all revolutions, however

just, and in favor of every personal servitude, however outrageous. In regard to public government, he wrote to the Romans (xiii, 1):

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rules are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

This is the language of a prudent man, who dreads crucifixion and attempts to ingratiate himself with those in power, and their faithful subjects; but it is also fatal to every emotion of freedom and desire after liberty, on the part of those who suffer under the wicked oppression of tyrants and despots. It is the Scriptural source of potentates: “by the grace of God,” the standing text in all churches and schools in Christendom, where despotism sways its awful scepter, and the

hostage of thorns in the hands of soulless tools and trembling slaves. If those that resist "the powers that be," "shall receive to themselves damnation;" then we pity William Tell, Oliver Cromwell, and George Washington, who, according to this doctrine, must be the most damned among the damned, and while this doctrine prevails, Christendom must continue to groan under the oppression of a few arbitrary despots, without any hope for the better.

Paul was by no means more charitably disposed toward servants or slaves. Regarding them, he says (Ephes. vi, 5):

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

He was so well pleased with this admonition that he repeated it literally to the Colossians (iv, 1.). This says not that masters should set free their servants after six years' service or any time (the law was a curse with Paul,) or that the slave should liberate himself; it says, servant, slave, be obedient with fear and trembling, and do the will of the master as if it was the will of God. We have no doubt this was a very popular text among negro preachers in the late slave States; it did excellent

service in Russia among the serfs, and in the dark ages, among the stubborn peasants who may have cursed their masters; but it is a direct condemnation of every attempt at personal freedom, or at the violation of the established relations between master and servant.

One thinking for a moment over these statements of Paul, is forced to the conclusion, it could not be Paul's intention that the doctrines thus pronounced should exercise any influence on a large community, or for any length of time. He could only have intended them as provisional measures for the time being. He was a free-born man, the son of a liberty-loving people, and had grown up in a community which sacrificed itself for its independence; he could not be a slave. But the Jew, on account of his love of liberty and independence, was odious to the Roman. Therefore Paul declared the law abrogated and the Roman authorities appointed by God, and the right of the masters to their slaves as something quite just. He must have known that his declarations might become a curse to humanity; but he preached the end of all flesh to be on hand, hence all power was to go any how. He did not want them to squander the few days before the end in any worldly improvement, in any reform of social or political relations. Therefore he admonished them to uphold the *statu quo* in every respect. This is the only justification we can



find for Paul's doctrines of subjection and slavery.

Knowing as we do now this great man with his great faults, we are fully prepared to follow up and control the statements of "The Acts" concerning him. We might conclude this chapter with Paul's own words of *Anathema* and *Maranatha* to all unbelievers (I Cor. xvi, 22) or the other curses which he fires away against his colleagues differing with him in opinion; but we do not wish to terrify the critics, whose nerves are frequently very sensitive. We invite thorough examination. It is our only aim to serve the cause of truth, and we do it to the best of our knowledge.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES.

In Damascus—it was in Damascus, where Paul first preached Christianity, his own original Gospel, based on the belief of the approach of the end of all flesh, the resurrection and the last judgment—and in Damascus he was unsuccessful, no congregation was organized and he, like the spies of Joshua at Jericho, escaped from the city "through a window in a basket" being "let down by the wall," as the garrison of the governor under King Aretas desired to apprehend him. (II Cor. xi, 32.) Although the strategy in the escape of Paul, as an imitation of a Scriptural event, looks rather

suspicious, and may have been a figure of speech, on the part of Paul, to describe his flight from that city, still the main fact that he first preached his Gospel in Damascus and not in any place in Judea can hardly be doubted. (Galat. i, 17.) The author of "The Acts," however, embraces this opportunity to put in a miracle, and a slur on the Jews whom he did not like. While Paul says nothing concerning the Jews of Damascus, "The Acts" state, "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known to Saul." (ix, 23.) If this was the fact, we can not see why Paul should not have stated it. The harmonizers, of course, tell us, Luke knew what Paul did not state, but they have not the least proof in substantiation of their hypothesis. Luke is always eager to glorify the Gentiles and to debase the Jews, because one of his main objects is to show that the Gentiles, by the Gospel, are the heirs of the covenant. Therefore he never forgets to introduce some devout Gentile and to administer a slur on the Jews. This is the reason of his addition, in this instance, to the statement of Paul.

The miracle which Luke narrates in this connection is the reproduction, with extra embellishments, of Paul's pretension (II Cor. xii, 1) to have been in the third heaven or in Paradise. Knowing the precise nature of this miracle, we also know that Paul undoubtedly, like the Rabbis Akiba,

Joshua, Ben Azzai, and Ben Zoma, maintained to have been in Paradise, whether in after times he believed it or did not. In his epistle (II Cor. xii) he brings this Paradise story in close connection with Damascus and his start as a Christian (ibid. xi, the close.) Therefore in the inventive soul of Luke this grew into another miracle, which he tells thus: Paul filled with hatred toward the Nazarenes, persecuted them every-where, and went even to Damascus with letters from the high priest and the Sanhedrin, to arrest the Christians of Damascus and to bring them in chains to Jerusalem. This portion of the story bears the fictitious character on its very face. There were no Christians in Damascus at that early period, there were none anywhere outside of Palestine, or else Paul or at least the author of "The Acts" himself must have mentioned them somewhere or somehow to the glory of the older apostles. In the second place, how can one imagine that the high priest and Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, whose power was reduced at home to zero almost, could exercise jurisdiction in a foreign country over the persons of a king's subjects? In the third place, if Paul had gone with such a commission to Damascus, there is not the least cause why he should not have said so. This was evidently put in to *miraculize* the miracle. On the way, the narrative continues, Jesus appeared to Paul in an extraordinary vision and converted his mind, so that the fierce

persecutor was stricken with blindness, and came tremblingly and sick to Damascus, where one Ananias brought him the appointment of Jesus "to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel," together with the Holy Ghost, the restoration of his eye-sight and his health.

The air-castles which Mr. Renan builds on this story, without any historical basis, are truly amusing. Pretensions like these were, indeed, very common in that age. Many of the mystic rabbis narrate that the prophet Elijah came to them, answered their queries, communicated to them what God had said on various occasions, and held familiar conversations with them, although Elijah occupied the same position in heaven, according to the mystic rabbis, which Jesus did according to Paul. Therefore Paul might have said or believed that Jesus appeared to him, as the mystic rabbis did concerning Elijah. But Paul did not say it, in speaking of the visions and revelations which he had (I Cor. xii.) The miracle begins with "a light from heaven," which suddenly shone round Paul. This, a child can see, is an imitation of the fire in the bush which Moses saw, when God first appeared to him. Moses hid his face, "For he was afraid to look up to God," and precisely so, did Paul, "He fell to the earth." God called twice "Moses, Moses!" so did Jesus call twice "Paul, Paul!" It is the same scene anxiously imi-

tated. But Paul is not told at once what Jesus wants him to do, as Moses was. "Go to the city," says Jesus, "and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Did the companions of Paul see this fire, fall to the earth, and hear this voice as Paul did? The author of "The Acts," who tells this story three times, answers thus:

1. "And the men which journeyed with him (Paul) stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man," (Acts ix, 7); hence they saw no light from heaven, or else they must have fallen to the earth like Paul, remained standing, and heard a voice, without knowing what it was.

2. "And they that were with me," the author of "The Acts" has Paul himself say, "saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me." (Acts xxii, 9; *ibid.* xxvi, 14.) Which of the two statements is true? Did they hear or did they not? Did they see or did they not? None is true, we say, and so Luke must have believed, or else he could not contradict himself.

Paul rises blind and terrified, not indeed as a punishment for his former misdeeds, the God of Luke punishes only those who believe not in Christ; he must be blind for two specific reasons:

1. Balaam also, when God spoke to him, fell on the earth and was blind in one or both eyes, as then the story was told,\*

\*See *Siphri* to Numbers xxiv, 3, 4, *Rashi* and *Nachmonides* *ibid.*

although he was the greatest prophet ; therefore Paul could not escape this misery.

2. He had to come blind to Damascus, in order that Ananias could heal him, bring him the Holy Ghost and his commission from Jesus, so that Paul be not altogether original and independent of all those who were Christians before him. Unfortunately, however, Paul contradicts this, and maintains that he had nothing to do with any man in receiving his Gospel (Galat. i, 12.) He never mentions Ananias, his great benefactor, which he must have done, if there was any truth in the matter.

That this story is fictitious, based upon Paul's Paradise story, can hardly be doubted. It is told well, in the spirit of that age, like all the Elijah stories in the Talmud, and in imitation of Scriptural scenes and passages. But the moral of the story is miserable. Like the prudent king of a constitutional country, Jesus takes the leader of the opposition into his cabinet; God takes an abject fanatic who is guilty of the most outrageous crimes, and on a sudden makes of him an apostle and a prophet; the benighted fanatic is seized by an unjust God, and elevated high above the best and most pious of his age. This is a nugatory doctrine to encourage crime and unbelief. If God chose the blood-thirsty Paul to be His special messenger on earth, why should he not deign one of these days to pick out one of the inmates of a penitentiary and make a demi-god of

him? Is it not better to be a vulgar criminal than a righteous man, if the chances of the former are so much better before God?

The facts in the case, however, appear to be that the whole story is not true; that Luke had a poor conception of morals; that Paul in writing to his Gentile congregations overdid his own wickedness in persecuting the Christians in former days, in order to encourage the sinful heathens to hope in God's mercy; and that Paul, after having come back from Paradise with his three colleagues, went to Damascus and there began to preach Christianity, as he understood and shaped it. How long Paul roamed about the deserts and solitary wilds, after he had become subject to that dreadful and self-destructive practice of the mystic Pharisees, described in the ninth chapter of this book, till he concentrated his mind upon the Gospel which he resolved to preach among the Gentiles—it is impossible now to tell. Transitions, with characters like Paul, are often sudden and violent, so that the very extremes meet in a moment. Thus much, however, is certain that his first attempt at the conversion of the heathens proved abortive, so that he narrowly escaped the governor's soldiers at Damascus. This failure, most likely, convinced Paul of his inadequate preparation for so important a task. He was young, zealous and visionary, but he had not studied the situation and the means. Therefore he

went into Arabia and spent there three years, where he did nothing that was handed down to posterity. He prepared himself for his mission. After he was fully prepared and had laid out his plan of action, he went up to Jerusalem and remained with Peter fifteen days. He saw also James, the brother of Jesus, but none else of the apostles. He may have come to some understanding with Peter about his plan of action; but it must all have been of a private nature, nothing of which has reached posterity.

This is by no means marvelous enough for the author of "The Acts," nor did it suit him that Paul acted independently; therefore he undertook to contradict Paul's own statement about himself. He brings Paul from Damascus to Jerusalem, "and he essayed to join himself to the disciples" who believed not that he was a disciple, until finally Barnabas brought him to the apostles and united him with them, so that he was with them coming and going out at Jerusalem. So Luke reconciles once more Paul and the apostles by Barnabas, which is not true, but it is good policy. On this occasion he administers another blow on the Jews, the Grecians are this time the rogues, who went about to slay Paul, but the disciples discovered it in time, and led Paul away by Cesarea to Tarsus. Before that, the author of "The Acts" let Paul state that while praying in the temple he "was in a trance;" he saw Jesus who



told him to leave Jerusalem and to go to the Gentiles. (xxii, 17.) Thus the departure of Paul from Jerusalem was not on account of the Grecian Jews who intended to slay him, as he says in the ninth chapter; it was by command of Jesus. It is certain that not one word of all that is true, if Paul told the truth about himself; but Luke reaches his object, he brings Paul and the apostles in perfect harmony and administers some blows at the Jews of Damascus and of Jerusalem. The reader, however, must not infer from this that the author of "The Acts" never tells the truth; he does, indeed, invent anything almost to suit his conciliation policy, nevertheless he sometimes states the truth. Besides he is very consistent, for he invents a number of stories, visions, miracles, angels, speeches, meetings and successes, as we shall see below, all of which suit his policy exactly, to which he adheres to the last.

Nothing could give Luke more trouble than the difference of opinion on the conversion of the Gentiles, which existed among the apostles with Paul on the one side, Peter and James on the other. The thing itself, the conversion of Gentiles, was obnoxious to the apostles, besides the exciting controversy on the law and circumcision. The Jew Christians accused Paul and his friends to be enemies of the law and the Hebrew people, while Paul charges the apostles and the Jew Christians with an entire miscomprehension of the salvation

scheme. The author of "The Acts" must begin the conversion of the Gentiles by the agency of Peter and James, for the justification of Paul. He begins with the conversion of the Samaritans who were half Jews anyhow, and narrates that Philip, in the persecution subsequent to Stephen's death, went to Samaria, preached in that city, drove out devils, performed sundry miracles, and converted all the inhabitants of the city of Samaria. The apostles are informed that "all Samaria," city and country, was converted, hastened thither, viz: Peter and John, to complete the work and furnish to them the Holy Ghost. (Acts viii, 1 to 25.) Thus Luke satisfies his own predilection for the Samaritans, both in the Acts and his Gospel, and the conversion of Gentiles is begun on these half-Jews, with the full consent of the apostles.

None mentions this conversion, no trace of it is left anywhere. Still the tone of the narrative in the Acts suggests the author's opinion that all or nearly all Samaritans were converted, and this unprecedented success left no trace anywhere. The Samaritans themselves\* do not mention this conversion; on the contrary, they narrate that they remained faithful to their religion, also during the reign of terror under the Emperor Hadrian. History informs us that the Samaritans were a strong people during the reign of Zeno (474 to 491) and that they then killed all the Christians

\*See Samaritan Joshua, Chapt. 47.

(Passover 484.) This hatred of the Samaritans against the Christians continued to the year 529, when the excommunicated Christians assisted them in the massacre of the Christians of Beth Sheon and Sychem. All this shows that the Samaritans were not converted by Philip, nor is any Christian congregation mentioned in Samaria before the third century.†

It must not be forgotten, although Jesus, according to Matthew, charged his disciples, "Go into no city of the Samaritans," which shows no great friendship for them, and neither Mark nor Matthew has anything to say about them; Luke, in his Gospel, has several highly favorable notices of them.‡ John, also, who in time follows after Luke, sympathizes with the Samaritans. Unfortunately, however, he shows two essential points: 1. That he took his story of the Samaritans (John iv, 1) from the story of Philip in the Acts (viii); and 2. that he did not consider it true, for he tells precisely of Jesus and the conversion of the Samaritans, what "The Acts" tell of Philip in the same connection. Jesus, like Philip, comes "into a city of Samaria," of which John gives the name Sychar or Sychem, the ancient capital. Jesus, like Philip, comes to Samaria a fugitive from Jerusalem. The next portion of John's story, Jesus asking a drink of a Samaritan

†Vide Introductio in librum Talmudicum de Samaritanibus—R. Kirchheim.

‡Luke ix, 51; x, 30; xvii, 12.

woman, is taken almost literally from Luke's first Samaritan story. Then John has "many Samaritans" converted to believe in Jesus who prophesies their entire conversion, exactly as Luke says, Philip did, who converted many Samaritans, and the apostles after him converted the rest.

As it is evidently the object of John in telling the Samaritan story, to have Jesus himself begin their conversion, in order to overcome the prejudices of the Jewish Christians against them; so it is Luke's object, in beginning their conversion under Philip and the apostles, to carve out a gradual transition to the conversion of the Gentiles began by the apostles before Paul. Neither John nor Luke could have considered the story true, as they must have known the small number of Samaritan Christians even in the second century. Nevertheless each had an object to reach, and a story was easily found to suit the occasion.

The conversion of the Samaritans, under the authority and co-operation of the apostles, is the viaduct for Luke to lead to the conversion of uncircumcised persons. Therefore the same Philip who wrought miracles, drove out unclean spirits, and healed the sick by the scores, was directed by an angel to go to the south, toward Gaza.\*\* On the way he meets the treasurer

\*\*The author of the Acts viii, 26, explains the word Gaza, "which is desert," to show that he understood very little Hebrew, for *Gath*, as is the Hebrew name of Gaza, means a wine press, and that he knew nothing of the Geography of Judea, for Gaza is not south of Jerusalem; it is East-south-east.

of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. This man had been in Jerusalem "for to worship," and on returning he sat in his chariot and read "Isaiah, the prophet." Philip converted this important man from Ethiopia, merely by baptism, not by circumcision. Still he was no Jew, or else he must have understood something about Isaiah which he said to Philip, he did not. The gist of the story is, that Philip, guided by the Holy Ghost, converted a devout heathen to Christianity without circumcision. The story may be an allusion to the early spread of Christianity in Abyssinia, or it may be altogether fictitious, and at that time Ethiopia was the land of fables; the object of the narrator is evident, it is a step from the conversion of the Samaritans to the Gentiles, the devout heathen who had gone all the way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship God, follows after the circumcised Samaritans, so that now the conversion of the Gentiles may follow.

This is actually the case, for now follows the conversion of Paul, who, if Luke tells the truth in the matter, and here he tallies with Paul's statements, was informed by Jesus himself that "He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles," (Acts ix, 16,) who was sent by Jesus "unto the Gentiles," (ibid. xxii, 21.) Still Paul must not have done so on his own account, not even by command of Jesus or the Holy Ghost; the older apostles must have set the precedent and must have ap-

pointed him to his mission, as they have been appointed by Jesus who has given them the precedents. Therefore Peter must make the beginning. He must first convert Gentiles, and he must first decide on the subject with the consent, of course, of all his colleagues. After Philip, who was no apostle, had wrought so many astonishing miracles, it can not be expected of Luke that he tell the next story in a plain way; Peter must, as a matter of course, outdo Philip in miracles as in the work of conversion. Therefore Peter turns up again in Lydda as a quack doctor, in our days one of the most despicable occupations; but Peter healed a man, Eneas, who was sick abed for eight years, stricken with the palsy, and he did it merely by calling on him in the name of Jesus to rise from his bed. "And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him and turned to the Lord." So the people of two cities were converted, not by any argument, it was done much quicker by a miracle. The only mistake in this story is, it is not true; for Lydda was for many years after that a celebrated rabbinical academy with one of the largest synagogues in Judea, and played a prominent part in Jewish matters in the war against Hadrian. The "Sages of Lydda," רבני לוד are celebrated in the Talmud for centuries after Peter. Hence not "all that dwelt in Lydda" were converted. It is not necessary that any were as long as Peter wrought a miracle. This being too small,

Luke transports Peter to Joppa. There he must perform in an upper chamber, where one Tabitha is lying dead, and he, saying "Tabitha, rise," reclaimed her from death to life. This, as a matter of course, was known "throughout all Joppa and many believed in the Lord." Having thus tallied miracles between Peter and Paul, to show that one was as great as the other, and Peter was so much greater than Philip, the author of "The Acts" returns to his main object, the conversion of the Gentiles, and tells the story about Cornelius, the centurion, (x, 1.)

The story runs thus: Cornelius, the Roman commander of the Italian band in Cesarea, a pious and charitable man, as almost all the Romans of "The Acts" are, more or less, has a vision. An angel appears to him, and commands him to send for Peter. This is quite an intelligent angel, for he describes minutely and exactly all about Peter, so that Cornelius could not help finding him. This angel is the proof that the conversion of the Gentiles was ordained from on high. Cornelius, of course, obeys, and sends two messengers for Peter.

Next day Peter has a peculiar whim to ascend the house-top and "to pray about the sixth hour," while all Jews prayed morning and evening. Peter got very hungry, and having nothing to eat, he fell into a trance, as it was usual among mystics in those days, to fall into a trance after having fasted long enough. This trance,

however, is an imitation of Paul's sojourn in Paradise to tally miracles. Peter in a trance sees heaven open, and coming down in a great sheet, knit at the four corners, "all manner of four-tooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." He was called upon to kill and eat; but he refused, in the words of the Prophet Ezekiel, to eat things common or unclean. The voice instructed him, "What God has cleansed that call not thou common." The vision vanished, the men of Cornelius arrived, and Peter with others follow them to Cesarea. Cornelius on beholding Peter "fell down at his feet and worshiped him." Although "he feared God with all his house," he nevertheless worshiped a man. Peter could not stand that, and informed the centurion "I myself am a man," which he might have known, had he used his eyes right; but Luke wants his readers to know that Peter was worshiped and refused the honor. Cornelius repeats the angel story, and then Peter seizes the opportunity to declare that God himself has pronounced in favor of the conversion of the Gentiles. Peter's speech brings down the Holy Ghost on his whole audience, so that the Jews present were astonished, "Because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." So Luke has commenced the conversion of the Gentiles by Peter with the special



sanction from on high by an angel and a vision. To make out his case strong enough, Luke introduces Jewish witnesses.

The story has many weak points. It is an imitation of Matthew's story of the centurion of Capernaum (Matthew viii, 5) of whom John (iv, 46) made a nobleman of Capernaum, changing also Matthew's servant of the centurion into the son of the nobleman. Both the centurion of Matthew and the nobleman of John are converted, because Jesus by his command healed the servant of the former or the son of the latter. This story was enlarged, adapted to the circumstances, and given to Peter. Matthew's centurion said to Jesus, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come unto my roof." This shows meekness on the part of the centurion, and his veneration for Jesus. But Luke understands this to signify that the Jew was prohibited to associate with Gentiles, and he must produce Peter's vision at Joppa, and let him say to Cornelius: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me (by that vision) that I should not call any man common or unclean." John goes a step beyond this, and extends this unrighteous law also to the Samaritans (John iv, 9.)

This is the second weak point of the story. No such law ever existed in Israel. How could it exist among the dispersed Israelites? How could it exist among

commercial men, and there was great trade in Judea? The prohibition of intermarriage and eating animal meat with heathens, was, in aftertimes, extended to a prohibition of drinking of their wine and eating of their bread and cheese: but there it stopped. Such an unreasonable and impracticable law existed in the brains of Luke only, not, indeed, in Peter or any other Jew.

This story says that neither Jesus nor the apostles, previous to this vision of Peter, had an idea of converting Gentiles, because, as Luke thinks, they considered it unlawful "to come unto one of another nation," or to "keep company" with him. Whatever the Gospels state about Jesus having charged his disciples to go and convert all the world, and whatever theological writers have declared on this subject—this story flatly contradicts the entire statements, theories and inductions.

But the conversion of the Gentiles must be sanctioned by a synod, by the Sanhedrin of the apostles, previous to the labors of Paul. Therefore (Acts xi, 1) the apostles and brethren in Judea take the alarm that Peter converted Gentiles and ate with them. But Peter rehearsed the whole proceedings to them, and they at last agreed to this, "Then hath God, also to the Gentiles, granted repentance unto life." So the synod was agreed that although heretofore no one had thought of converting

the Gentiles, it was now (then) lawful to do it.

This synod depends on the former story. If the conversion of Cornelius is true, the synod might be. But the Cornelius story, on account of the miracles and the two weak points, being rather doubtful; the synod is still more so. It does not at all appear likely that Peter ate with the Gentiles and confessed it in Jerusalem, when afterward in Antioch he would not do it, out of fear for the messengers of James. Besides there is another query. If Cornelius was circumcised, there was nothing left to discuss about, as it was perfectly lawful, and thousands besides the kings Munabaz and Izatez were circumcised and accepted into the covenant. If he was not, this very point must have been discussed, as indeed it was done at a future synod, and Peter would have first been charged with accepting uncircumcised proselytes. Still the author of "The Acts" so far has reached his object, the conversion of Gentiles was sanctioned by a synod, previous to the public activity of Paul. True or not, it matters little, it serves the conciliation policy, to heal the breach between the Gentile Christians and the Jew Christians.

The stage being prepared, the next business is to introduce Paul on it. This is done in the following manner. In consequence of the persecution, some disciples had reached Antioch and preached to the Jews. Some Grecian Jews, however,

preached also to the Gentiles of Antioch, in which they were successful. Tidings thereof having reached the apostles in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to continue the work. Barnabas then went to Tarsus and brought Paul to Antioch, to assist him in his mission labors, and they worked there one year. In Antioch the new sect was called the Christian. The elders of Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem with gifts for the congregation. On returning to Antioch, Barnabas and Paul were sent to the Gentiles by the prophets and teachers of Antioch and by the Holy Ghost. (Acts xiii, 1.)

According to the statements of the author of "The Acts," Paul does nothing of his own account. He is introduced to the Holy Ghost by Ananias of Damascus, to the apostles right after that by Barnabas, to Antioch by the same, and is sent from Antioch on his mission to the Gentiles, as an assistant to Barnabas, by the prophets and teachers of Antioch, after he had been sent by them to Jerusalem. All this Paul consistently and emphatically denies. He went not to Jerusalem and Tarsus, after his conversion, but to Arabia, where he remained three years. He was not introduced to the apostles or the congregation and saw none except, after three years, Peter and James, the brother of Jesus. He received no instructions of anybody, consulted none, was sent by nobody, and claims to have done and said everything

without the least assistance from any man. Those who traveled and worked with him always appear under his charge. His Gospel is not theirs, his doctrines are not their doctrines. He shaped his Gospel and his doctrines for the acceptance of the Gentiles. At the close of his journeys, after fourteen years, the congregation in Jerusalem with the apostles were still opposed to him, except Peter, James and John, who acknowledged him as the apostle to the Gentiles, claiming for themselves the apostleship to the Hebrews. These difficulties of Paul with the original disciples, which gave rise to the epistles of Paul, could not have existed, if the conversion of the Gentiles had been commenced by Peter and sanctioned by a synod previous to Paul's public life. The reader being under obligation to reject either Paul's statements about himself and his mission, or those made by the author of "The Acts," can only decide in favor of the epistles. Therefore Paul is the author of Christianity which he named in Antioch and carried over a vast area of land in the Roman empire. The religion of Jesus and his immediate disciples ended with the excommunication of the Jewish Christian sects. Nothing remained of it, except what Paul remodelled for the Gentiles and some anecdotes and sentences in the Synoptics, which to distinguish from the later additions is almost an impossibility.

The author of "The Acts" beginning

the story at the end has a large congregation in Jerusalem, shortly after the crucifixion, of which he finally rids himself by ingenious contrivances. He invents persecutions, trials, rows, speeches, to get the congregation out of Jerusalem. He must dispose in one way or another of the thousands of believers in that city. But now he has written himself into the same dilemma. If Peter and Phillip had done such great work in the start, before Paul appeared in the arena, why has he nothing more to tell about them? Here another persecution must help him out of the dilemma. (Acts xii.) Herod, the king, vexed the church, killed James, the brother of John, and Peter escapes by a most wonderful wonder. He found the names ready made in Josephus (Antiquities xx, v, 2,) James and Simon (or Peter) the sons of Judas of Galilee, who were crucified by order of Tiberius Alexander. Having consulted Josephus in making the speech of Gamliel, and using there the name of Theudas, he stumbled almost over these two names, which are in the same paragraph of Josephus. Herod also being mentioned in the same paragraph, the story was made in a moment, and the flight of Peter was accounted for in the more convenient way of a miracle. "And he departed and went into another place;" so he disposes of Peter. The Holy Ghost and the angels had nothing to say this time. This left Paul the principal actor in the great

drama. Those left in Jerusalem under James, the brother of Jesus, were satisfied with the money which Paul collected for them, (Galat. ii, 10) and were not prepared to enter with Paul upon the arena of public discussion. Therefore, however radically they differed with Paul, they could not efficiently oppose him, and so he remained master of the situation.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE VOYAGES OF PAUL.

Paul, on returning from Arabia, remained for a time, he says not how long, in Damascus, and then he went to Antioch, where he met with decided success among the Gentiles, so that a congregation of Jews and Gentiles was organized, whom he called Christians. He did not call them new Israelites, new Jerusalem or any other name connecting them with the children of Israel and their outward religion, because it was from the start his intention to establish a new religion on the ruins of Paganism. His new religion was an abstract of Judaism connected with his salvation scheme, his Gospel, the latter being intended to be the bearer of the former for the time being. The main point of his Gospel being, the Messiah or Christ has come, he could call his new religion Christianity only, signifying that system of religion which flows from the doctrine that the Messiah has come.

Three years after his conversion, he went

to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stood with him fifteen days. He may have gone there in company with Barnabas with contributions from the new congregation of Antioch to the apostolic congregation; on this occasion Barnabas may have introduced him to Peter; he may also have prayed in the temple, as the author of "The Acts" maintains he had done at a previous time. But all this is uncertain and immaterial after we know that he had his own Gospel, and by no means wished to learn anything of the disciples of Jesus. On the contrary, it must have been his decided intention to have no connection with them at all, as he thus could announce himself to the Gentiles as the direct messenger from God, and was not under the obligation to struggle against all the prejudices which the heathens harbored against the Jews and their law, and the apostolic congregation was composed of Jews only, and strictly law-abiding ones at that. Peter was influenced by Paul in after days, and yielded a little from his Pharisean orthodoxy; but James never yielded an iota.

Having returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, Paul in company with Barnabas, started out on his hazardous and momentous mission to the Gentiles, to shake the tottering fabric of Paganism, and to lay the foundation to a new epoch in the history of mankind. He started out in opposition to all existing systems of religion, declaring war to Heathenism, war to the entire struc-



ture of Judaism, war to the creed of his colleagues in Jerusalem whose master he glorified, with no resources outside of himself and no allies beside the signs of the time. He could not count much upon the aid of Barnabas, who, like Peter, James and others in Jerusalem, was a very pious man with little energy or genius, who prayed much and devoutly, wrought as many miracles as he knew how, and was sure to be saved. The author of "The Acts" himself, who was quite favorably impressed with the saints of Jerusalem, must have had this opinion of Barnabas, who, sent to the Gentiles of Antioch, could do nothing with them without Paul. (Acts xi, 22 to 26.) Paul could expect of him all the benefits which a good and faithful traveling companion affords among strangers in a foreign land; he could not expect more of him. Bravely he faced the storm and vanquished its fury. After a lapse of many years he complains bitterly before the Corinthians (I Cor. iv, 9):

"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last as it were, appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are

the off-scouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

Again he tells the same congregation (II Corinthians xi, 23):

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

How could it be otherwise? Alone and unprotected in the very midst of heathens he declared Paganism an accursed falsehood, all heathens a band of unnatural criminals, Judaism abrogated, all that was holy and dear to anybody a lie and a crime; it is wonderful enough that he was not assassinated.

It is true, Paul was a grievous sinner, he persecuted persons on account of their religious belief; but he suffered for it, and sufferings purified him, especially as he like all pious Pharisees rejoiced in his sufferings as being his very means of elevation. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,

in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong."\* (II Cor. xii, 10.)

He sacrificed himself for his wickedness, and devoted his life to a great cause. This was sufficient sacrifice for all the sins of his earlier days, and it appears they were not few. He had a thorn in his flesh and the messenger of Satan buffeted him. (Ibid. xii, 7.)

It is no less true that all the Jews from Abraham to Paul believed in the final downfall of Heathenism and the triumph of truth over falsehood, that very truth which was preserved in the shrine of Israel. It can not be denied that the Messianic speculations which were entertained at that time, and the progress which Judaism had already made among the heathens, considerably increased and strengthened that faith. But Paul did that which others believed, that it would come to pass. They believed and he did. They converted persons, and he converted communities. He could

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\*Compare to numerous passages in the Talmud on *הכובין עליך יסורין* and *יסורין מאהבה* and especially "It is said of those who are put to shame and retaliate not, who hear themselves reproached and make no reply, 'And his friends are like the sun rising in his power.'" (Sabbath 88.) Or this: "Those who abase themselves, God will elevate; and those who exalt themselves, God will debase." (Erubin 17 b); of which the *Robbah* makes this, "My debasement becomes my elevation, and my exultation becomes my degradation."

not expect any considerable success with the ceremonial law, and he did without it, a step which the Pharisean rabbis fully justified without carrying it into practice. They prophesied it for the future, but Paul said that future had come already, the Messiah has come, the ceremonial law is abolished. He went too far into broad generalities, but he was driven to it, and in his older days he fully explained that it was the ceremonial law only against which he spoke.

It is true, Paul went only to such countries where the Jews were numerous and naturalized, and Judaism had made deep inroads into the heathen temples, undermined by the onward march of Grecian literature, philosophy and skepticism, coupled with Roman sensuality and corruption. It can not be denied that devout Gentiles, such who were already partially inclined to Judaism, were his main force. Nor can it be gainsaid that he condescended to superstitions and prejudices unworthy of a great man and a sacred cause. He encouraged the popular belief in demons and unnatural diseases, the prevalent superstition that Jews could banish the former and cure the latter, and the expectation that all converts should possess the same gifts of grace. He encouraged, at the start, the superstition of "speaking with tongues," so that the inarticulate sounds of any fool in a trance were considered divine revelations. Above all and everything, he announced the end of all flesh to be nigh, and

based upon this fundamental doctrine his entire scheme of salvation with Christ or the Son of God as the herald from the realms of death, that the end, the resurrection, and the last judgment are nigh; as the temporary lord of the world, for the time between his resurrection and the day of judgment, and as the judge on that terrible day of change; and he must have known, at least after a second sober thought, that the end was not yet, hence his scheme of salvation was not true. Still all these things were means only to reach his ultimate object, viz: to make an end of Heathenism and its demoralizing effects, and to carry the light of truth into the dark regions of benighted pagans. As he shook their wickedness by the terrors of the approaching end of all flesh, so he marshaled them under the Son of God to lead them back to the Father. They could not reach the Father without a son. When the Israelites had come out of Egypt, they looked upon Moses as a mediator between them and God, and when Moses was absent for a short time, they forced Aaron to make for them gods which would go out before them and which would go in before them, "For this man Moses," they clamored, "who hath brought us up from the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him." They could not reach the abstract idea of an infinite and absolute Deity. So were the heathens in the days of Paul, and so they are to-day. Their conceptions were

too materialistic and too gross to think of the infinite and the absolute. Therefore Paul, to reach his ultimate object, was obliged to resort to those means. His ultimate object, no one can deny, was great, good and sublime, and he was eminently successful. His mission was not only hazardous to the utmost, but also momentous and important.

The ancient rabbis tell an anecdote of Acher or Paul which is characteristic in this direction. They say he washed his hands before meals and pronounced the benediction, as pious Pharisees did; then he ate a meal of forbidden food; and after it he again, like a pious Pharisee, pronounced the benediction. His pupil, Rabbi Mair, asking an explanation of his strange conduct, he is reported to have said "I will receive my reward for the good and the punishment for the evil I do." This simple story tells their opinion of Paul that he declared the ceremonial law abolished, still he adhered to piety. It tells that they believed he did good and bad things. It tells much more than this. The good which he did, the God and the moral law of Israel, which he brought to the Gentiles whom he redeemed from Paganism, bore its thousandfold reward and abounded with unfathomable blessing to mankind and to his memory. But the evil which he did, the superstitions and falsehoods which he encouraged, cherished or imposed upon his devotees, were fraught with misery, de-

gradation and bitter curses to the human family, in all the bloody wars and persecutions, the debasement of man and of man's understanding, and are a chastisement to the memory of Paul. The truth which he taught has become the common property of all civilized nations, an incentive to progress and a blessing. The fictitious means to which he resorted are the cause of sectarianism, ill will and narrow prejudices, and fade away before the sun of truth.

It is certainly doubtful that Paul, starting out on his mission, was conscious of its hazardous nature or the magnitude of its influence on the history of mankind. For enterprises like this require more than common enthusiasm, and enthusiasts are no profound thinkers. They are too much under the present influence of ideas and impulses, an uncontrollable and strange pressure, for which philosophy has no name, to be capable of profound calculations and correct conclusions from cause and effect. Paul calls his own enthusiasm revelations from on high, and he must have believed it, or else he could not possibly have been the enthusiast which he was, nor could he have been successful as he was. This belief and the firm conviction of doing a great and good work for its own sake, in the name of God and to the blessing of man, were his power, his host and his allies.

So prepared Paul appears among the Gentiles as Elijah did on Mount Carmel before Ahab and his host of priests and

prophets of Baal and Astarte. Like a pillar of fire he traversed the deserts of benighted Heathenism, in Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. Within the short space of ten years, he kindled a fire in the very heart of the Roman empire, under the eyes of the authorities of Rome and of Jerusalem, which in a few centuries consumed the idols and their temples from the Ganges to the Tiber, and from the Tiber to the Thames. With a skillful hand he threw the spark upon the accumulated combustibles of error, corruption, and slavery, and the ancient world exploded to make room for a new civilization; and Jerusalem in her fall triumphed over the proud queen of the earth. Rome succumbed to Palestine.

In all his troubles and perils, Paul was not so much vexed and mortified by the Jews, or even by the Heathens, as he was by his own colleagues from Jerusalem. They could not forgive the three transgressions, that he preached the salvation of the Messiah to the Gentiles, that he abolished circumcision, and that he declared the law of Moses abrogated. All the conciliatory attempts of the author of "The Acts," to hide this breach between Paul and his colleagues of Jerusalem, are in vain as long as the epistles of Paul are in existence. They consist chiefly of sharp polemics against his colleagues in Jerusalem about these three points. The author of "The Acts" (xv, 1) makes an attempt to have these vexatious questions settled. To this



purpose he narrates that some of the sect of the Pharisees who had turned Christians insisted upon the retention of the law and circumcision also for the Gentile Christians. The Pharisees in this passage spring from the imagination of Luke; for the story is copied from Paul's words (Galat. ii, 4): "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you." These "false brethren" were baptized into Pharisees by Luke, as though the other Jews were less attached to the Law. This accusation of the false brethren is taken in such earnest consideration by the apostles and elders of Jerusalem that they summon away Paul and Barnabas from their distant field of labor, and both come to Jerusalem, according to Luke. There is an object in this statement. Luke wants to make us believe Paul obeyed orders from Jerusalem, of which there is no trace in any of the epistles. Paul always represents himself as entirely independent in all he said or did. He did not go to Jerusalem. Paul states expressly he was not there till after fourteen years from the date of his conversion (Gal. ii, 1) which was at the end of his journeys, and not in the middle thereof. Then he says that he went there "by revelation," and not in.

obedience to any summons. Then and there for the first time he communicated unto them (in Jerusalem,) "That Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,"\* of which they had no knowledge before.

The author of "The Acts" then holds a synod of the apostles and elders. Peter makes a long speech in favor of Paul's proceedings among the Gentiles, including, as usual, a falsified quotation from the prophet,† and closes with the proposition: "That we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols (Paul permitted them to eat of sacrificial meals,) and from fornication, and from things strangled (not slaughtered according to Jewish rites,) and from blood. For Moses, of old time, hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day;" hence the Gentile Christians can hear and learn anyhow. This proposition was adopted and communicated in letters to the Gentile Christians by two messengers, Judas and Silas. So circumcision and the law of Moses were declared abolished, and the laws of slaughtering and eating no blood were retained. This is absurd; but Luke could not help it, for

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\*On this occasion Paul also states that he had an other Gospel which he preached "privately to them which were of reputation." It is easy to imagine what was omitted in this extra Gospel.

†On this occasion Peter quotes from the prophet Amos ix, 11, 12, "The residue of mankind and all nations" (so it is in the Greek,) but the prophet said, "The rest of Edem and all the nations." The other blunders interest us not.

in the very same epistle from which he took the material to make this story, Peter is upbraided by Paul (Gal. ii, 11,) because he refused to eat with the Gentiles on account of the presence of messengers from James. Luke was obliged to put this absurd proviso in Peter's mouth, although he could never have talked so foolishly. Stranger than this is the fact that Paul never mentions and never cared for these provisos in the apostolic letter, and repeatedly spoke against all laws of forbidden food. But we need not trouble ourselves about these contradictions, for if Paul told the truth about himself, this synod did not come off, and these provisos were not made.

Luke anticipates the matter. There was a meeting in Jerusalem in the house of James, as the author of the "We" portion states (Acts xxi, 18.) It is the same to which Paul refers in the above-mentioned epistle, viz: at the end of his mission journeys, after fourteen years. But then the meeting or synod did not resolve any such thing, for Paul says of that synod, "But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person; for they who appeared to be somewhat, have added nothing to me" (to my knowledge.) Only Peter, James and John acknowledged him, at the end of his journey, as an apostle to the Gentiles, not indeed to Jews; and caused him to deny in Jerusalem that

he ever spoke to Jews of the abrogation of the law and circumcision. (Acts xxi, 20.) After this last meeting he wrote his epistle to the Galatians, in which he says all this, and again protests against his colleagues' doings and teachings. He wrote the same protests from his prison in Cesarea, from Rome and even after that. Therefore not the shadow of a doubt exists that his colleagues from Jerusalem vexed and troubled him more than the Jews and even the Heathens.

Nothing, however, neither opposition nor danger, could prevent Paul to carry out his determination. He followed a manifest destiny with an uncompromising firmness and fervent enthusiasm. He cared no more in his mission for the saints than for the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, and paid no more respect to Peter than he did to the high priest. Like all men of this description he saw but his mission, trusted implicitly in his convictions, and went on with irresistible force and unaccelerated velocity.

The journeys of Paul, as described in "The Acts," are taken partly from the epistles, and partly from the notes of the "We" writer, to which Luke made additions, we know not on what authority. They are of no particular importance in this direction. They properly belong to ecclesiastical history. Still we must briefly review them, in order to appreciate the merits of some of Luke's additions to the sources before him.

Paul's first journey, in company with Barnabas, was made to Cyprus and some states of Asia Minor (Acts xiii, 4.) Having landed at Salamis on the Island of Cyprus, and preached in that synagogue, they went across to Paphos at the other end of the island. There they met Bar-Jesus or Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer, who opposed Paul before Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul who desired "to hear the word of God." Paul rebuked and cursed the poor man with blindness, and blind he was. This induced the proconsul to believe in the doctrines of Paul.

It is not only the involved miracle which renders the story suspicious ; it is also the fact that the author of "The Acts" here repeats his own story which he said of Peter. Peter, in his first attempt to convert non-Israelites, met with Simon, the magician, and converted the Roman Centurion Cornelius ; therefore Paul also must meet a Jewish magician and convert a prominent Roman. Our author proceeds on the special plan of counterbalancing Paul and Peter, to which end he is obliged to invent many a story, of which this appears to be one without any evidence of truth. If Paul could perform miracles so easily as is maintained in this and in numerous other cases, why did he not tell us, in his epistles, of this particular demonstration of his divine mission ? and why did he submit to so much suffering, as he says he did, if by a little bit of a miracle he could get over it,

and convince tens of thousands like Sergius Paulus that he stood under direct orders from on high? We have to ask these questions against every miracle of Paul, narrated by the author of "The Acts." There being, however, but one answer to these questions, viz : hence those miracles are the inventions of Luke or somebody else, we must consider all such stories fictitious.

Up to this event Luke calls our man Saul, but here (verse 9) he inserts " who also is called Paul." The reason is very simple. The journey across the Island of Cyprus was taken from the notes of the "We" writer, Luke only added stories and miracles to serve his purpose. The "We" writer knew no Saul, as little as the epistles do; they knew of Paul only. Luke being ignorant of his Hebrew name made Saul of Paul, changing P. to S. It appears that Paul was known only and exclusively as the apostle to the Gentiles, so that the biographical notes concerning him began with his work in Cyprus. Therefore all which the author of "The Acts" states about him previous to this event is unhistorical; while in the following the main points of the journey are historical, and the embellishing stories, miracles and speeches belong to Luke, whose tendencies and aims being conspicuous anywhere, deserves no confidence.

Going from Cyprus to Asia Minor, Paul and Barnabas traveled over the countries

of *Pamphylia*, *Psidia* and *Lycaonia*. They preached in the synagogues with changing success, finding believers now and persecutors then. The Gentiles believed much more readily than the Jews. Luke forgets not to have occasionally one of his favorite rows among the Jews with a noble Roman or some devout Gentile to quell it. He can not do without Paul's healing some blind or lame men and driving out some devils, as he said the same stories of Peter. He invents one of his childish speeches, and tells us Paul delivered it to the Jews of Antioch in *Psidia* (Acts xiii, 13) as though Paul could speak such empty phrases. But at *Lystra*, in the country of *Lycaonia*, our author goes a little too far for the ordinary common sense of a reader, who knows the old tale of Jupiter and Mercury who visited the house of Philemon and Baucis, in that same country of *Lycaonia*. On the strength of that old story, he has Paul and Barnabas heal a lame man at *Lystra*. The people seeing this miracle, exclaimed, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker." The priest brought oxen to sacrifice them to the guests. No wonder, Peter having been worshiped by Cornelius and his kinsmen, Paul must have the same honors. Peter refused those honors, and graciously maintained that he was a man only, so did Paul and Barnabas tear their garments and cried out before the multi-

tudes: "We also are men of like passions with you."

Luke, however, did not wait for the critic to say that his story was not true; he says so himself in the sequel, as plain indeed as language can convey it. He tells us that certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra, and persuaded the people to stone Paul; "And, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead." He indeed says, "Once was I stoned," (II Cor. xi, 25,) but he says not that it was in Lystra, and Luke had to fix the place. But he forgot that changes as sudden as this, that one being worshiped a god one day is stoned to death the next day, are almost impossible. Again he forgets that he represented Barnabas the chief man, nevertheless he escapes the wrath of a mad populace and Paul alone is noted. The fact appears to be that Barnabas being a mere traveling companion of Paul was not molested, while Paul, indeed, was stoned, and the first part of the story is of Luke's own invention.

Having visited several other cities, he preached the Gospel, and "ordained them elders in every church," they returned to Antioch in Syria. This first voyage of Paul, it appears, was as successful among the Gentiles as it was unsuccessful among the Jews. Here the author of "The Acts" brings in the convention of the apostles in Jerusalem, with Paul and Barnabas ap-



pearing before them, which, we have seen above, did not take place.

Shortly after that Paul started out on a second journey in company with Silas. He went through Syria and Cilicia to Asia Minor, traveling over Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, up to Troas, hence through all Asia Minor from south-west to the north-east. In Lystra Paul engaged his faithful Timotheus. He circumcised him, says the author of "The Acts," (xvi, 3) which can not be true, if the epistles and Paul's opposition to circumcision are true. The congregation of Galatia, which he must have founded during this tour, is not mentioned in "The Acts." From Troas Paul went over to Macedonia. In Philippi Paul mixed again among the women. He baptized Lydia and lodged then in her house. Here again (Acts xvi, 16) Luke puts in one of his peculiar stories. A man has a slave damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, and she earns much money for her master by soothsaying. Now this damsel follows Paul and his companions, crying after them day after day, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." If it is strange that the evil spirits on this and some other occasions knew so well all about Jesus and Paul, it is still more wonderful that they said it, as evil spirits usually are liars. Paul commanded the demon to leave the damsel and, as a matter of course, he left, and the soothsaying

was all gone. That this part of the story was enacted in Luke's imagination can hardly be doubted. But he proceeds with a piece of history. The master of the damsel accused Paul and Silas before the magistrate of preaching rebellious doctrines. The magistrates "rent off their clothes and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison." Why did Paul not prevent this suffering of Silas and of himself by stating at once that he was a Roman citizen? Because Luke wants to work a prison miracle as an offset to the one of Peter in the last persecution. At midnight "there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's hands were loosed." This was a new kind of earthquake which did not overthrow the buildings or things fastened to the earth; it merely broke chains without injury to those who bore them. But it had its effect. It converted the jailor in less than no time. Next day Paul remembered that he was a Roman citizen, and on this ground he was released from custody. All that can be true in this story is the fact that Paul had trouble with the people of Thyatira, on account of his opposition to Paganism, and was dragged before the magistrate, who, guided by passion and not by law, beat and imprisoned him, but, after a sober second thought, was obliged to dismiss him in peace.

In Thessalonica again only some Jews but a great many "devout Greeks" believed. Here Luke has another of his favorite rows among the Jews enacted, and has a Gentile on hand to save Paul and Silas. They went to Berea, and would have met there with success, if it had not been for the Jews of Thessalonica who followed them and forced Paul to leave for Athens. In this city he disputed in the synagogue "with the Jews and with the devout persons." Also "in the market" he disputed daily with various persons, so that stoic and epicurean philosophers thought he was a babbler, while others accused him of preaching to them strange gods, because he spoke of Jesus and the resurrection. Consequently they brought him before the Areopagus, the superior tribunal of Athens, where he in the speech quoted before, defended himself against this accusation, and set forth his belief in one invisible and spiritual God. The Athenians, it appears, were not opposed to this doctrine; but when he came with his peculiar doctrines of the resurrection of the dead and the Gospel connected therewith, "Some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again on this matter." Only two persons, it appears from the Acts (xvii, 34,) were converted, a woman named Damaris, and Dionysius, the Areopagite. This latter name is taken from Christian legends, according to which one Dionysius was the first bishop of Athens, and he

wrote many books. The fact appears to be that Paul was in Athens and met with no success there, because they could not be persuaded to believe in the end of all flesh to be on hand, hence his Gospel was superfluous.

From Athens Paul went to Corinth where he met with better success, and therefore he remained there for some time. The Jews would not listen to him; the Gentiles did. Here the author of "The Acts" tells us again one of his peculiar stories (xviii, 2.) He informs us that Paul "found a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately came from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers." Peter having been a fisherman, and most all the apostles having trades, Paul must be a tentmaker. Where and when he learned the trade is another question. If he was brought up in Jerusalem, "at the feet of Gamliel," (Acts xxii, 3,) was then engaged in either persecuting the Christians or in the conversion of the Gentiles, where and when did he learn that trade? Most all the rabbis had a trade, they say, and so had Paul. But it is not true. Some of the poor rabbis had a trade, because they had families to support; but Paul had none to support and was brought up at the feet of Gamliel. He did not begin

his studies in an advanced age, like Rabbi Akiba and others; he was a young man when he left Jerusalem. The tent making trade is an invention of Luke as an offset to Peter and the other apostles who were, in their early days, poor laborers. Besides all this, no historiographer mentions the fact that Claudius banished the Jews from Rome, hence it can not be true. This Aquila, born in Pontus, is the translator of the Pentateuch into the Greek. He was a Jewish proselyte, although he may have been a Christian first and then he embraced Judaism, as some of the fathers of the Church state. This Aquila was a relative of the Emperor Hadrian. He translated the Pentateuch sometime in the beginning of the second century; hence he was no tentmaker, and Paul could hardly have met him in Corinth toward 60 A. C.\*

Here again Luke produces one of his favorite rows among the Jews, and a noble Roman to settle the matter fairly and squarely, as usual, in favor of Paul. He left Corinth in company of Aquila and Priscilla. If there should be any doubt as to the fabulous additions made by Luke, one only need read that he says of Paul "having shorn his head in Conchrea; for he had a vow." Some commentators put this piece of mockery on Aquila, which does not improve the case. Paul, the great-

\*See also in Dr. Z. Frankel's Monatschrift 1851 p. 192, Juedisch-geschichtliche Studien von Dr. H. Graetz.

opponent of the law which he declares abrogated, had the Nazarite vow on his head, or taught Aquila to perform this Mosaic law. Here the hand of Luke is visible, who, for the sake of peace, would not admit that Paul abrogated the law, and makes here, as in the case of Timothy's circumcision, a hypocrite of the apostle to the Gentiles.

Leaving Aquila and his wife in Ephesus, Paul went back to Antioch. Here again Luke says he went to Jerusalem to keep a feast (Acts xviii, 21) which he adds on his own authority, to show that Paul who abrogated the law observed the law. He went back to Antioch. It was most likely then, when he rebuked Peter for his hypocrisy, eating with the Gentiles all the time, till messengers came from James, whom he feared and therefore refused to eat with the Gentiles. Luke says, Paul went to Jerusalem "and saluted the church," and Paul says he did not, and we must believe Paul.

Paul entered soon on a third journey to convert the Gentiles (Acts xviii, 23.) He "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order to strengthen all the disciples." He stopped a long time at Ephesus, Luke says three years. He succeeded here in converting the disciples of John the Baptist. Meeting with very little success among the Jews, he turned to the Gentiles with better success. The school-house of a certain Tyrannus was the church of Paul.

Luke forgets not to ascribe to Paul great miracles which he wrought, and he wrote it in his favorite style. The most ludicrous anecdote is that of the Jewish exorcists who banished evil spirits by the name of Jesus "whom Paul preacheth." Such deception might have been practiced. Every thing is possible with impostors. One of the evil spirits, like the one which was in the Macedonian damsel, broaches the secret. The refractory demon being accosted by some of these impostors, suddenly exclaimed, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The poor man in whom the demon was leaped on the ostracists and handled them so badly, "that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." (Acts xix, 13.) The effect was, as usual, the conversion of many, and the most wonderful part of the story is, that they burnt their books worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. The price of these books is rather high, as the knowledge and pluck of the demon are wonderful indeed; but the story can not be true.

Next follows the riot of the silversmiths of Ephesus. These men lived on manufacturing "silver shrines for Diana," and Paul interfered considerably with their trade by his successful opposition to Paganism. Demetrius, one of the wealthy manufacturers, convoked the craftsmen and excited them to a revolt, so that they caught two companions of Paul, and dragged them before the public forum. The disciples

and friends would not permit Paul to go there, where confusion, passion and violence appeared to reign. In the midst of all this confusion, however, Luke forgets not to state that the Jews were some of the chief actors, although he first spoke of the silversmiths only. The town clerk appeased the rioters, and the whole row turned out a fiasco. This was written to gratify Luke's propensities for rows and aiming a blow at the Jews. It is evident that the Christian congregations of Asia Minor in those early days were not numerous enough to endanger the trade in idols. Luke anticipates a state of affairs, which might have been true a century after Paul.

Paul left Ephesus, leaving his faithful Timothy there to take charge "that they teach no other doctrine," (I Tim. i, 3,) went again to Macedonia and to Greece and remained there about three months. Again Luke tells us, the Jews laid in wait for him, and he could not return, as he intended, by the way of Macedonia, so he was obliged to go the other way to Troas. He left Philippi, arrived in Troas, and wrought another miracle, and then went to Assos and Mitylene, Samos, Miletus, from thence to Coos, Rhodes and Patara, and over to Tyre. Here the disciples cautioned him not to go to Jerusalem, but he insisted upon going there, and settle, if possible, his difficulties with the apostles in Jerusalem. A prophet came to him at Cesarea, and cautioned him again not to



go to Jerusalem; but it appears he attached little importance to prophets, he went to Jerusalem to settle his difficulties. Nothing else, as is evident from his words to Timothy (I, i, 1,) was the cause of his intense desire and firm resolution to go to Jerusalem, except to come to an understanding with the apostles, who put more obstacles in his way than any other party.

Paul arrived in Jerusalem, the synod took place in the house of James, "and all the elders were present." They heard what he had to say; but they did not settle the difficulties. "Thou seest, brother," said they to him, "how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come." (Acts xxi, 20.) They not only could not and did not justify his doctrines concerning the law and circumcision, but also cautioned him that the Jew Christians might harm him, and therefore advised him to practice hypocrisy, in Jerusalem, although the author of "The Acts" adds the absurdity that they had written to the Gentiles to observe only four commandments concerning forbidden food and fornication. Paul himself informs us that be-

sides Peter, James and John, a very small minority, none reached him the hand of brotherhood, and none else acknowledged him an apostle to the Gentiles, and to them only. The rest opposed him, and he did not learn much of them, he says.

Poor man, after so much labor, so numerous toils, sufferings, perils and anxieties, he had no friend outside of his converts, no acknowledgment and no encouragement from any side. After so many years of toil he is not safe in Jerusalem among those whose master he had proclaimed, and whose cause he had promulgated, and is advised to practice mockery and hypocrisy in self-protection, to deny his principles for the sake of his life. This accounts for the violence of passion which characterizes his epistles, especially when he speaks of his colleagues and their opposition to the Gospel which he preached. However disfigured by Luke, the facts are undeniable. Paul was as successful among the Gentiles of Syria, Asia Minor, and partly also in Macedonia, as he was unsuccessful among the Jews and the Athenians. He was considered a babbler by the philosophers, as we this very day estimate all those who imitate him in preaching the approaching end of all flesh. The Jews considered him an apostate who rejected the laws of Moses and the custom of Israel. The Jew Christians rejected him as a dangerous innovator and antichrist. His hand was against every one, and every

one's hand was against him. It appears that many of his disciples began to suspect his Gospel, since the end which he prophesied did not come, and he preaches hope and faith, and faith and hope again, in his epistles; nevertheless he was obliged to deliver some to Satan, as he says to Timothy, and most likely many more deserted his churches. So we meet Paul, after a long, successful and brilliant career, deserted, almost alone in the city where he once sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

This, most likely, was the situation to which the rabbis refer in the following tale: Acher or Paul narrated, "I once rode behind the temple, and I heard a *Bath kol*, the voice of the Holy Ghost exclaiming, Return all ye toward children except Acher, who knows my glory and rebels against me." It takes no particular stretch of the imagination to imagine the bitter feelings of Paul, when he saw himself obliged to play the hypocrite in the temple, and found himself deserted from all sides, alone among those worshiping crowds, too far advanced in his system to return to those around him, and too sensitive and scrupulous, not to feel the painful situation in which he was, a prodigy among his people, and his success among the Gentiles was by no means secured beyond the possibility of entire failure.

## CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTURE, TRIAL AND DEPORTATION OF  
PAUL.

Paul must have appeared rather small in his own estimation, on walking up to the temple in company of the four men, whose expenses he paid, to purify himself and "be at charges" with them, that they may shave their heads: "and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee (Paul,) are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law. Mr. Wislicenus and other critics think this is an addition of Luke to the original notes; but there is no good reason why Paul discomfited before the synod, and he tells us he had but three of the whole assembly in his favor in regard to Gentiles, and none in regard to Jews—should not have submitted momentarily at least to the dictates of that synod, in order to get off in peace. He had come to Jerusalem to come to an understanding with his fellow Christians, in order to be opposed no longer by their messengers among the Gentiles, no other reason in the world can be assigned to his consistent resolve to visit Jerusalem. They demanded of him a public confession that he adhered to the law, and like numerous prelates after him under similar circumstances, he yielded to appease his fellow Christians and for the sake of his own safety in Jerusalem. Like Galileo he abjured his faith for a moment and then exclaimed, the earth

moves! When he was out of Jerusalem again, he defended his theories with the indignation of offended manliness, but momentarily he yielded. Paul was none of those imprudent enthusiasts who sacrifice themselves to emergencies which might be overcome or outflanked.

The synod had nothing to fear of the Jews of Palestine, because they did not know Paul. They certainly must have heard of his activity among the Gentiles, this or that merchant visiting those countries might have seen him, very few anyhow; but passing abroad as he did under the assumed name of Paul, they could only guess who he might be, without knowing it with any degree of certainty. Fourteen years ago he was one of the thousands of young students who frequented the schools of Jerusalem, and could not have a very extensive acquaintance in the city, as those young students usually associate among themselves, so that now but a few could have recognized him, without knowing, however, that he was the man called Paul.

The apprehension of the synod was, that the Jew Christians who must have known more about him, and must necessarily learn his presence in Jerusalem, "must needs come together," and might do him harm. They only speak of the Jews who believed in Jesus (verse 20) and that they, being informed of his course among the Gentiles (verse 21,) might congregate against him. (verse 22.) The Jews them-

selves are not mentioned at all. Therefore it is so much more likely that Paul considered it prudent and practical to yield to the demand of the synod, and assume allegiance to the laws of Moses.

Besides this the synod had just cause to dread the congregating of multitudes, even if they had no intention to harm Paul; because, as Josephus chronicles repeatedly, the slightest disorders of a multitude were welcome pretexts to the bloodthirsty Roman procurators, or a barbarous massacre, or the crucifixion of individuals as impostors or rebels. Paul must have known this and adopted every means of precaution to prevent any and every demonstration for or against himself. Had Jesus been as prudent as Paul was, he would not have been crucified.

Nobody can tell why Paul remained in Jerusalem after the session of the synod, whether he waited for a second convocation of that body and resolutions more favorable to his cause; or whether he considered it prudent to remain there some time, in order to convince his disciples of the peaceable solution of the existing difficulties between him and his colleagues. It could not be mere curiosity, nor could it be attachment to the Mosaic laws and institutions, or a sudden impulse of patriotism. We are only told that he remained there and did penance, and can see in this act only the submission of Paul to the synod.

For some days all went well. But when the seven days of purification were almost ended, Jews from Asia recognized him in the temple, laid hands on him, and cried out, "This is the man that teacheth all men every-where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." The first of these accusations was correct, the second was not; it resulted from a mistake. This, according to the author of "The Acts," was the signal to one of his favorite rows among the Jews with a noble Roman stepping up in due time to quell it. Here (Acts xxi, 30) the author deserts the historical ground entirely and returns to it with the beginning of the twenty-seventh chapter, "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy," &c. The whole portion of the narrative between those two points is more or less fictitious, as we shall see in the sequel.

The cry and double accusation of those Jews from Asia against Paul, says Luke, had the terrible effect that "all the city moved," as if Jerusalem had been a small town of rowdies, "and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut," with the intention to kill him. This is not exactly true, because it was not so easy a task to alarm the whole city of Jerusalem; Paul could not have entered the temple before his seven days of purifi-

cation were over\* and the doors of the temple were never closed in day time. If a demonstration against Paul actually took place somewhere about the temple, it is embellished by Luke to suit his notions.

“And as they went about to kill him” (Paul,) the author of “The Acts” continues, “tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar: Who immediately took soldiers, and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they ceased beating Paul.” If it is strange, very strange indeed, that all the people of a large city without previous consultation unanimously resolved to kill a man, and all of them could not get done killing him before the Roman soldiery interfered, things impossible in themselves; it is still stranger that such a general row was possible in a city, whose citizens, for a thousand years previous, had been governed by the laws of Moses. Law and law again, a law for every possible emergency, is the principle charge made against the Pharisees; while, according to Luke’s stories, there is no shadow of a law anywhere among the Jews. Any sensible person is obliged to admit that so large and old a city as Jerusalem was, visited continually by so many thousands of strangers, if she had not been governed by the laws of Moses, must have had police regulations, for the security of life and property. Unfortu-

\*Leviticus vi, 9, 10, and rabbin. commentaries *Ibid.*



nately the laws of this description are carefully preserved in the Talmud,\* and demonstrate prudent and minute legislation. In a city, governed by the Mosaic law, and by a system of police regulations, a row like the one described by Luke is utterly impossible. If a thing could be worse than impossible, this story would certainly be so; because aside of all the above considerations, one person, and, to say the worst, one who taught a religion contrary to their notions, could not possibly have thrown a whole city into such spasms, such fits of insanity, that all ran amock to kill one person, did not have accomplished their purpose before the Roman soldiery had interfered.

Aside of all these considerations, two essential points must be borne in mind. The first is this: All known sources, be they Jewish or Gentile, of fifteen centuries of Hebrew history, from Joshua to Hadrian, make no mention of the execution of a single person on account of his religious or his political opinions expressed in this or that way. Once, and once only, we are informed of the persecution of witches by King Saul, and once in the time of a Maccabean ruler. If there had not been granted the widest scope to religious thought, how could those numerous sects have sprung up in Palestine? The Pharisean rabbis, with all the imperfections upon

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\*See "neber manches polizeiliche des talmudischen Rechts," by Dr. Z. Frankel, Monatschrift 1852, where many of the sources are quoted.

their heads, were opposed to capital punishment, and virtually abolished it in regard to political and religious offenders, without substituting another mode of punishment.† But all at once, and all is isolated in the evangelical sources which come with stories of rank fanaticism, lawlessness and barbarism, all charged upon the Jews, and all possible mercy, rectitude and piety given to the Romans, whose history, especially of that and the previous century, is full of the most revolting outrages on humanity. Any person looking carefully upon this point is forced to the conclusion that the evangelical accounts in regard to Jesus and his disciples, as well as in regard to Paul, have been falsified with the special intention to flatter the Romans and slander the Jews. This is supported by the Latin sources. Tacitus (Annals xv) says not that the Jews crucified Jesus; he says of him, "who, in the reign of Tiberius, was brought to punishment by Pontius Pilate, the procurator." In Pliny's epistle to Trajan, it is not said that the Jews persecuted the Christians as one of their sects; it says that the subordinates of Trajan were commanded by an edict to do it, and did it most numerically. The same Trajan who was an enemy of the Jews was also an enemy of the Christians. But in the evangelical stories all these relations appear in an inverted position.

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†See all the proviso's in regard to *Saken Mamre* in the Talmud *Sanhedrin*, or in Malmonides, *Yad*, II. *Mamrim*.

The second point is this: We read the accounts of Josephus from the death of Herod I to the days of the last war, and we find the state of affairs to be in the main, that the usurpations of Rome and the outrages of her procurators in Judea, gave rise to numerous revolts, the leaders of which were religious pretenders, in many cases, prophets, Messiahs, or such other titles as they assumed, like Judas the Galilean, his two sons, Theudas, the prophet from Egypt and many more. All of them were persecuted, some crucified, not by the Jews, but by the Romans, and everybody almost who raised his voice in behalf of a new idea suffered the same fate. Thousands died on the cross. In all instances, without exception, the Jews appear as the persecuted part and the Romans as the persecutors. In the evangelical writings only, the Jews rage against their own sons and brothers, and the Romans defend them. The roles are suddenly changed, without any reason or cause. History suddenly belies herself, and a people turns treacherous to itself. The thing is impossible, a child almost can see it. The evangelical writers had their special reasons to flatter the Romans whom they feared and whose favors they courted, and to insult the Jews of whom they had nothing to fear or to expect.

This is also the case with Luke's account of Paul's capture and trial. It is one mass of representations to flatter the Romans

and insult the Jews, the same policy which we have noticed all along. Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, Dyonisius of Athens, the town clerk of Ephesus, the judges of Corinth, and all the other Gentiles, are perfect angels; and every Jew we meet in "The Acts," Gamliel excepted, is a perfect devil. This can not be true.

It may be and it may not be that some Jews of Asia denounced Paul somewhere about the temple, there is no proof on record, and in consequence thereof a tumultuous crowd gathered around him, which getting somewhat louder than Roman orders permitted, a squad of soldiers dispersed the crowd and arrested Paul. It is sure that the Romans arrested him under the impression that he was a ring leader, for the Roman captain did not rescue him; he "commanded him to be bound with two chains," "to be carried into the castle," and there asked him, "Art not thou that Egyptian (the prophet) which before these days madest an uproar, and led'st out into the wilderness four thousand men that were robbers?" If the people had beaten Paul or had demonstrated any intention to kill him, the Roman captain could not have suspected him to be the man whose avowed intention it was to free Jerusalem from her Roman usurpers.

Paul was led to the castle, and the multitude followed. He having spoken to the captain and obtained permission to address the people, spoke to them from the stairs

of the castle, so Luke narrates. Paul "beckoned with the hand to the people," to the excited multitude who a few minutes before were about to kill him, and "there was made a great silence." This transition is as unnatural as is the other part of the narrative, viz: that Paul who had been mercilessly beaten by the crowd, now all at once is recovered and makes a speech to the mob. Either the populace was not as excited as Luke says, or they were not silenced so easily. Either Paul was not beaten by the populace or he made no speech. We apprehend both statements are untrue. To what purpose could Paul have addressed the populace. Could he expect of them that they should rescue him from the power of the Romans? Certainly not, even if he could convince them of the justice of his cause, he could not expect any such thing of them who were powerless before the Roman garrison. Did he speak merely to justify himself before his assailants? It is not only unnatural for a man who was a while ago beaten and abused by a mob, to address them as dispassionately as Luke's speech on this occasion is, who wrote it in his quiet room, so that nobody will expect even of Paul to be so entirely free of the usual human passions; but it is also untrue that Paul spoke the words which Luke ascribes to him. In the first place, Luke says they were gratified to hear him speak in the Hebrew tongue. (Acts xxii, 2.) Did they not know

that he was a Jew? and knowing that he was a Jew speaking to Jews, how could they expect him to speak otherwise than in their own dialect? and with this expectation, how could they be so particularly gratified? This notice was evidently put in by one who, unacquainted with the precise state of things, thought the Greek was spoken in Jerusalem as frequently as the peculiar dialect of the country, only that the populace preferred the latter.

The story which occurs here in Paul's speech—of his going to Damascus to bring the Christians bound to Jerusalem together with the vision he had on his way to Damascus—we have seen above is not true, hence not Paul but Luke said it. He is supposed to have said, "the high priest doth bear me witness," and standing before the high priest (Acts xxiii, 5,) he said: "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest," so he did not know him who was to be his witness. The commentators think he referred to documents with the high priest's signature; if he, indeed, fourteen years ago had such a document, which he most likely had not, it is wonderful that he had it on hand just now in this tumult. He mentions Ananias of Damascus and the death of Stephen, both of which belong to Luke and not to Paul. He mentions his coming to Jerusalem right after his conversion which he flatly denies in his epistle to the Galatians. The speech is Luke's and not Paul's. It is neither his spirit, nor his way

to argue. So is the sequel, the wild vociferations and the terrible conduct of the crowd who had listened to the speech. Luke supposes, when Paul said to the crowd, "And he (Jesus) said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles"—their patience gave way, and they would not listen any longer, as if Paul had been accused on account of saying this or that to the Gentiles; or as if they had thought there was a crime in his going to the Gentiles. This is evidently Luke's private opinion which he had already put into the mouth of Peter speaking to Cornelius.

Luke's speech being delivered and one of his favorite rows being closed, the captain commands that Paul be examined "by scourging" in the style of Roman justice, with which Mr. Renan is so well pleased. Paul pleads his being a Roman citizen, and the captain was satisfied with keeping him in custody, in chains of course. The captain, however, was alarmed that he had arrested and chained a Roman citizen, as if that had never happened before. Therefore the next morning he called "the chief priests and all their council" to the castle to ascertain what Paul had done. This is certainly new, that a Roman officer submitted a case to those whom they had deprived of all jurisdiction; but Luke needs this link to inform us that Paul was arrested and transported to Cesarea and then to Rome, not by Roman aggressions, but

by Jewish instigations. The thing does not sound likely, but Luke wanted it so.

The most childish piece of invention is the next following trial. It begins with the childish statement that the captain of the castle, an officer of inferior rank, "COMMANDED the chief priests and all their council to appear," among them, of course, the high priest. The highest ecclesiastical dignitaries of a country, and among them the high priest who was also politically the most important personage in the land, are commanded to appear before a military officer of a lower grade; and they do appear. The prisoner is not led into the court room; the court is brought before the prisoner. Precedents and parallel cases in Jewish history can not be found. This council is not the regular Sanhedrin; it is the council of priests, as in the case of Stephen.

In the morning the high priest and his council met in the lower part of the castle, and Paul was placed before them. The lawless proceedings begin, not with an accusation and the testimony, agreeable to Jewish law, Paul opens the court thus: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." This, indeed, looks much more like Paul than like Luke, and he most likely said so on some occasion, but not on this, which never took place. The barbarian of a high priest, however, feels so much excited at this simple plea of innocence that he com-



mands somebody to smite Paul on the mouth. What a rude, uncouth and barbarous man! and he was the high priest of the Jews—that is Luke's object in this unpleasant interruption, regardless of law, custom, dignity or position. John in his Gospel (xviii, 19) copied this entire scene into the trial of Jesus. He applied it almost verbatim to his case. This informs us that John did not believe this statement of Luke; but understanding his object, to aim a blow at the Jews, he thought it would do just as well in the case of Jesus as in that of Paul.

Paul, who was a lamb yesterday, made a mild and calm speech to the populace which beat, maltreated and tried very hard to kill him; Paul, forgetful of his master's words, "Whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;" the prudent and sagacious Paul, standing before his judges with his life in jeopardy, flies into a passion and tells the chief man of that court, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Luke made this part too childish. He could hardly expect anybody to believe it.

But he gets worse with every progressive step in the story. Next he tells us that one of the bystanders rebuked Paul, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" to which Paul replied, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt

not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." It may be, but it is not very likely, that Paul, having been several days about the temple, did not know the high priest, or be told a falsehood in self-defence. It may be, although it is not very likely, that Paul considered it necessary to quote a Mosaic law to his self-incrimination, and before men who are naturally supposed to know the law. But it is utterly improbable that Paul before that council should make a misquotation. Moses said (Exodus xxii, 28,) "Thou shalt not revile God (*Elohim*), nor shalt thou curse the prince of thy people." The quotation is Luke's and not Paul's.

The council took no further notice of Paul's behavior, no trial followed, no legal proceedings were had, Paul played them a trick, and that with a noble Roman stepping between the parties, settled the question. "Paul perceived that the one party were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees," says Luke, without informing us how he ascertained this fact; and he said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Luke's moral conception was rather poor, we have seen on former occasions; but to make a liar of Paul is a little too bad. Paul, who argued with might and main against the law, said he was a Pharisee. This is a bare-faced falsehood, which Paul could not have said. Standing accused from the start of this

affair of having preached against the law and the temple, and having brought an uncircumcised Gentile into the temple, Paul says he was accused on account of the resurrection of the dead. This is another falsehood which Paul could not have said. But the fun of the thing is, the judges did not know of what the prisoner was accused, that is original, and hearing him speak of the resurrection, the Pharisees jumped up in his favor, and now one of Luke's favorite rows ensues in the very grave council of the high priest, which a noble Roman closes quite dramatically by the soldiers taking Paul away. The Sadducees and Pharisees of the council are supposed not only to have been ignorant of Paul's career and the charges against him, the scribes are also brought in, and the melee becomes amusing and ludicrous.

Luke had no more knowledge of a high priest and his court than he had of the man in the moon, and did not know how to make his story appear any way palpable or probable at least. He tells a coarse fiction in a coarse manner. The story could have transpired thus: Paul having been arrested as the ring leader of a tumult, plead innocence before the Roman captain. The Asiatic Jews, most likely arrested with him, may have testified against him that he traveled as an agitator over Asia Minor, proclaiming the Messiah. This induced the captain to send him away to the procurator who resided in Cesarea. Whether

the high priest had a hand in it, we will decide below, after we shall know who this ANANIAS was. Thus much, however, it is easy to decide, that the trial before the high priest is a fiction.

Paul made up his mind in the night to appeal to the emperor, which Luke tells us (Acts xxiii, 12,) in the form of a vision. His situation was a desperate one. If one-tenth of the public disturbances which Paul's mission created in the various provinces was true and known to the imperial officers of Judea, he necessarily must have been considered a dangerous agitator, especially as his Messianic doctrine had, to the uninitiated at least, so much the appearance of a political scheme. In the loyal provinces, the Roman authorities were not so easily alarmed by disturbances like those of Ephesus, Corinth and elsewhere. But in Judea, the ever rebellious province, the imperial officers were much more sensitive and much easier alarmed. Felix alone had thousands crucified, impostors, robbers, *scarii* and their followers, any body almost who submitted not to Rome's authority, or who had a new idea to promulgate. Paul was considered harmless in other provinces, but in Judea he must have appeared a dangerous agitator in the eyes of the jealous and vigilant Romans. Having renounced his people and denounced the law, the covenant, and the circumcision, he could expect enmity only from the Jewish authorities, and very little favor from

the people, a fact which Luke knew, and tried to represent, in his own way, by rows, speeches, trials and a noble Roman. He had nothing to expect of the Jew Christians, partly they were powerless, and partly, or probably chiefly, they hated Paul's innovations. Not one of them shows his face any where during the trials and the captivity of Paul. Not a word was spoken, not a measure adopted, according to the sources before us, in favor of the great apostle to the Gentiles by the Jew Christians. This silence is ominous. Much more so, however, is the utter silence of the Holy Ghost, of all the angels, and of all miracles. Luke does not tell us the whole truth in this matter; his silence, however, offers us a fair opportunity to peep behind the curtain, and inquire with astonishment, where were those thousands of Jewish Christians, the Holy Ghost, the angels, and all the miracles, during the troubles of Paul? Nowhere! It appears they felt no particular regret for being relieved of a dangerous innovator, so that one is almost tempted to believe the Jews from Asia who betrayed Paul were Christians. There is, indeed, a Christian legend on record that one of the apostles killed Paul. Having met his opponents a few days previously in the synod, Paul must have known that he had as little to expect of the Christians as he had of the Roman or the Jewish authorities. He must have dreaded the high priest most, for which he had un-

doubtedly the best founded reason. But we can not explain this point before we know who that Ananias actually was, which we must defer a little. All these points must have been well known to Paul, therefore he could do but one thing, appeal to the emperor. He was a Roman citizen, so this appeal was his unquestionable right.

In the morning, Paul was informed of a conspiracy against his life. His sister's son informed him and then also the captain of the castle, that during the night about forty Jews banded together and swore an oath to assassinate Paul. They had an understanding "with the chief priests and elders," that they should try Paul in their court-room, so that he be brought out of the castle, and they should have an opportunity to kill him. Here the question rises, how did "Paul's sister's son" ascertain so quickly the existence of that conspiracy, as, by the very nature of the thing, it must have been done secretly? Did that informer actually know or did he only suppose to know the existence of that plot? Did the informer actually say so, or did Luke state it on his own authority? The understanding with the "chief priests and elders" looks suspicious. It is not at all likely that the principal men of a nation enter into a plot with assassins. It appears much more likely that the author of "The Acts" imitated the assassination plot of Felix against the high priest Jonathan which

Josephus narrates.\* Luke may have written this story, which he repeats afterward, to justify the apprehensions of Paul, to be tried before a court of his own countrymen and by the laws of his own people. He must have known that Paul sharply rebuked the Corinthians, (I Cor. vi,) because "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers," and not before their own coreligionists; why is he now guilty of the same offence which he condemns so emphatically with the Corinthians? He must have known furthermore the just prejudices of the Jews against the Roman courts of justice, how emphatically they condemned an appeal to them, (ערכאות שלהם) and how fully Paul endorsed this prejudice. He must have known that an appeal to the emperor was an insult to the nation, and must have roused the indignation of the Jews and the Jew Christians; therefore Luke, or Paul's sister's son, may have invented this assassination plot, especially to justify Paul's step before the Jewish Christians. The materials were on hand in the Felix and Jonathan affair. Nevertheless the story may be true. Paul undoubtedly had plenty of fanatical enemies among Jews and Jew Christians. The high priest himself may have been eager to get Paul out of the way. Especially after his appeal to the emperor had become known among the community, his death must have appeared to many pre-

\* Antiquities xx, viii, 5.

ferable to a denunciation or an accusation against the Hebrew people before the emperor.

Paul left Jerusalem a captive under the protection of two hundred and seventy soldiers, and the thousands of Christians did not rescue him. He went to Antipatris and thence to Cesarea, where he appeared before the governor or procurator of Judea, the highest Roman officer of the province.

The author of "The Acts" quotes a number of Roman names and official documents, such as the letter of the captain to the governor (Acts xxiii, 26,) which some accept as authentic, although they are not, and Luke himself says in regard to that letter, that it was written "after this manner," hence not literally so. There is no reason why Luke should not have copied the original letter, if he had been in possession thereof. The same is the case with all the speeches up to the twenty-seventh chapter, where the "We" writer is again quoted. Luke had no original of either before him in writing "The Acts." If such historical documents had been in existence in the imperial archive at Cesarea, Josephus or Tacitus must have known and said something about the former at the occasion of the death of James, and the latter in his notice on the Christians under Nero. If those documents had been in the hands of Paul—but we can not see how he could get them, or rather if those trials had been as Luke describes them—Paul must have said



something about them in his epistles written from the prison at Cesarea, or from Rome. There exists not the slightest proof that the historical documents and names mentioned in this connection are not the inventions of Luke. We have proof positive, however, that either the name of Ananias, the high priest, or the names of Felix and Festus must be dropped as unhistorical in this connection.

The author of "The Acts" states repeatedly that the high priest before whom Paul was tried was called Ananias. Josephus mentions three high priests of the same name. The first is Annas or Ananus, the son of Seth, who is mentioned in the crucifixion story, in connection with his son-in-law, Josephus Caiaphas, the fourth high priest after the former. The second is Ananias, the son of Nebedeus, appointed by Herod, King of Chalcis, when Cumanus succeeded Tiberius Alexander, as governor of Judea, about 48 A. C. (Joseph. Antiquit. xx, v, 2.) The third is Ananus, the son of Ananus, who was high priest when Albinus came to Palestine, under whose procuratorship James was slain, about 62 A. C. (Ibid. xx, ix, 1.) Of which of these three could Luke possibly think? He could not think of the first who was already deposed when Jesus was crucified, and figures only on the side of Caiaphas who was the high priest then. He could not think of the second, because he comes in connection with Tiberius Alexander and Cumanus,

and especially with Herod, King of Chalcis, who appointed him, and the death of Herod is mentioned in "The Acts" (xii, 23) as having occurred previous to Paul's journeys. This second Ananias is the high priest who figures in the first persecutions of Peter, John and the others, about 48 to 50 A. C. Herod died 49 A. C. So he could only think of the third Ananus, Annas or Ananias which are synonyms.

None of these three high priests were contemporaneous with Felix, who was governor of Judea for nine years between 51 and 60 A. C. The high priest, on whose recommendation Felix was made procurator of Judea, was Jonathan, the same whom Felix had afterward assassinated (Joseph. Antiq. xx, viii, 5) and this Jonathan was the successor of Ananias, if Josephus omitted none between them. But if Jonathan even succeeded Ananias in the beginning of Felix's administration, which is quite unlikely, as Josephus expressly states, "He (Jonathan) it was who had desired Cæsar to send him (Felix) as procurator of Judea," which influence with the emperor could be expected only of the high priest—still if we lay no stress upon this and admit that Ananias was high priest when Felix came to Judea; it does not change the case, for Jonathan must have soon followed him, and Paul is supposed to have been before Felix toward the end of his administration. Again Jonathan was slain long before the sedition under

the prophet from Egypt, as Josephus informs us, (ibid 6) and Paul was arrested long after that event, as the author of "The Acts" tells. (Acts xxi, 38.) Therefore Jonathan, the successor of Ananias, was dead long before the trial of Paul. The successor of Jonathan was Ismael, son of Fabi, appointed by Agrippa. This Ismael outlived the administration of Felix, because Josephus narrates (ibid. xx, viii, 11) that he was high priest in the time of Festus, Felix's successor, and was of the ten deputies sent to Nero from Jerusalem, and was retained there with Helcias as hostages to gratify the piety of Poppea, the wife of Nero and patroness of the Jews. Next Agrippa appointed Joseph Cabi high priest; but when Festus died, Agrippa deposed Joseph Cabi and appointed the Sadducee Ananus, son of Ananus who slew James (ibid. xx. ix, 1.) The high priests with Felix were Jonathan and Ismael, son of Fabi, and with Festus and Joseph Cabi, no Ananias and no Ananus. Therefore either the Ananias or the Felix and Festus in the accounts of "The Acts" must be dropped as unhistorical.

Which must be dropped? According to the chronology which we established above, we must drop Felix and Festus and retain Ananias in Luke's accounts. We placed the conversion of Paul about 50 A. C. He gives us the date of fourteen years from his conversion to his second visit in Jerusalem, when he was captured. The numbers

three, five, seven and their multiples must never be taken exactly with Paul or any ancient writer. He mentions the same number fourteen (II Cor. xii, 1) in pointing back to the day of his conversion, and this was written in Macedonia, a few weeks before his arrival in Jerusalem. Therefore the congregation of Antioch was established in 52 or 53 A. C., after which he traveled about ten years, and then he came to Jerusalem about 63 A. C., exactly when Ananus was high priest and Albinus was governor.

Besides, however, we have other reasons for this preference. They are the following:

1. This Ananus was a known fanatic. He had slain James, the brother of Jesus and some of his companions, after a sham trial before a sanhedrin of his creatures, on the accusation "as breakers of the law." Against this act of violence "the most equitable of the citizens and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws," as Josephus informs us (Antiq. xx, ix, 1,) raised a loud and emphatic protest before Agrippa and also before Albinus. This fanatic may also have persecuted Paul, only that he lacked the power to do him any harm. This changes the general aspect of the state of affairs, but it shows us the probability that the high priest persecuted Paul contrary to the laws of his country and against the will of the better class of his people.

2. Paul's arrest took place after the execution of James. For had James, the brother of Jesus, been alive, he would have been the head of the apostolic congregation. In this case the author of "The Acts" would not have said plainly (Acts **xxi**, 18) the synod took place in the house of James, he must have added, the brother of Jesus, as there were three of the same name in the apostolic college. Still if the author of "The Acts" had forgotten this explanatory phrase, Paul himself could not well forget it (Galat. **ii**, 9) since he bases his apostolic authority upon the three men, whom he names there, viz: James, Peter and John; especially as he does not forget to mention "the brother of the Lord" (ibid. **i**, 19) in speaking of his first visit in Jerusalem, and on other occasions. The James we find at the time at the head of the apostolic congregation is the same who figures in the Talmud as the representative of the congregation under the name of Jacob (James) of Capersamia, who was still alive in the days of Trajan, and was the author of the epistle which bears his name.

3. Had Paul been accused by the high priest before Felix or before Festus, of being "a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes"—no appeal to all the emperors living or dead would have saved his life. Those two procurators were insatiable hyenas, in comparison to whom all the grand inquisitors

of bloody memory were benign lambkins. Whoever dared to express an idea or do anything not agreeable to the notions of the procurator was a prophet, an impostor or a robber, and he was sure to be crucified or his life was otherwise disposed of. With those men it was not avarice which prompted them to those diabolic crimes ; it was the usual design of tyrants to spread terror and to enforce unconditional submission, coupled with a bloodthirsty disposition. Josephus, being an eye-witness of that terrible time, must have known correctly the unnatural crimes of those procurators, and writing, as he did, under the very eyes of the Roman aristocracy, has certainly not overwrought them. Nevertheless every paragraph of his history concerning those men fills one with abhorrence against those inexorable tyrants, who were reckless, merciless, without any human feeling for the people. Had Paul been delivered into their hands, with the accusation of sedition made by the high priest, no earthly power could have saved his life.

4. The author of "The Acts" ascribes the long retention of Paul in Cesarea to avarice. He says, "He (Felix) hoped also that money should be given him of Paul that he might loose him : wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him." All this looks more like Albinus than Felix. "Albinus concealed his wickedness, and was careful that it might not be

discovered to all men" (Joseph. xx, xi, 1.) Upon the petition of the Jews, after James had been slain, "Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done." (Ibid. xx, ix, 1.) Money was the main object of Albinus. He took money of almost any body, of the deposed high priest Ananias (ibid. 3;) of the robbers and other prisoners (ibid. 5.) He was so avaricious that he robbed with the robbers and was an arch-robber himself. (Wars ii, xiv, 1.) This is the man of whom it might naturally be expected that he protected Paul, and that he expected money of him.

"But after two years" (Acts xxiv, 27) points not to Paul's having been two years in prison, it points rather to the two years of Albinus. He was governor but two years.

We can not tell how Luke came to make this mistake, but a mistake it certainly is, by the correction of which the whole affair adjusts itself into a historical shape. Paul went to Jerusalem after James and his companions had been executed, therefore the precaution of the apostles, the voice of the disciples and the prophet to Paul, not to go there. He was arrested by the Romans on the accusation of some Asiatic Jews, and knowing, as he did, the wickedness of Ananias, he appealed to the emperor and was sent to Cesarea. Luke who was well aware of the fact that the law-abiding Jews

who were so much opposed to the execution of James, must also have been opposed to doing any wrong to Paul; but he would not tell it in plain words. He prefers writing the farce of a trial to reach the same object by a row among Sadducees and Pharisees in the council. This brings us again to Cesarea, but not before Felix; it brings us before Albinus with Paul and Ananias.

Five days after Paul had arrived in Cesarea, his accusers made their appearance. Ananias, the high priest, with the elders, and an orator named Tertullus, were the persons who accused him to be "a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes: Who also hath gone about to profane the temple;" to which "the Jews also assented," meaning those who had come with the high priest. The fact that a speaker was deemed necessary shows that the governor was a stranger to them, hence it was not Felix. The charge of sedition among *all the Jews throughout the world* is absurd, and could never have been made officially. But it must not be forgotten that we have no originals before us; we read what Luke thought proper to tell us. Another absurdity in the case is that the accusers came without witnesses.

Paul's speech is the production of Luke, with some sentences from Paul. Paul could not have said that he "believed all things which were written in the law and



in the prophets," when the abrogation of the law was one of his principal objects. Nor could he have said, "Now, after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings," when the object of his coming was quite another, and he was opposed to all offerings, which means sacrifices in the temple. The fact is, he denied all their charges and admitted only one point, viz: that he was a Christian. "The way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers." The governor adjourned the case, to be informed of the captain of Jerusalem concerning it; but the case was never tried. Ananias was removed from office in consequence of the popular complaints against his bloody fanaticism (Joseph. Antiq. xx, ix, 1) and his successor Jesus, the son of Damneus, did not prosecute the case. Luke confesses this, but he does it in his own peculiar manner. He has Paul brought before Agrippa and Bernice, where he must deliver a speech, which he could never have delivered on account of the Damascus story, narrated again and contradictory to former statements; and because, he says not one word of the case itself, he only speaks of his belief in Jesus, when he stood chiefly accused of sedition among the Jews in preaching against the law and the temple. Still Luke took the trouble of writing the speech, having it delivered by Paul, in order to let Agrippa say "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," which he most likely did not

say. But the governor and Agrippa may have agreed, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or bonds," and Agrippa may have added, "This man might have been set at liberty, had he not appealed unto Cæsar." If Agrippa said so, the high priest would not say otherwise, for he appointed and removed the high priests. Nevertheless Paul was afraid of a trial before the priests, for Ananias, though no longer high priest, was a mighty man and a friend of the governor. (Ibid. 2.) Paul had many enemies in Jerusalem, no doubt, and he could have no confidence in his fellow Christians who did nothing for him. From his prison in Cæsarea, loaded with chains, he thundered against them, with unreserved anger, standing firmly by his own Gospel, and denouncing them in the language of an offended man. Besides all this he had appealed to Cæsar right at the beginning, and he would not change his opinion now. He had been retained in Cæsarea by a mercenary governor who speculated on his purse; but in vain. Another governor came, and he was sent to Rome 65 A. C.

This appeal to Cæsar must have estranged him to the Hebrew people, both to Jews and Christians. It was contrary to his own doctrine preached to the Corinthians, and very offensive to the Hebrews. He alienated himself from his people. It appears to us that he took this step deliberately and purposely, in order to appear before the

Gentiles alienated from his people, to stand among them as one of them, free of their prejudices against the Jews and their laws. Having nothing to expect from the apostolic congregation, he threw himself entirely into the embrace of his Gentile friends. This is evident from the epistles which he wrote from Cesarea and from Rome, in which he is most violent against his colleagues in Jerusalem, and most outspoken against the law, circumcision and everything Jewish.

Tacitus is our testimony that Paul did not reach Rome before the spring of 65 A. C. He must have come there in the days of the emperor Nero, either shortly before the conflagration of Rome (Christian chronologists waver between 62 or 63 A. C.) or a considerable time after it. If the testimony of Tacitus\* deserves credit, the early Christians were considered in Rome "a race of men detested for their evil practices," on account of their belief in "a dangerous superstition," and it was dangerous to the Roman paganism, so that it appears quite natural that it supposed the primitive Christians harbored "a sullen hatred of the whole human race." Under such circumstances, it is quite natural to suppose that no Christian congregation existed in Rome, and nobody had undertaken it publicly to promulgate Christianity, although many Christians from Judea and other Roman provinces had come to the capital. Many

\*Annals xv, xlv.

years after this, the Christian congregation as such was unknown in Rome; it was a secret society known publicly as a burial association. Had Paul been brought before Nero before or shortly after the conflagration, and accused as THE promulgator of Christianity among the Gentiles, thus much is certain, nothing could have saved his head. The process would have been brief and Neronic; death was inevitable. But after the conflagration, when Nero, on the evidence "of profligate and abandoned wretches," not only put to death many Christians, in his own gardens, "with exquisite cruelty," but also added to their sufferings "mockery and derision," then, as is almost invariably the case under such circumstances, "the cruelty of these proceedings filled every breast with compassion. Humanity relented in favor of the Christians." Therefore only after the Neronic persecution it is possible that Paul was permitted to live in his own hired house in Rome, unmolested by the authorities, and to escape unhurt from the hands of Nero.

It is one of the strangest errors of Christian critics, having before themselves two authentic statements, the one of Josephus, that the better class of Jews condemned the unjust proceedings of Ananias and his co-adjutors against James and the Christians, and the other of Tacitus, that the Romans did hate the new Christians, acquiesced in their torments, in the unparal-

leled barbarity of Nero against them, until it became too shocking, and they were led to believe that those Christians "fell a sacrifice, not for the public good, but to glut the rage and cruelty of one man only;" and knowing, as they must, that these two statements can not be disregarded; nevertheless they credit the statements of the author of "The Acts," according to which the Jews, and the Jews only, persecuted the nascent Christians, and the Romans in all cases protected them, so that even wicked Felix becomes a saint almost in the hands of Luke. How is it possible, we ask with surprise, that those critics did not see that Luke's aim was to gain the favor of the Romans for Christianity? They having crucified Jesus, as Tacitus states, and began to deify him in the days of Luke, they having slaughtered so many Christians, to whom they afterward looked up as great teachers and martyrs, Luke attempted to persuade them that their patrician ancestors were admirers of Jesus and his disciples, of Paul and his followers, and protected them against the violence and wickedness of the Jews. It is a mystery to us how critics could possibly overlook this fact.

In the spring 65 A. C., Paul was sent to Rome, in company with other prisoners. The main notices concerning that voyage the author of "The Acts" copied from the "We" writer. He embellishes them, however, with childish miracles, being bent

upon making a quack and a juggler of every one of his heroes. Paul prophesied, healed the sick, was wonderfully saved in the storm, and did plenty of miracles to counterbalance Peter's reputation. The story of the serpent, which "fastened on Paul's hand" and which "he shook into the fire and felt no harm," we have stated above, is taken from a rabbinical tale of Rabbi Haninah ben Dosa and the venomous serpent which died by biting the rabbi's heel. The brief notes of his journey to Rome are void of interest, except to the ecclesiastical historiographer. He arrived safely in Rome, was met by brothers, and without any trial or molestation, he "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him." He preached his doctrines privately to his visitors, "no man forbidding him." This could only have been the case after the Neronian persecution, when the people began to sympathize with the Christians.

So far the author of "The Acts" leads us; here his accounts end without any closing remarks or any form of finishing a book. This leads to the supposition that a portion of "The Acts" has been lost. There was a tradition in the church that Paul stood twice before Nero (II Timothy iv, 22) which, if true, Luke must have mentioned and embellished. It was supposed that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, if so, Luke must have known it and passed some remarks on this important event, especially

as he drops him rather unceremoniously after the death of the first James. Not having been an acknowledged portion of the Canon as late as 407, it is not strange at all that as additions were made to its narratives, portions of its end especially may have been lost, as it actually appears to have been the case. The authors of legends seized upon this vacuum and filled the balance of the first century with tales and epistles so utterly incredible and crude that the early Christian critics rejected them. It is from sources of this description that the martyrdom of Paul and Peter is derived. We will examine those legends in our next chapter, as also the rabbinical notes concerning Acher or Paul, for the consideration of the historiographer, whom we hope to have assisted in the separation of the grain from the chaff in the Christian sources. May it also enlighten the teachers and professors of religion.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE LAST DAYS OF PAUL.

The apocryphal portions of the New Testament were excluded from the Scriptural canon, because they are pseudonymous; they were written centuries after and by other authors than those whose names are connected with the respective books. The cabalistic writers of the Jews have committed the same frauds in publishing, from and after the thirteenth century, books of Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai,

of Rabbi Akiba, of Moses and of Father Abraham, containing a conglomeration of mysteries which are a pasquil on the understanding. The cabalists limited their falsehoods to the angels and the demons, aside of their mystic speculations on theology and onthology. Christian writers extended their powers of invention also to this physical world, so that Eusebius assures us that some bodies of holy martyrs having been devoured by wild beasts, were found alive and whole in the very stomachs of those beasts, which were strangled ;\* and St. Augustin, in his thirty-third sermon, tells his audience that he, being bishop of Hippo Regius, had preached the Gospel to a nation of persons who had no heads, and had their eyes in their bosoms, and in countries further South to a people of persons who had but one eye each, and that in the middle of the forehead. After the apostles, the most terrible darkness and ignorance beset the Christian writers, wrote very illiterately and the most extravagant improbabilities.

The pious and orthodox Dr. Mosheim, in his ecclesiastical history† treating on the Apocryphies of the New Testament, after having informed us (xvii) that their Jesus stories were “full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders,” whose writers betrayed “the greatest superstition and ignorance,” he continues, “Productions appeared which

\*Lardner, Eccles. Hist. Vol. 4. p. 91.

†Eccles. History Book I, Part II, Chap. II.



were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men as the writings of the holy apostles." Then, after having reviewed the literary remains from the apostolic fathers, he comes to the following conclusion (xxii): "We may here remark in general that those apostolic fathers and the other writers, who, in the infancy of the church, employed their pens in the cause of Christianity, were neither remarkable for their learning nor for their eloquence. On the contrary, they express the most pious and admirable sentiments in the plainest and most illiterate style." Mosheim thinks this quite an honor to the Christian cause, and we will not dispute it, although we can not tell how those "fraudulent," "superstitious," "ignorant" and "illiterate" men could express "the most pious and admirable sentiments" which were crystalized into the Christian dogmas, of which neither Paul nor Jesus had the remotest idea. It suffices us to know the utter worthlessness of that literature and the spirit of fraud, falsehood, ignorance and superstition which, among the Gentile Christians, followed after the apostles. Mosheim labors under the mistake that the canonical Gospels and "The Acts" were compiled previous to that age of darkness, which no veracious critic can admit, and no intelligent reader will believe. That was the very time when the Gospel stories of the apostles were collected by the various compilers; therefore they are as they are.

It is no wonder that ignorance and its legitimate concomitants among the Gentile Christians followed the preachings of Paul. He condemned all the knowledge of the heathens as one huge crime which led them to damnation. This had the effect to separate them entirely from the heathen culture, from Grecian and Roman literature, so that the few literary persons who may have been converted by Paul, must have denied their intimacy with heathen literature. Not one among a thousand could possibly have a knowledge of the Bible, of which copies were very scarce, and those able to read were still more so. Therefore pious ignorance was the natural consequence. The Gospel stories and the apostolic stories were told and retold, modeled and remodeled in those days of ignorance, until they finally appeared in their present form. They were selected from a number of compilations, as the best of the whole pile, as the least fraudulent, least superstitious, and least illiterate; the balance were rejected.

The martyrdom of Paul and the other apostles rests upon the sole authority of those rejected books, concerning which we have quoted Mosheim's pious and orthodox verdict. There is no cause whatsoever to believe any of those statements. Clement Romanus, the fifth bishop of Rome, in his epistle to the Philippians, a production declared spurious by Mosheim, and the "Acts of the Apostles" by Abdias, a book long

ago rejected as fraudulent and full of falsehoods, are the sources upon which Dorotheus, bishop of Tyre about 366 A. C., founded his "Lives of the Apostles." He says of Paul; "He was beheaded at Rome under Nero, the third kalends of July, so died a martyr, and lieth there buried with Peter the apostle." Abdias says that Paul was beheaded, and milk flew from his body instead of blood.

All these stories are perfectly worthless. Paul, in his epistles written from Rome, expresses not the remotest omen that his life was in danger. The closing lines of "The Acts" suggest that he was entirely unmolested in Rome. Hence those who added the names of the writers and the place to the epistles, and the author of "The Acts," could not have believed in the martyrdom of Paul.

Besides, two characteristic points of Paul's epistles must here be taken into consideration. He writes to established congregations with complete ecclesiastical organizations, having elders, deacons, bishops, every thing complete and finished. This could not possibly all have been accomplished in the short period of ten years. The conversion came first, the congregational organization followed in the progress of time. Most of his epistles have no trace that they were written at any time prior to the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. The epistle to the Galatians was written after his capture in Jerusalem, that is cer-

tain, and it must have been long after that event, for the Galatians had been misled into Jewish Christian theories, which could hardly have been done in a short time, and shortly before his journey to Jerusalem he was in Galatia (Acts xviii, 23.) In this epistle already he speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem. He says there (Gal. iv, 25,) "Sinai is a mount in Arabia which is now in the same rank with Jerusalem which is in bondage with her children." So the original reads, and this points directly to a time after the destruction of that city, when it could be compared to the desert of Arabia, and it could be said it was in bondage with its children. Still later II Timothy was written, in which he blesses Quesiphorus, who had visited him in Rome and was not ashamed of his bonds (i, 15, 16.) In that same passage he declares that all Christians in Asia (hence also the Galatians) had deserted his Gospel; consequently his epistle to the Galatians was fruitless. The last words of this epistle are those of an old, tired, disappointed and deserted man; they must have been written long after the days of Nero. Paul writes to Timothy, "I am now being offered," as he called dying in faith, "and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness," &c. Then he complains that all but Luke had deserted him, therefore he

requests Timothy to come to him and bring Marc with him before the winter. This was not written by one condemned to death, for he wants to see Marc, "for he is useful to me in my office." What offices has a condemned man to attend to? He wants "the cloak (or book-case) which he left in Troas, the books and the parchments;" what good are they to a convicted man? or is it at all likely that the executioner would wait till Timothy and Marc should arrive from Asia with all those articles? He says further on, "At my first answer (responsibility, trial or defence) no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." This may refer to his trials in Jerusalem and Rome. The Christians evidently deserted him. Nevertheless, he says as clear as language can convey it, he was not lost in Rome, and still lived after that time. "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known; and that all the Gentiles hear that I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me for his heavenly kingdom."

Paul was not long in Rome, it appears. He traveled through Italy to Illyricum (Romans xv, 19) which he could have visited only after he had been dismissed in Rome, went back to Syria, most likely to Antioch, which appears to have been his home, with the intention to go to Spain. But on returning he found his converts

falling off from him by the influence of his colleagues in Jerusalem who taught them the law and circumcision, and by other influences, and he was obliged to stay at home and secure his bishoprick. This is about the time of the fall of Jerusalem which left the Jews in a helpless condition of despair, the law and its institutions defeated, the nationality violently broken up, all hopes and theories of salvation vanished. This is the time when Christianity could hope to meet with success, and it actually did. This is the time when Paul wrote most of his epistles against the law, the circumcision, the nationality and the covenant of Israel. In that time, it may be said, he had good cause of defending and promulgating doctrines as Paul held them.

It is childish to suppose that his epistle to the Romans was written before he was in Rome, nevertheless he knew all the people whom he greets and salutes in the sixteenth chapter; when he begins with greeting Priscilla and Aquilla, who were with him in Ephesus till he went up to Jerusalem, and undoubtedly went with him to Rome, so that he could justly say, "Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."

A thorough examination of the epistles will give abundant proof that those passages which are considered spurious, be-

cause they are imitations of passages in Josephus, or because they must necessarily have been written after the fall of Jerusalem, are much more one of the proofs that most of the epistles were written after that eventful time, when Judaism by that terrible shock had been thrown off entirely from its ancient basis. Only two Jewish sects survived the catastrophe, the Pharisees and the Christians, the rest were submerged in either of them or in Roman paganism. Now the struggle began for the religious ascendancy. The Pharisees started out from the principle of the expected restoration of the Jewish people in a short time, and exerted all their energies to save every national law, custom, observance and trait of character. With the most rigid firmness they enforced the will of the majority of the Sanhedrin, now an ecclesiastical court, as the law of God, to which all teachers, judges and leaders were obliged to submit, in order to prevent dissensions and sectarianism which was one of the great causes of their misfortune. They went so far that they excommunicated the great Rabbi Elieser ben Hyrcanos, because he submitted not to the majority. They succeeded so well in preserving and strengthening the patriotic hopes of the Jews, that one of the most terrible rebellions which Rome had been called to crush, was made by those vanquished Jews in the time of Hadrian. It failed. The rabbis who had created that new system of rab-

binism fell as martyrs. Their words became the unalterable law to future generations, and their system the foundation of the rabbinism of all generations, always upon the same basis, "the restoration of Israel may come to pass every day, and then all the laws of Moses will be in force as they were heretofore."

The Christians started out from the principle, the nationality of Israel is at an end, the national laws, customs, &c., are abrogated, and the world of Gentiles is with Israel heir of the religious and moral truths which were hitherto encased in Israel's nationality. The approaching end which Paul preached was the lever to rouse the Gentiles to repentance. The Son of God whom he proclaimed was his instrument to prove the truth of resurrection for the time being, to console the alarmed heathens after they had become conscious of the approaching end and their own wickedness, to lead them to the Father whom they did not comprehend, by the son which was a familiar conception to them, and to bestow upon them the religious and moral treasures of Israel. The words and the symbols are different, but the sense is always the same. The Jesus of Paul is no more than the superintendent of the catastrophe which was then to come to pass, and after which he should be subject to the Father and God, should be again all in all.

Both of them succeeded. As the Pharisean rabbis succeeded in the preservation



of Israel and his treasures, so Paul and his co-laborers succeeded in the demolition of paganism and the promulgation of religious and moral truth. The errors came after them. As the Jews tenaciously clinging to the idea of restoration, adhered faithfully to the rabbinism based upon it, and spun it out into six hundred and thirteen principal laws with several thousand auxiliary ones; although the idea of restoration was itself auxiliary only: so did the Christians in after times cling to the auxiliary ideas of Paul and spun out codes of dogmas, on the trinity, the incarnation, the immaculate conception, the inspiration of Scriptures, the theory of salvation, angels, demons, satan, heaven, hell, purgatory, and all the other productions of scholasticism. Both clung more to the means than to the substance. The Talmuds of Jerusalem, Babylonia, Mecca, Rome, St. Petersburg, Berlin and London, with all the commentaries and sub-commentaries are substantially the same, many words about the means and few on the substance.

Both were necessary, or else they could not succeed. Rabbinism preserved the Jew, encrusting him with the impenetrable shell of thousand laws and observances. The Jew preserved the main principles of religion and ethics in their primitive purity, and rescued the Bible together with his rational views on the same, from the destructive revolutions of eighteen centuries. Dogmatic Christianity prevented the re-

introduction of paganism after the migration of nations, because it gave to those semi-barbarians a sensual religion which they could understand in part at least, being heathenism on the outside and Judaism inside. It preserved the moral truth in the indigestible crust of medieval christology, in the midst of all the ignorance, violence and rudeness of the Middle Ages, and protected the nucleus for better days. It gave a religion to those who were incapable of grasping the abstract ideas of God, immortality, morals, justice, freedom, and humanity.

Both must fall. Rabbinical Judaism and dogmatic Christianity, being extensive codes concerning the means of religion, must finally yield to the progress and triumph of the religious idea itself; then God will be again all in all, to speak with Paul, or then God will be one and his name one as the prophet has it. Whenever they shall have done each its full service to the cause of religion, they will disappear. Intelligent men in our days need neither rabbinism nor christology; the pure doctrines of God, immortality and morals, as the wise Creator has impressed them on the human conscience and consciousness, are sufficient for the happiness of every individual, the peace and the prosperity of society. Thoughtless masses need the antiquated means, the child must be coaxed to school; but it is the duty of every good man to diminish the number of thought-

less individuals by spreading light, information, genuine piety, eternal truth, to wean and to educate the child. Let this be done; let the means fall, and the breaches be repaired.

But we return to the historical point. The representative men of the Pharisees after the fall of Jerusalem, the very founders of rabbinism, were the rabbis Johanan ben Saccai, Gamliel II, Tarphon, Hanina ben Dosa, several Joshua, Ishmael, Eliezer and Eliazar—The main and most active representative, however, was Rabbi Akiba, whose most distinguished opponent was Acher, and Acher is Paul. Rabbi Akiba represented the new rabbinism and Paul the new Christianity. Both traveled over the same countries precisely, undoubtedly preaching in opposition to each other, each advocating his own cause. Both of them claimed to have been in Paradise, "caught up to the third heaven," and to know all about the mysteries. Paul opposed the whole law, and Akiba could prove a new law from every dot in the Bible, and expounded "heaps upon heaps of them," as the rabbinical hyperbole states. They undoubtedly stimulated each other. The more sagacity one exhibited in expounding laws, the more the other strained his energies to prove the abrogation of all of them. So they pushed each other to extremes. Paul taught, as one of the means of salvation, baptism in the name of Jesus; and Akiba said: "Blessed are you, O Israel!

for before whom do you purify yourselves? and who purifies you? Your Father in heaven, as the prophet said, 'And I will sprinkle upon you purifying water,' &c., as the bath purifies the impure, so God purifies Israel." This is in direct opposition to Paul's baptism and his theory of salvation. God does that to Israel, what Paul says, the blood of the son does to the Gentiles. Without multiplying instances, as we can not fully carry out the subject, we believe to be entitled to the observation that Paul and Akiba, if thoroughly examined in their method and substance of instruction, explain each other. They are counterparts of the same age, the same field of labor, with the same object in view. Akiba whose main basis was patriotism naturally, came in conflict with Rome, prepared the tremendous rebellion under Bar Cochba, and died by the hand of the executioner, if the rabbinical accounts of his end are true. They are very much embellished however. Paul who yielded to Roman authority and opposed the Jewish patriotism, it appears, lived to a good old age and died a natural death. According to the rabbinical records Akiba spoke never disrespectfully of Acher or Paul, and he spoke respectfully of Akiba, so that no enmity is perceptible.

The rabbinical as well as the Christian chronology and history of the first and second centuries are so uncertain and unreliable, they were so much inclined to make history of parables, legends and vi-

sions, and spoke of events so entirely without regard to chronology that it is next to an impossibility, to distinguish truth from fiction. Nobody can say with any degree of certainty, when and where either Paul or Akiba was born, or when and where either of them died. No cotemporary historian or chronographer wrote about them. Therefore nobody can say whether the following narratives are actually true. Still they serve one purpose, viz: to show what the rabbis of the Talmud thought of Paul, and in what relation they considered him to his cotemporary doctors.

It has been mentioned before that the rabbis make Rabbi Mair, who was the great light among the Jewish doctors of the second century, and both in learning and liberal doctrines one of the most remarkable men, to the pupil of both Akiba and Paul or Acher. This may be allegorical altogether, to represent the mutual influence on the mind of the next generation. This very Rabbi Mair, of whom they said that there was none like him in his generation, that his sagacity was unlimited, and that he was so expert in expounding the law that he could prove in forty-nine different ways, why a reptile was unclean, then again in forty-nine other ways, why the same reptile was clean—this Rabbi Mair was not acknowledged as an authority in legal decisions, although he was superior to all his colleagues, and was obliged to retire into private life (he died in Asia

Minor,) although he had done most for the restoration of the law and the study thereof after the death of Hadrian. The cause of this apathy to Rabbi Mair, on the part of the doctors, is, according to the Talmud, his disputes with the prince Simon ben Gamliel, the legitimate successor to that dignity from the Hillel family, who stood far below Mair on the intellectual scale. But the very cause of these disputes was, or at least it has been ascribed to the fact that this Mair was a pupil also of Acher or Paul. One of the rabbis of a later day met the prophet Elijah, whom he asked what God was doing, to which that angelized prophet is supposed to have replied: "He repeats the verbal laws after all the rabbis except after Rabbi Mair, because he has learned them of Acher" (or Paul.) (Hagigah 15 b.) Other rabbis, however, take the part of Mair very liberally, and prove from several passages of Scripture that he was perfectly right to receive instruction of Acher. "He retained the kernel and refused the shell."

It is highly interesting to study the mutual influence of Akiba upon the primitive Christians who, down to the third century, clung to many of his laws and doctrines, and especially to his peculiar exegese, and of Paul upon the development of rabbinism which the Talmud allegorizes in the person of Rabbi Mair, the pupil of those two representatives of two diverging systems, although it may be true that Mair was the

pupil of both. Still it is not our sphere to follow up this instructive theme. We can only call attention to it for the benefit of those who will hereafter give their attention to the subject, and compare the Christian and rabbinical literatures of those centuries.

The intercourse of Mair and Paul in after days is illustrated in the following anecdotes:\*

Paul asked Mair: "How doest thou understand the verse 'Also this opposite that hath God made?'" (Eccles. vii, 14.) Mair replied: "To every thing which God made, he made a counterpart. He created mountains and valleys, seas and rivers," &c. Paul objected thus: "Thy teacher Akiba did not explain it so; he said, God created the righteous and the wicked, also paradise and hell. Each has two portions, one in paradise and another in hell. If he be righteous, he takes two portions in paradise, his own and that of his wicked neighbor; if he be wicked, he takes two portions in hell, his own and that of his righteous neighbor." This is a fair exposition of Akiba's doctrine concerning reward and punishment in strict accordance with man's doings, to which Paul objects and teaches justification by faith.

Another time Paul asks Mair: "How dost thou understand the verse, 'And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job?'" Mair re-

\*Vide *Yerushalmi, Hagigah* ii, 1; *Babli* do. 15 a and the *Midrashim* as quoted above.

plied: "I understand it by the sequel, 'And the Lord gave him double of all;' he restored doubly his lost property to him." Paul objected: "Thy teacher Akiba says otherwise, he says, on account of the virtue and righteousness which was in Job at the beginning, God blessed his latter days." This story has the same tendency as above, only that it refers to this life, while the above refers to the life hereafter. Akiba holds God blessed Job at the end, because his righteousness deserved it, while Paul thought Job's *faith* deserved this blessing.

Again he asked Mair: "How understandest thou the words 'the end of the thing is better than its beginning?'" Mair replied: "It may be better. If one had children in his younger days, they died however, and he gets children in his older days. If one acquired knowledge in his youth, forgot it, and studied again in his advanced age. So the end may be better than the beginning." Paul objected and translated that verse: "'The good of the end of a thing (or person) depends on its beginning,' if the intentions were good at the beginning, if the motives were laudable, the end were good." Here he narrates the circumcision story to which we referred above. In this case Akiba is not mentioned, and the doctrine involved is evidently the anti-gnostic Christian one, opposed to the rabbinical decision about *מַצְוֵי שְׂמֵרָה* which Akiba refused.

Furthermore he asked Mair: "How understandest thou the passage (Job xxviii, 17),



'She can not be estimated after gold or glass; and not in exchange for her, can vessels of fine gold be taken?'" Mair replied: "This refers to the words of the law, which are difficult to attain like fine gold, and easily lost like glass." Paul objected: "Thy teacher Akiba said thus, if the learned forget their knowledge, they may easily regain it (as the gold is easily cleaned,) even if they go astray they may easily be recalled to the path of virtue."

Here the *Babli* puts in the interesting notice that this was on a Sabbath, Paul was riding horse-back, Mair followed him on foot, and Paul suddenly stopped him with the words, "Return Mair, to this point is a Sabbath way," as far as it was allowed to walk on Sabbath. "How doest thou know it?" Mair asked. "I counted the steps of the horses," said Paul. This was to show either Mair's strict adherence to the rabbinical rule, or Paul's respect for Mair's conscience, or both. Mair exclaimed, "As thou art so wise, return also thou" (to Judaism.) Paul replied, "I can not, for as I have told thee before, I once passed the sanctuary of Jerusalem on the Day of Atonement which was on a Sabbath, riding horse-back, and I heard a *Bath kol* issuing from the *sanctum sanctorum*, "Return all ye froward children, except Acher who knew my power and yet rebelled against me."

Here the two Talmuds differ in the narrative to the very extreme. The *Babli* has

Paul end in remorse and suicide, and the *Yerushalmi* has the direct contrary. After he had asked several pupils on several occasions, after the biblical verses they had just learned, and such answers were something akin to the reply of the *Bath kol*, and all of them answered, as he understood it, in condemnation of himself; he committed suicide. The *Yerushalmi*, however, has the story thus: Acher being very sick, Mair came to see him and found him very low. He again admonished him to return. Paul asked, will I be accepted in God's grace, if I return? to which Mair replied, that man may return to his Maker to the very last moment of his life, and expect the grace of the Most High. "In that hour he (Paul) wept and died. Mair rejoiced and said, it appears to me that he died a repenting sinner. A fire came from heaven and his grave burnt. Mair went out, spread his cloak over the grave and said: 'Tarry here all night, tarry in this world which is like unto night; and it shall be in the morning, this is the life to come which is all morning; if he will redeem thee, the Good shall redeem thee, this is God of whom it is said God is good to all and His mercy extends over all His works; and if He shall not redeem thee, I shall redeem thee, as sure as God lives.'" This, it is easily understood, could have been addressed to Paul only, and refers clearly to his theory of redemption, which the Talmud opposes.

This remarkable story is told somewhat different in the *Babli*; both, however, agree that Mair redeemed Paul and led him to heaven. So they were really liberal enough not to condemn him, as modern sectaries would do under similar circumstances. "He was saved," they maintained, "on account of his learning."

This and similar stories in the Talmud show that they knew Paul's grave. They also speak of his daughters, hence he must have married after his return from Rome. It appears that he led a retired life in his advanced age, when all but Luke had deserted him, and Timothy was far from him. The whole tone of that epistle tallies with these talmudical tales, not that he repented his course, but that he was greatly disappointed by the desertions from his ranks, and the opposition from the apostles.

Furthermore these stories show the high respect which the rabbis paid to Paul's learning, and how they tried to suppose he returned to Judaism in the last moments of his life, although Mair would not say so for sure. These stories show an entirely different spirit between Paul and the Jews, from what the author of "The Acts" states, who was an enemy of the Jews. This fully agrees with Paul's epistles who never speak ill or harsh of the Jews, of whom he says salvation comes; on the contrary, it is always with pride and hope that he speaks of them. "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," he

says, "who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law," &c. (Romans ix, 4.) "I say then," he says on another occasion, "have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation was to come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness." \* \* \* "For, if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." (Ibid. xi, 11.) That spirit of enmity and misrepresentation which made the Gospels and "The Acts" so obnoxious to the Jews, is not of Paul nor of any other of the apostles; it was engendered in foreign lands by Gentile Christians in the second century, and engrafted on the Gospel stories. Therefore the Talmud shows no particular enmity to Christians, although in the second century the enactment of laws had become necessary to protect Judaism against the encroachments of growing Christianity. But these laws concerned the Jews and not the Christians. Intermarriage among Jews

and Christians was not prohibited by Jews; it was done by Christian authorities, ecclesiastical and worldly.

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We are done, and must leave it to others to continue this task, to compare the New Testament with the cotemporary portions of the Talmud. It is a laborious but remunerative task. The results of our research may guide others far beyond our landmark, and we hope truth, the holiest cause, will be benefited by this new road of research which we suppose to have opened.

Christianity originated in its age, and bears the impress of the same. The angels and the demons, the messianic speculations, the belief in miracles, wondrous cures, supernatural diseases, necromancy and sorcery, the frequent appearance of angels and the speaking of the Holy Ghost or *Bath kol*, are all the products of that morbid and overloaded age. Its solid basis is an abstract from Moses and the Prophets, strongly intermixed with rabbinical views. The Christianity of Peter and the other disciples of Jesus exists no more; Paul, especially after the fall of Jerusalem, opposed and defeated it. Modern Christianity has more of Paul than of Peter and Jesus, although in the dogmas Paul also is scarcely traceable. It is probably the strangest phenomenon in history. Peter proclaims Jesus the Messiah, it costs his life. After his death Peter proclaims his

second advent and the hope connected therewith, viz: the restoration of the Davidian throne, and finds some though few believers. Then comes Paul, uses this idea, and that of the end of the world approaching, as the means of converting the heathens to pure Judaism. The second advent never came to pass, the world did not come to an end, there was no last day of judgment, hence no savior was as yet necessary, and Christendom still adheres to the belief of those who were addressed by Paul, adding thereto numerous dogmas of which he knew nothing, although Paul's christology was intended for the time being only, and not for the future. If Paul and Peter would come into one of our modern churches and re-assert their doctrines, they would surely be excommunicated. The Christianity of to-day has no similarity to that of Peter and very little in common with that of Paul. They knew nothing of the trinity, universal depravity, or redemption by grace in the form of the church; nothing of the pope and his hierarchy, of the saints, the mother or grandmother of God; nothing of purgatory or hell, of the condemnation of all who believe not in Christ, of the power of the church to forgive sins, or of the wonderful efficacy of the wine and the bread at the Lord's supper; nothing of the Christian Sabbath or holidays, mass, or prayer through Christ to God; they knew nothing of all Christian dogmatics. If the pope is a Christian,

Paul was none; if any of our modern congregations are Christian, the apostolic congregation of Jerusalem was heretic. Orthodox christology is the product of ages of darkness, and has nothing in common with the lessons of Jesus, as propagated either by Peter or by Paul. It is at warfare with philosophy and science, and sustained by constant appeals to credulity and ignorance. It stands, because thousands know no better.

