

THREE LECTURES
ON THE
ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY,

BY THE
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LECTURE I.

JESUS THE PHARISEE.

THE great and characteristic feature of the nineteenth century is the objective nature of its researches. It is not as productive as it is eminently reproductive, because it does more investigation than reflection. The centers of civilization having migrated from the southern to the northern clime, metaphysical contemplations and lyric melodies declined under the perpetual irritations of increased wants. Thus natural science assumed the place of transcendental philosophy, history subjects theology, prose triumphs over poetry.

In the province of religion, the same characteristic phenomenon preponderates. Religion itself, the internal fact of human nature, which engaged the sages of former days, has in our century very few scientific expounders. The history of religion, however, engages some of the most eminent minds of the age. It is not only the Græco-Roman, the Gothic and Celtic mythologies which claim the attention of those investigating heads; it is also the Kings of the Chinese, the Vedas of the Hindoos, the Zendavesta of the Persians, the Koran, and the myths which preceded all of them, together with the remains of ancient Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria and Assyria, and of the modern Indians and Negroes, which have largely attracted the attention of some of the brightest scholars of this century. Therefore, it will not appear strange that I should call your atten-

tion to Talmud and Gospel, which are so much nearer to you and interest you so much more, especially as they explain on another, and are the only sources from which a true picture of the origin of Christianity can be sketched.

It is presumed that the contents of the Gospels, and the various critical standpoints concerning them, are familiar to all. The Talmud being less known, we must briefly introduce it. Among the three sects of the ancient Israelites—the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes—the former had the most doctors, called at different times by different names, such as elders, scribes, sages, rabbis, or, as they called themselves, *Sophrim*, *Tanaim* and *Amoraim*. Therefore, while no documents of the other two sects have reached us, the Pharisees have left behind a vast literature, which was known under the general designation of “the tradition,” comprising commentaries on the law, moral and religious precepts, historical items, original legends, parables, fables, poems, prayers, Bible commentaries and paraphrases, fragments from Grecian, Persian and Arabian philosophy, medicine, poetry, legends, myths and fables, besides the numerous maxims of the wise, proverbs of the people, their knowledge of angels, demons and the mystic arts, handed down from sire to son, from master to pupil, and increasing with every passing century, from the age of Ezra to the days of Rabbina, for about one thousand years; in round numbers, from 500 B. C. to 500 A. C.

From that chaotic mass of traditions, books were compiled at different times. We will mention some of them.

1. The *Mishnah* contains, in systematical order, the laws. Its compilation was commenced by Hillel about 25 B. C., was continued by Rabbi Akiba in the first century, by his pupil, Rabbi Mair, about 150 A. C., and was completed by Rabbi Judah, the friend and contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, 175 A. C.

2. The *Tosephta*, a collection of the original traditions, from

which the laws were abstracted; (3) the *Mechilta*; (4) the *Saphra*, and (5) the *Siphri*, showing how those laws and precepts are based upon the Bible, were compiled at the same time with or shortly after the Mishnah, by different authors, and, like the Mishnah, they were always accepted as the ancient traditions. They did not exhaust the whole, nevertheless they brought the main portions into systematic arrangement.

These books, viz, Mishnah, Tosephta, Mechilta, Saphra and Siphri, together with the Bible and verbal traditions, became afterward the text-books of the rabbis in the synagogues, the academies and the courts of justice. They were compared, expounded, enlarged, amended, discussed and criticised. This gave rise to a new literature of the same kind, and from the same source. The Mishnah was the main text, the other traditions, called *Boraitha*, were secondary. Imagine for a moment that then the rabbis were the preachers, teachers, lawyers, judges, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians, politicians, poets, orators and philosophers of the Hebrew people, and think for a moment of the reports which make now the lawyer's and the physician's libraries, the sermons and essays on the preacher's table, and the politician's statistics, tales and fictions; and you may form an idea of how the bulk of the rabbinical literature increased and what a variety of subjects it embraced.

The rabbinical literature of Palestine was compiled at the end of the fourth century, in the large work called the Talmud of Jerusalem, and in a smaller work called the *Pesikta*. In Persia, the rabbinical literature was compiled at the end of the fifth century into the extensive work called the Talmud of Babylon and the ancient Midrashim, or the sermons. All those books together are usually called the Talmud, which would comprise a library of no less than one hundred respectable octavo volumes.

In form, the two Talmuds of Jerusalem and of Babylon, are

alike encyclopedical. Various matter, sometimes without logical connection, is grouped about each *Mishnah*, or general law, which is expounded; so that the main divisions of the Talmuds are those of the *Mishnah*, without any other system, division, or even interpunction. The *Pesikta* contains abstracts of sermons, placed to the Bible passages, which were publicly read. Later *Midrashim* follow either the Pentateuch, or also Psalms, Proverbs and Samuel, or also the whole Bible in their respective divisions, adding the traditions and other matter to each Bible passage. The *Mishnah* and *Tosephta* form the groundwork of the Talmuds, while *Pesikta* and later *Midrashim* are compiled on the pattern of *Mechilta*, *Saphra* and *Siphri*.

The idiom of the Talmuds reminds one of the English language. It comprises elements of all Semitic tongues, enriched by Persian, Greek and Latin terms, and shows to what extent those ancient Hebrews were encyclopedists. They adopted forms, terms, ideas and myths from all nations with whom they came in contact, and, like the Greeks, in their way, cast them all in a peculiar Jewish-religious mould.

The subject is too dry and my time too short to allow me to enlarge on this topic. In our present course of lectures, I will only refer to such passages of the Talmud which are known as traditions handed down from the ancient Pharisees. In those fragments we have before us a clear mirror of the philosophy, history, religion, morals, politics, laws, customs, hopes, wishes, views—a perfect spirit of the age in which Christianity originated; besides the meager sketches of Josephus, Philo, Tacitus, Pliny, Juvenal and other classics, the only literature in which that age transmits itself to posterity; hence, also, the only literature by which the New Testament can be properly understood, its statements controlled, and the obscure passages illustrated.

The New Testament, and that part of the Talmud to which I refer, are the products of the same age, the same country, the same class of men, with the same objects in view, with the same merits and demerits. They must necessarily explain and supplement one another.

Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, to make one more prefatory remark. The historian has nothing to do with mysteries and miracles, with angels and ghosts, plenty of which are recorded in the Gospels and the Talmud. He must stand upon the solid ground of reason. He occupies the office of the judge. The sources are the testimony offered in the case. Criticism and Anti-criticism are the lawyers pleading the case. Law and justice, logic, the canon of criticism, must decide. On this principle I have treated the Old Testament, and so I considered the Gospel and the Talmud. Where reason fails, history ceases, and I am but an humble historian. Others may know more, but they can not prove it. I can prove every statement I shall make, from the original sources and by the above method.

It is necessary to our present object to present a brief sketch of the life, precepts, aspirations and fate of Jesus of Nazareth, who is supposed to have been the author of Christianity. I can only be brief, because the subject is vast and my time short.

My investigations into the Gospel and Talmud have taught me three paradoxes concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which I consider highly important and essential points in history, especially in the origin of Christianity. Jesus of Nazareth was *not* the author of Christianity. He was a *Pharisean* doctor, an enthusiastic Jewish patriot, determined to save, to rescue his country out of the clutches of a bloody despotism. He was crucified (if crucified he was) by the Roman authorities, for

the chastisement and to the chagrin and profound regret of the Jews.

I maintain these paradoxes in contradiction to those modern critics who advance that Jesus was an Essene; and especially to the unfounded theories of Mr. Renan, that Jesus was an ignorant phantast, with Græco-Roman ideals and Jewish prophetic spontaneity. The Talmud often mentions the name of Jesus; his teacher, Rabbi Joshua, with whom he was in Egypt; his disciples, one of whom stood in close communication with several of the most prominent rabbis, and he stood at the head of the nascent Church. In the Talmud, mention is made of a sort of manuscript, then well known to the rabbis, which Jesus wrote in Egypt and brought to Palestine. An original Hebrew or Aramaic Gospel is mentioned there, from which passages of the four Gospels must have been taken. Those passages of the Talmud to which we refer bear the names and the stamp of prominent contemporaries of Jesus and the Apostles. This settles the question. Had those rabbis considered Jesus an ignoramus or a mere impostor, they must have said so somewhere; but they did not. Their silence is a much better testimony than Mr. Renan's arguments, eighteen centuries *post festum*. Therefore, with all due respect to Mr. Renan, we think he misconceived the character of Jesus entirely.

A careful comparison of the sources gives us the following historical picture:

A strange feature of the Old Testament is the opposition of prophets and psalmists to priests and sacrifices. This opposition, supported by Isaiah, Jeremiah and Malachi, was inherited by a political party, which becomes powerful in Judea in the second century B. C. This party called itself *Hassidim*, "the pious, or the law-abiding ones." Their opponents called them *Perushim*, "the dissenters," which was corrupted into the word "Pharisees." These were the anti-priesthood and theocratic

republicans among the Jews. The majority of the people was with them. The most stringent among them, tinctured with Stoic peculiarities, formed in after-times a secret order of Hassidim, which word was corrupted into Essenes. The opposition to priest and king, to altar and throne, was the main feature of these two parties; only that the Essenes had peculiar secrets, and the Pharisees had none. The Essenes were a secret order and the Pharisees were a popular party.

As long as Judea was independent, the two main parties in the political arena, Sadducees and Pharisees, aristocrats and democrats, literalists and progressionists, governed the country alternately, as circumstances favored the one or the other side. But when Rome had become sovereign in Judea, and governed her by the instrumentality of Herod, Archelaus, and then by Roman governors and Jewish high-priests, the Pharisees were most despotically treated, oppressed and persecuted, as democrats always were under imperial or royal scepters. The more inflexibly and strenuously the Pharisees clung to the theocracy, to their God and their country, the more Rome and her partisans in Judea were ²imbittered, and the severer were the measures against them. The high-priests of that period, and Caiaphas especially, were the tools and instruments in the hands of their Roman masters. So the hatred against Rome, the home aristocracy, and against the priests, increased with every passing year. *Christ*

Under these circumstances, some of the Pharisees established the organization of *Haberim*, or "Associates," with the avowed object of saving the theocracy. Like the Essenes, the *Haberim* maintained that every Israelite was a priest of the Most High, every table an altar, and every meal a sacrifice; therefore, every one must observe the Levitical laws of ablution and cleanness. This organization represented the efficient and outspoken oppo-

sition to priest and prince ; it wanted neither, and was naturally hated by both.

Galilee having saved the shadow of independence under Herod II., was the chief seat of those *Habermim*, and so remained for centuries after. The term *Haber* was the title of the Asmonean princes, and conveyed the idea that every man is his own prince, as he is his own priest and prophet.

One of those *Habermim* was John the Baptist, a rabbi and a priest himself. He made public propaganda for this association. From a solitude on the Jordan, he called upon the masses to come to him, repent their sins, take the priestly ablutions, afterward called baptism, and receive remission of sins ; that the theocracy or kingdom of heaven, which are literally the same, might be restored. Like all his compatriots, he proclaimed that the national misery was the punishment for national sins. Repent those sins, they will be forgiven, and the punishment removed. This done, and the kingdom of heaven is restored in Israel.

In modern phraseology, this signifies freedom from foreign invaders and home corruptionists ; it signifies liberty and equality, the sovereignty of God's laws.

Thousands, it appears, came to John ; among them also Roman soldiers and other hirelings ; and the revival assumed the dimensions of a popular insurrection, and the character of a threatening rebellion, at least in the estimation of Herod, Prince of Galilee, in whose territory John preached and baptized. Tyrants are easily alarmed, and always ready to dispose of patriots. So John *and many other rabbis with him* were secretly captured, transported to a place in Arabia beyond the reach of the Jews, and beheaded there by command of Herod. The supposed rebellion was suppressed, and the people cursed its tyrant ; this occurred some time before this Prince Herod

married his brother's divorced wife. This part of the evangelical story is contradicted by the historical sources in Josephus.

Herod and all the other blood-stained despots did not understand the Psalmist's admonition, "Ye shall not touch my Messiahs, nor maltreat my prophets." He imagined that, with the heads of John and his compatriots, the hope and the faith of that abused people had also fallen, to rise no more. So all despots reason, and so all are disappointed. For among the thousands in whom the spirit of John resurrected, there was also Jesus of Nazareth, who, by the death of John, rose rapidly to popularity and eminence, to continue the martyr's work, to the chagrin of Herod. Jesus was one among the many who were baptized by John. He saw in the youthful enthusiast a man with whom God's spirit was well pleased, who should continue and perfect the work begun by himself, the restoration of the kingdom of heaven, and the redemption of Israel.

Jesus had commenced his public career as a popular teacher in Galilee, and embraced the cause of the anti-priesthood and theocratic associates. Like John, he preached repentance and remission of sins, obedience to the Law, and opposition to priest, prince and corruption; in order to restore in Israel the pure theocracy, the eternal kingdom of heaven. He was too young to find acknowledgment or many admirers. A few disciples of the lower class of people had congregated around him, who loved and admired him. He had succeeded in gaining even the confidence of the Roman agents of the lower class, publicans, foreign harlots, Sodomites; but he did not succeed among the masses; therefore, the notices concerning his early sojourn in Galilee are few, meager, contradictory and overloaded with miracles, stories of exorcism and Essenean cures, added by popular poesy, religious eccentricities and dogmatic biographers.

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patriots, and Jesus, with his small band of followers, fled to the thinly inhabited outskirts of the land, where he justly envied the birds their nests, when the son of man had no home in this world.

From and after that time Jesus was a fugitive. We meet him on the Jordan, then on the other side of the land in Phœnicia, then again in the northern mountains, but never more in the interior of Galilee. The fugitive sage and patriot, with all the great pain in his soul which the misery of his people, the decline of Zion and the rise of Rome inspired, with the enthusiastic zeal on his lips to save God's people and God's word, and to verify God's promises, attracted the attention of multitudes, who followed him to his distant retreats, caught sparks from his fire; and the spirit of John resurrected with tenfold vigor.

“I must save my people and its sacred heritage, I must restore the kingdom of heaven in Israel!” was the great thought, the sublime ideal, which elevated Jesus to that high standpoint where the earth and her charms are forgotten, peril, danger and death lose their terror, manhood and godhead meet as closely as the finite and the infinite can touch, and man excels himself. This thought grew rapidly in Jesus as his popularity increased, and as his scheme of salvation ripened into definite shape. This is the idea of the transfiguration scene.

How shall the people be roused,—how shall everybody be inspired with that fervent enthusiasm which Jesus and some of his disciples felt? This is, and always has been, the stumbling-block of enthusiasts. Peter undertook to solve this important question. While in the northern mountains, Peter proclaimed Jesus the Messiah. There was always a Messianic mania among the Hebrew people, especially outside of Palestine, when the political status was most oppressive and unpromising. This is the popular watchword, Peter must have

thought; this will rouse the patriots, captivate the attention and secure the confidence of the masses. Jesus protested loudly and emphatically against this appeal to popular prejudice. But the word was spoken, the spark had been thrown on combustibles, and against his will, with almost certain death before his eyes, the son of man was proclaimed the Messiah among his disciples and followers. This new phase in his life brought him into hostile conflict not only with Herod, but also with the Roman authorities. For the title of Messiah, however spiritualized, always conveyed the idea of the political ruler of the entire Hebrew people. Jesus was now in the hands of his friends, who protected and vigilantly guarded him. They conducted and managed the Messianic drama which followed.

The Messianic scheme was ingenious, although a failure [at] in the last. Fast and undiscovered they traveled down the banks of the Jordan as far as Jericho—(therefore, the notes of this journey are so uncertain and contradictory) —[to appear] suddenly after the feast, and unexpectedly in Jerusalem shortly before the Passover feast, when the myriads of Israel were assembled in the capital, to secure the co-operation of the pilgrims. “The Messiah has come!” was to be the mighty signal to ignite the enthusiasm of the masses, to support the master, surprise and confound the priests and the Roman officers, take possession of the temple, proclaim the kingdom of heaven, change the temple service or close it altogether, and regenerate the whole government, before priests and Romans could recover from the surprise; and by the demonstration of the masses oblige the Roman authorities to acknowledge the new state of affairs.

The scheme was splendidly inaugurated. The master was proclaimed the Messiah, and, riding on an ass, as Jewish superstition expected the Messiah to come, he was led in triumph to the city and to the temple. The disciples shouted Hosannah, waved their palm-branches and poured forth all the en-

thusiasm of their souls. But it had not the overpowering and surprising effect which the disciples expected. The masses were powerless. The learned did not believe in the Messianic mania of the vulgar. The wealthy citizens were afraid of Pilate's avarice and heartless cruelty. Caiaphas and the chief priests were alarmed by the theocratic and anti-priesthood demonstration. Being the tools of Rome, they could but side with Rome in the overthrow of this threatening rebellion. The demonstration took well with thousands of powerless pilgrims; yet Jesus could not venture to stay over night in Jerusalem. He was safe among the multitude only. The mere attempt to elevate the Jewish people, to ameliorate its condition, to proclaim any new idea, was sufficient at that time to rouse Pilate to bloody vengeance. The word Messiah, however, associated with the idea of restoring the kingdom of heaven in Israel, was intolerable to Roman ears. Jesus himself, having become aware of the failure which the Messianic proclamation had proved, and fully aware that every demonstration in his favor would cost the lives of his friends and heap misery upon his people, could not and did not expect to escape the revengeful jealousy of Rome. Herod and the high-priest were probably the only persons who might have saved him; but neither of them had the independence or probably the desire to do it; both were slaves of Rome. Jesus was to Herod no better but more terrible than John; and the high-priest could have been no particular friend of one who had come to carry into effect that which the theocratic opponents of priest and prince preached and desired. So the doom of Jesus was sealed. After a few days, giving him scarcely time enough to expound his scheme of salvation, the Romans captured and crucified him, as thousands of Jews were crucified in those days, some by this same Pilate.

Therefore, every evening Jesus retired to some hiding-place

in the suburbs of Jerusalem, where the presence of lepers kept intruders far away. There he was jealously guarded by his disciples. Like a miracle he appeared daily among the crowds on the Temple Mount, to expound his scheme of salvation, and none could discover his nightly abode. To arrest him in the midst of the enthusiastic crowd was dangerous — dangerous to the Roman authorities, because it might have been the immediate cause of a tremendous insurrection, which was to be avoided; dangerous also to the Hebrew people, because such an insurrection could have resulted only in a terrific carnage and pillage, and an apparent justification of Sejan's and Pilate's bloodthirsty and avaricious policy in Judea. Therefore, Caiaphas suggested the secret capture of Jesus and his delivery to the Roman authorities. He suggested it as a political necessity, with or without fanaticism, with or without malice, with or without slavish officiousness to his Roman superiors, with or without patriotism—none can tell with certainty. He suggested it as a political necessity, says John the Evangelist.

A demonstration on a large scale on the first day of Passover in favor of the Messiah was apprehended by the Roman-Jewish authorities and expected by Jesus and his disciples. Some of them, probably all, favored it. Jesus was opposed to it, because he, as well as Caiaphas, must have understood that such a demonstration would cost the lives of half his friends and end in a general carnage and pillage, without effecting any good result; but he was in the hands and in the power of his friends; he could not prevent the calamity, except by giving himself up to the authorities, which he could not do, because he was closely watched and jealously guarded by his disciples.

The situation of Jesus was painful. On the one hand, he saw the entire failure of his scheme of salvation; the object of his life, the highest aim of his existence, the lofty ideal, the sublime dream of his soul, vanished, perished, and naught left behind

but the blank of despair. None but enthusiasts can feel the mortification, the burning pain of an enthusiast upon the ruin of his cherished ideals. On the other hand, he saw his friends and admirers madly rush into certain disaster and self-destruction, contrary to his teachings, declarations and outspoken intentions. He saw his own disciples ready to overthrow his scheme of salvation and render the evil ten-fold worse; and there was no way open to get out of the hands of his disciples.

Did Judas Iscariot comprehend the situation and understand the sufferings of his master? Did Jesus prudently, cautiously and forcibly suggest to him to go and betray him, in order to save the multitude from the calamity in store? Or is Judas a merely dramatic finish to the story? The former appears to be the fact. No other way was open to Jesus to save his own, to prevent the calamity. Judas did as was suggested to him, although he did not suppose it would cost the master's life. In the night previous to the expected demonstration in favor of the Messiah, Judas betrayed his secret abode. Roman soldiers of the garrison and of the high-priest's guard were sent out to arrest him quietly. It was all done in the dead of night, when the citizens of Jerusalem and the pilgrims slept without apprehending the treachery. On Passover morning, when priests and the people were assembled on the Mount of the Temple, long before they could have learned anything of the fate of Jesus, he was in the hands of Pilate, who treated him as a rebel, and quietly disposed of the enthusiastic patriot, as ten thousands more were disposed of who paid with their lives for any and every opposition to despotism, brutal force, avarice and beastly ambition. "The King of the Jews" was slain for the chastisement and to the chagrin and sorrow of those thousands of Jews who had listened with enthusiasm to the words of Jesus and were ready to sustain him in the Messianic position. So Jesus sacrificed himself to save his

friends and his people from the calamity which was in store for them.*

So much about the life of Jesus is necessary to these lectures. Others may know more, but they can not prove it. He was an enthusiastic Jewish patriot. Therefore, he was hated by the Roman authorities and their tools in Judea. He was proclaimed the Messiah; therefore, his death was inevitable, unless his supporters had overthrown the Roman power. He had not come to start a bloody revolution, for he knew that [that] would end in a calamity. Therefore, he sacrificed himself to save his own. He said he had been sent to the lost sheep of Israel only, and that mission cost his life.

Jesus had a scheme of salvation, to save his people, and to restore the kingdom of heaven, which he might have carried into effect had not death cut short his public career. A brief review of this scheme of salvation will support the paradoxes, with which I started.

Like many of the prophets and the psalmists, and in perfect harmony with the Essenes and the Pharisean associates, Jesus was opposed to [the entire] Levitical laws and institutions. There was good reason for it, aside from the allegation that the whole Levitical law is anti-Mosaic. In the temple, Rome oppressed the Hebrews. The high-priest and the chief priests were of necessity the most obedient servants of their Roman task-masters, and, like them, they purchased their offices for high prices, and used them to enrich themselves from the

*For the critical apparatus in support of this conception, see the author's two books, "The Martyrdom of Jesus", and "History of the Hebrews' Second Commonwealth."

sweat and tears of the oppressed people. Besides, every now and then a number of innocent pilgrims were slain by the Roman hirelings, nearly always for the purpose of terrifying the rest, and to drive them to despair and self-destruction. Therefore, in order to save the people, the temple had to be closed until it could be opened again to a free and independent people under the lead of men and patriots and with a mode of worship agreeable to the theocracy.

This was, indeed, the first reform which Jesus proposed to carry. "My house shall be called the house of prayer, and ye have made it a den of thieves," he exclaimed, and this expresses in full his opposition to priesthood, sacrifices and Levitical institutions. Pray at home, pray in your closets, do not congregate in this place, bring no more sacrifices, and you need this place no longer; so Rome is deprived of one instrument to oppress, enslave and slay you.

This was undoubtedly the first object of the triumphal march to the temple, although it was not accomplished, and the Synoptics skillfully buried it under the story of expelling the traders and changers of money.

The kingdom of heaven must be restored, was the second and main point. This kingdom of heaven or theocracy, being the translation of *Malchuth Shamaim*, signifies the sovereignty of God, not merely in heaven, but also on earth. It signifies the dominion of the Almighty on this earth, on these planets, in this universe, over this generation, this nation, over all generations and nations, in time and eternity, in life and in death, here and hereafter; it means dominion without beginning and without end, without limitation, infinite in time and space. It means the government of God. It means the most exalted democracy. God is the absolute principle of justice, and he alone is king, ruler and autocrat, and none besides him. The laws of God, *i. e.*, laws which are the incarnation of the principle of

absolute justice, are the rules of duty for the citizen in that kingdom. Righteousness, virtue, is his badge of honor.

This theocracy begins for man on earth, to end nowhere. It must be entered by conscientious obedience to God's laws, and must be honored as the will of God, and preserved as happiness here and hereafter, as man's only means of salvation. This kingdom of heaven is nothing else than the pure theocracy of Moses without the Levitical laws; the law expounded, the law in its spirit, in its beneficial application to man's happiness, to mankind's well-being, as the Pharisees no less than Jesus, and Jesus no less than the Pharisees, wished to see it in force again. "Let thy kingdom come," is a quotation from the ancient Hebrews' Kaddish, וימליך מלכותיה, to which the Israelite added, בחיבון ובימיכון, "In your lifetime and in your days," to show where the kingdom begins. Therefore, Jesus said he had come to fulfill and not to abolish the law. Therefore, he advised those who wished to learn of him how to obtain eternal life, to observe the law. Therefore, did he himself observe Sabbath and holidays like the other Jews, and never advised the violation of any-one law. He had no idea of making a new religion.

The restoration of the kingdom required especially the abolition of the government and dominion of the priests; therefore, he also advised the entire abrogation of the institution. It required the reintroduction of the Mosaic code; therefore, he opposed all laws, customs and usages which were contrary to the laws of Moses, and chastised those hypocrites and bigots, to whom outward observances, pious show and ecclesiastical pomp were dearer than light, truth, freedom, justice and eternal happiness.

In the kingdom of heaven, man is his own priest, prince, prophet; and God alone is king, and the law is sovereign. Therefore, the question naturally arises—Who shall expound

the law, and how shall it be expounded?—especially as this was a point of controversy between priest and rabbi, king and people, allegorists and literalists, for centuries previous to and during the time when Jesus lived and spoke; especially as the Sanhedrin, the legal expounder of the law, had just been dissolved, and scholiasts, assuming that function, brought confusion and discord among the disputing parties.

Here again Jesus sided explicitly and totally with the Pharisees. Love, said he, must expound the laws, for love is the law of laws, the basis, the tenor, the cause, and the object of law. Whoever of you shall be in doubt as to which law is obligatory, and which is not, how this or that law must be understood, construed and reduced to practice, needs neither priest, nor prophet, nor prince, nor scribe, nor savant, to inform him; appeal to the highest tribunal, to your own love to God and man, and whatever that tribunal decides, that is THE law in the kingdom of heaven; that is THE duty of the citizen in that kingdom; that is THE means to enter the kingdom, to remain therein, and to obtain eternal life. This was a terrible blow struck at priests, scholiasts, rulers, sages and long-faced moralists. It was a declaration of independence, of individual freedom in the kingdom of heaven. It was a dangerous declaration, because it came from the hearts and souls of tens of thousands in Israel; it was in perfect harmony with the precepts of the Pharisees. Like Jesus, Hillel had taught, "Be of the pupils of Aaron, to love peace, to pursue peace, to love the people, and to bring them back to the law." Like Jesus, Hillel had taught the golden rule as the principal law. It was Hillel, the predecessor of Jesus, who said to the Pagan, "Whatsoever would hurt thee, that do not to thy neighbor; whatsoever would please thee, that do also to thy neighbor." It was Rabbi Akiba who pressed it into the brief formula, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is the major principle of the law"; the

same Rabbi Akiba who uttered the immortal words, "Beloved is man, for he is made in the image of God." It is a particular love, to make known unto him that he is the image of God, as God himself has done in saying, "For in the image of God he hath made man." Jesus could not think that the law of the land should be expounded by individual feelings, which would lead to anarchy. On the contrary, as the Pharisees held, "Jephtah in his generation was as much of an authority as Samuel in his": so he admonished the people to obey the decisions of the Sanhedrin, "the Pharisees who sit in the seat of Moses," even if they or some of them are wicked. But now when the Sanhedrin was dissolved, priests and scholiasts quarreled, and in cases of individual duty love is always the sole arbiter. *Y*

Take these few simple points together, and you have the substance of Jesus' scheme of salvation. Have no priests, no altar, no sacrifices, no rulers, no lords besides God. Obey God, live according to his commandments, expound his law by the love within you, be your own priest, teacher and ruler, and you have the kingdom of heaven within you, and Rome has lost her dominion over you; you are free men, God's children, in spite of all Roman swords and Roman legions. So far, his scheme of salvation was in perfect harmony with the Pharisees, with the foremost and acknowledged authorities of the ancient Hebrews. But we will discover the same harmony precisely in the other points expounded by Jesus.

The question naturally arose, What does Jesus think of the resurrection of the dead? — a point of dispute then among the three parties. And also on this point Jesus proved to be a Pharisee. He not only declared his belief in the resurrection of the soul in a spiritual body, exactly as the Pharisees maintained, but he went on to prove it from the words of Moses, precisely in the same manner as the Pharisees did, be-

cause it was the test of orthodoxy to believe that Moses taught the doctrine of resurrection in the Pentateuch.

The next question, however, was, What shall be done with the Roman legions, the Roman despotism, the Roman barbarism, cruelty and oppression! How shall we be free and independent? How shall the kingdom of heaven be restored, with the Roman yoke upon our necks? Shall we make war upon them, as the Zealots urged, or refuse to pay them tribute, as Judas and Saddauk's party advised?

To this Jesus had three replies. The first was, as stated before, Stay at home in your mountain castles, pray in your closets, bring no sacrifices, have no priests, and one arm of power is broken. Let love expound the law, and be united among yourselves. This is your power, which no invader can destroy.

The second was, Return as fast as you can to Cæsar that contemptible, degrading and enslaving medium, which is a perpetual curse upon you, which demoralizes and degrades you, your priests and your rulers; return to Cæsar as fast as you can all the money in your possession and be free; you and your houses, your wives and your children, your land, your bodies and your souls are God's; the money only is Cæsar's, and the money bearing the effigy of Cæsar is an outrage upon your laws and your conscience. Therefore, give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and give to God that which is God's!

Here again we have before us the Pharisean rabbi, with his sovereign contempt of money and luxury; the Pharisean rabbi, who adheres to the law which prohibits the use of any coin bearing the effigy of a king or emperor, because those personages were worshiped at that time, and the Pharisees hated the very idea of king or emperor: the Pharisean rabbi, with his peculiar doctrine—Freedom! Freedom within, notwithstanding the metallic clang of the chains from without.

And the third reply of Jesus was, If you can not conquer

Rome, convert her; if you can not vanquish the colossus by the power of arms, melt it away by the charmed omnipotence of love. "Love one another," he advised, because the greatest misfortune of the age was the terrible discord which the military despotism, the bribery and the morbid ambition had created. "Love one another" and be a unit among yourselves. "Love your enemy" and you need not fight him—you will conquer him and arm him for your cause. Have nothing to do with their administration of justice, rather give one your cloak who stole your coat; go with one a day who forces you to go a mile; expose your right cheek to him who struck you on the left; do anything, humble yourselves in anywise, do not lose your temper, return generosity for wickedness, charity for violence, love for hatred, and change your enemies into friends. So did Isaiah advise his people when Sennacherib and the Assyrians overran the land. So Jeremiah taught on the approach of Nebuchadnezzar; and precisely so did Jesus counsel his people. Have patience, have kindness, have love; these are your arms—all others are broken. So did the Pharisees teach, in the name of Moses, to pray every evening before retiring to rest, "Forgive, O Lord, those who have mortified me." It is really amusing to read the novel and unnatural doctrines of ethics based upon these and similar sentences, originally intended for momentary purposes only. *omit*

One more point must be mentioned here, *omit* to illustrate the identity of Jesus and the Pharisees. The doctrine of special providence, Josephus informs us, was one of the cardinal points in the Pharisean creed. Jesus also maintained that no bird falls from a tree unless God in heaven has so decreed.

The coincidences of doctrine, words and image in this point are remarkable, for the Pharisees maintained, *אפילו צפור מכל ער, שמיא לא מצריא* *acc.* "Not even a bird can be trapped, unless so decreed in heaven."

Whatever dogmatists have discovered and still discover in the Gospels, these are the outlines of the scheme of salvation which Jesus preached to his disciples. With this scheme of salvation, he came to Jerusalem, when the wickedness and barbarity of Pilate had driven the patriots to violent hatred, under a reign of terror. Fear must have restrained thousands from listening to Jesus, especially after the disciples had proclaimed him the Messiah. Then it was dangerous to embrace his cause publicly.

It could hardly be expected of a nation with David, Joab, the Maccabees, and a thousand heroes in its history, now oppressed, outraged by a foreign foe, wronged, humbled and scorned by petulant hirelings; in sight of the blood of their slain patriots and their crucified champions, that they would all at once lay down their arms and all become apostles of love. Jesus asked too much of his oppressed countrymen. Yet it was the only plan of salvation left to them. Had he lived long enough he might have persuaded the majority of his people to adopt his plan of operation; but he would never have succeeded in changing Rome's destructive intentions. It was well understood that either the gods of the empire or the people of Judea must be exterminated. Either the laws of Rome or the laws of Israel must govern. Jesus might have influenced his countrymen to love instead of fight; but Tiberius and his minister Sejan, Pontius Pilate and his creatures could not be converted.

One thing, however, can not possibly escape our attention. As inimical as the precepts of Jesus were to Rome, so congenial were they to the Pharisees. The anti-Pharisean spirit of the Gospel is the product of the second century, in the controversy among Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians, by authors who were not acquainted with the Pharisees in the time of Jesus, who knew not that he himself was a Pharisee, a gen-

uine patriot, the warm friend of his people in every word of his which has reached us. Why, then, did the Christian writers of the second century put the crucifixion of Jesus on the shoulders of the Jews? Tacitus tells us he suffered under Pontius Pilate, without any mention of Jews. Pliny informs us that in the days of the Emperor Trajan, that is, in the beginning of the second century, an edict existed, to kill every man, woman or child who professed Christianity, and this edict was in force also in the days of Marcus Aurelius, at the end of that century. Tertullian informs us: "The enemies of the Christians call aloud for the blood of the innocent, alleging this vain pretext for their hatred, that they believe the Christians to be the cause of every public misfortune. If the Tiber has overflowed its banks or the Nile has not overflowed, if heaven has refused its rain, if famine or the plague has spread its ravages, the cry is immediately, 'The Christians to the lions!'"

We know it to be an historical certainty that, during the first three centuries, the Romans and the Greeks treated the Christians as the Christians, in their turn, treated the Jews in the Middle Ages; and the cry of "No Christianity!" became at times as brutal, as violent, and as unreasoning, as the cry of "No Popery!" has often been in modern days.

On the other hand, we know that the history of the Jews from Moses to Jesus, for fourteen centuries, records not one case where a man or woman in Israel had been slain on account of his or her religious belief. By the laws of ancient Israel, and by the existence of numerous sects among them, we are in possession of the very facts, that liberty of conscience was then and there as sacredly regarded as it is here and now. We know that the scheme of salvation was totally anti-Roman and in favor of the Jews, and in perfect harmony with the Pharisees, who formed the great majority of that people.

Again, two centuries of history inform us that the Romans

were the persecutors and the Jews the persecuted. The Jewish patriots were slain, crucified, assassinated, and the people systematically crushed to the ground. During those two centuries the Jew never rages against the Jew; but now all at once the Jews, it is charged, have crucified one of their most innocent sons. They cursed Herod when he slew John the Baptist. They cursed Ananias when he slew James. They opposed capital punishment and abhorred the idea of persecution. Nevertheless, all at once, in this isolated case, they must have slain him whose sole crime was his patriotism.

In the face of these facts, we know it is not true. We know that Pilate, true to his brutal policy, must have slain Jesus, as he did thousands of other patriots. The question is only this: Why did the Christian writers of the second century put the crucifixion of Jesus on the shoulders of the Jews? The only historical reply is, the quarrel between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians, and the desire to please and to win the Romans, dictated the crucifixion story, in which there is but one fact, viz, that Jesus was slain by command of Pontius Pilate because he had been proclaimed the Messiah.

But Pontius Pilate was as mistaken as Herod and all other blood-stained tyrants ever were. Ideas can not be crucified. A people's moral treasures can not be drowned in the blood of its martyrs. Nemesis is a terrible goddess. Her retribution is certain. A few weeks later Pilate was banished and he died in exile. A few years later the gods of the empire were dethroned. A few centuries later the empire crumbled into atoms.

In all this, however, there is no Christianity. Jesus was not the author of Christianity. He became the cause of its origin as we shall see in the next two lectures. He was a Pharisee, a patriot, an ardent enthusiast, whose aspiration was to save his people, to redeem Israel from the bondage of invaders and con-

ruptionists. Politics, ethics and religion being then an indivisible unit (and, in a true sense of the term, they always will be), he was a religious, moral and political character in one person.

But how about the miracles, the angels, the demons, the exorcism, the Essenean cures, and all those wonderful things which the Gospels narrate? The Talmud narrates the same things of its heroes. But we have here nothing to do with either. We believe neither. It hurts our feelings to believe that Jesus accommodated himself to the prejudices of the illiterate, and played the juggler or mountebank in order to gain their confidence. It is too inconsistent, too unworthy of a man and a martyr. His entire character contradicts the supposition that he took deception into his service. The miracles begin with the apostles, and there we shall account for them.

According to Luke, Jesus was about thirty years old when he was crucified; according to Matthew, about thirty-three; and, according to John, about forty. They did not know. Nor did they know exactly in what year or on what day of the year he expired. It was all written in the second century, when the particulars had been forgotten. This much is sure; Jesus was an enthusiastic and thoroughly Jewish patriot, who fully understood the questions of his age and the problems of his people, and felt the invincible desire to solve them. Had he lived in Palestine at any other time, he would have lived long enough to stand now prominently among the sages of the Talmud, and undoubtedly he would have gained a high reputation. But he was too young when he lost his life. There was no originality in his words. His disciples estranged him to the Jew. His followers made of the cross the symbol of persecution. Therefore, the Jews did not think of reclaiming him, who was actually theirs—their blood and their flesh, mind from their mind, and intellect from their intellect. He taught

and practiced their law, their morals and their wisdom, and felt their woes and their afflictions. He longed to be their redeemer, and was crucified ; he taught their doctrines, and was deified ; he unfurled their banner, and became the great captain of a mighty host. His martyrdom became the cause of a new era in the world's history ; but I shall speak of this in my next.



LECTURE II.

THE APOSTLES AND ESSENES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:— The greatest of all miracles, a German poet maintained, is man's belief in miracles. I beg leave to add, the greatest miracle will be when men will no longer trust in miracles, but see with their own eyes and think with their own brains. History is full of miracles, priests, kings and wars, four superfluous articles, expensive luxuries, which have cost the treasures, freedom and reason of entire nations. The Talmud advises, "None must rely on a miracle."

Among the ancient Hebrews, miracles were as common as poor physicians. The Essenes especially were noted for both. They prophesied, wrought miracles, and stood in reputation as quack doctors, who, be it said to their credit, used no patent medicine and no galvanic batteries. They cured or killed by magic spells, incantations, and Thomsonian medicines made of herbs and roots. They knew all about angels, demons and their weak points, and understood the mystic art of managing those ethereal citizens of transatmospheric regions.

Aside from these little peculiarities, the Essenes were inoffensive and intelligent saints, as Josephus, Philo and the Talmud describe them. They lived together in colonies. Some of them only were cenobitic and celibatic communists. They were industrious agriculturalists and mechanics, frugal, sober and economical, prayed and studied much, baptized themselves twice every day, wore the surplice at their meals, and had their pe-

culiar secrets, signs and grips, probations, vows and degrees.

However interesting a detailed history of those odd saints may be, we can only set down here two of their main principles.

1. They maintained that each of them was priest and high-priest, therefore their daily baptism, like the priest on duty; their garbs were the Levitical garments; their tables, altars; and their meals their only sacrifices. So, like the Pharisean associates, only with more ceremony, secrecy and sanctimonious misanthropy, they opposed priest and altar.

2. The contemplative life was their highest virtue, and the allegorical method of expounding Scriptures their highest wisdom. Where we think, reason and reflect by our innate understanding, they suspended their own faculties, to receive impressions from on high—an easy method of acquiring knowledge still in use with some of our pious contemporaries. Again, where we see simple words and sentences in the Bible, and discover a rational statement, they, by the allegoric exegese, discovered mysteries, supernatural doctrines, symbols, types and predictions, as the Egyptian Jews did then and many Bible readers do now.

These mysterious, sanctimonious and isolated saints enjoyed the reputation of superlative wisdom and possessed the confidence of the illiterate masses, as the dervishes of the Orient do to this day, and the hermits did in years past. These Essenean saints became the patterns and most likely also the patrons of the apostles, although Jesus, in several speeches, directly opposed the practice, doctrine and hermeneutics of the Essenes, and argued against the minor baptism, namely, the washing of the hands before meals, an observance indispensably necessary to Essenean life. The Essenean traits of the apostles misled many of our modern critics into representing Jesus himself as one of that mystic fraternity, with whom, however, he had

nothing in common, except his opposition to Levitical laws and institutions, to priest and prince.

However, before we can develop this theory, we must know who the apostles themselves were, and what new doctrines they advanced.

Peter, two Jameses, John and Barnebas are noticed in the Acts of the Apostles. The others have never become known to fame; so that the Gospels differ in the apostolic nomenclature. The Talmud mentions six of them. They were undoubtedly a number of young and humble tradesmen of Galilee, who for some time enjoyed the benefit of their master's instruction. They were certainly young, because the master himself was but thirty or thirty-three years old when he died on the cross.

After the crucifixion, they left Jerusalem. Only Peter, it is maintained, had the courage to follow Jesus into the palace of the high-priest, and he denied the master three times. The object of that story is to show the consternation of the disciples. Not one of them, according to the testimony of the Synoptics, was present at the trial or crucifixion of the master. The barbarous act undoubtedly struck terror into their ranks, and they fled to their respective homes. Luke does not admit this, but the others do. Tacitus informs us expressly that after the crucifixion the Messianic mania abated, and was extinct for some years. It is but natural that the death of the hero closes the drama; that the disappointed multitude loses faith in current elements of excitement; and especially must it be remembered that with the removal and banishment of Pontius Pilate a few weeks after the crucifixion, the main cause of the Messianic excitement was removed.

Those of the disciples who expected high positions under the Messiah were certainly the first to forget him; but those who were his honest admirers and veritably believed him to be the Messiah, could not so easily forget him who had enlightened

their souls with wisdom which appeared to them superhuman and supernatural.

I request you, ladies and gentlemen, to take into consideration what a teacher then was to his pupils. At a time when books were found only in temples and palaces, and the practice of writing was as limited as the materials were scarce, the whole wisdom and knowledge of the human family were a liquid tradition. The teacher was the library and the oracle, instructor, expounder and prophet, the sole mediator between the world and the pupil, between God and the student. In this light the teacher appeared to the ancient Hebrews, who said, "Let the fear of thy teacher be upon thee like the fear of God." They considered it a higher duty to honor the teacher than to honor the parents, "Because the teacher is thy guide to life eternal," and preached that next to God we owe most reverence to our teachers. Add to this maxim of that age and people the fact that the disciples of Jesus had heard only one master, and that he had impressed them not only with the liquid fire of his enthusiasm, the spiritual treasures of Israel, the quintessence of revelation, and fifteen centuries of its history, but also with the wisdom, hope and aspiration of the chosen people, the woes, tears and afflictions of an abused and oppressed country—and you may form a correct idea of the sublime veneration which the faithful disciples felt for their deceased master. This veneration was, besides—at least with those who understood it—connected with a deep sentiment of gratitude for him who had sacrificed himself to save their lives and the lives of many thousands more in Israel; which fully explains the attachment and love of the faithful survivors for the venerated martyr.

He is not dead, was certainly the first thought of the disciples after recovery from their consternation. Whatever we learned of him and know by him, the impressions which he

left in us and the new life to which he roused us, they must have believed, is life from his life and spirit from his spirit. He is in us and among us. He lives.

This was the first idea of his resurrection. Peter expresses it almost *verbatim* in his first epistle. He says, "Jesus was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit." The resurrection of the body is not mentioned in the epistles of Peter or James, and those, if authentic, are the only documents written by the immediate disciples of Jesus. The double resurrection of the spirit, precisely as the Essenes believed it, viz, its returning unto God and its remaining in the disciples, is all and everything to which those epistles refer. Had Peter professed the doctrine of the resurrection as the Gospels and Paul have it, must he not have referred to it as the best evidence of the divine mission of Jesus? But he did not. In defense of his faith, he wrote to foreign converts: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount." (II. Pet. i. 16-18.) This is a weak and untoward argument, especially as it is contradicted by the Gospel writers—if it was in his power to use in evidence the fact of the Messiah's bodily resurrection, which he certainly must have used had he believed in it.

Therefore, the ancient rabbis, who knew only the Jewish Christians, had no knowledge whatever of the existence of the resurrection dogma among the primitive Christians, never mention it, either directly or indirectly, either sarcastically or otherwise. Therefore, none of the ancient writers, in Rome,

Athens, Alexandria or Antioch, make the slightest mention of the mere existence of such a dogma. Had it only existed, somebody must have referred to it. The hypothesis of Spinoza, borrowed from a theory of Maimonides, which Mr. Renan adopted without giving credit to its author, viz, that the disciples saw an apparition, and supposed they had seen the resurrected Jesus, rests upon no sort of evidence and explains nothing. Had this belief existed in the nascent Church, it must have assumed a definite shape, which would have excluded the possibility of six entirely different accounts of the resurrection in the four Gospels, the Acts, and Paul's epistle, different in place, time, witnesses, appearance and nature of the resurrected body, and in the words spoken after the resurrection; and the existence among the early Christians of sects who denied the death and the resurrection. It was the spiritual resurrection which was believed in in the apostolic college at Jerusalem, in harmony with the Essenean doctrine of immortality.

The next stage of the dogma must have been this: If the master lives with God and in his disciples, who have inherited his spirit, as Elisha inherited a double portion of the spirit of his master, Elijah, then his work must be also their work; his hope, his aspirations and his mission must also be theirs. But he lives not exclusively in one of his disciples; he lives in all of them. Therefore, if all of them could be united in one harmonious association, it would certainly embody the master's whole spirit, and enable it to continue the work of salvation and the restoration of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, when the disciples were all united in one harmonious body, afterward called the Church, they considered themselves the body in which the spirit of Christ was resurrected, and so did and does the Church consider itself to this day. This is the original form of the dogma of the bodily resurrection.

In Galilee, after the resurrection, the disciples had sufficient time to search the Scriptures. The allegoric method of the Essenes afforded them ample scope to discover, in Scriptural passages, types and prophecies relating to Jesus, or also to shape incidents that "it be fulfilled." Limited in knowledge and full of admiration for the master, as they were, this was an easy task to them, as by the allegoric method almost anything can be discovered in the Scriptures. *prop*

The next step of the disciples naturally was, to unite and to form that body of Christ. Meanwhile, the political aspect of the country in Judea and Samaria had changed for the better. Tiberius and Caius Caligula were dead. Claudius had mounted the throne of the Cæsars. Agrippa I. was the emperor's particular friend, whose cause he had successfully advocated before the Roman senate. Agrippa was rewarded with his ancestral crown, and was sent home as King of Judea. The Sanhedrin was reorganized under Gamaliel I. The national laws were put into force again, and with them the old spirit of liberal toleration returned to the land. This was the time when eleven of the disciples came down from Galilee to Jerusalem, to assemble there the faithful and form an association. That was the only time when they could venture to do it. They elected a twelfth man and formed the college of the twelve apostles, around which a small body was gradually formed. The author of the Acts says there were one hundred and twenty persons. They organized on the pattern of the cenobitical and communistic Essenes, having everything in common and residing in one house. Like the Essenes and the Pharisean associates, they practiced baptism, originally most likely twice every day, though this was afterward not required so often of neophytes, as among the Pharisees in general to this very day. Like those parties, they considered themselves priests and high-priests, and made no sacrifices in the temple, but consid-

ered their table the altar of the Lord, and their meals the only acceptable sacrifices. Therefore, the author of the Acts informs us that they ate their meals with particular piety and simplicity of heart. The last supper of Jesus had most likely nothing to do with this particular practice which the nascent Church had in common with the Essenes. Like the resurrection dogma, it owes its origin to the ingenuity and fruitful mind of Paul. Like the Essenes, they prayed much, devoted much time to the contemplative life, to the reading and allegorical expounding of Scriptures; therefore, like the Essenes, from whom they did not perceptibly differ, they must have soon gained the reputation of mysterious and very pious men. Harmless and inoffensive as they were, neither the authorities nor the busy world paid much attention to them, and they were left entirely undisturbed up to the year 48, which afforded them ample opportunity to perfect the young organization and a plan of action.

In one thing, however, the disciples did not imitate the Essenes, they did not work. Consequently the young association was poor, which brought them the name of Ebionites, signifying the needy ones. They were afterward called Nazarenes and Meenim. In the ancient rabbinical works, the above names only are known; but the word Christian is not found, simply because it had been adopted only by the Gentile converts outside of Palestine.

Peter or Caiphas,* a name most likely given him *post festum*, was the first head of the nascent Church. He was the man who had originally proclaimed Jesus the Messiah, and he consistently adhered to his allegation. Most likely he was also the man who built up the new Church, and, assisted by John, the two apostles James, and the brothers of Jesus, one of whom

* *Caipha* is the Aramaic for the Hebrew *sela*, and means "flint." *Tinnara* signifies the Hebrew *Tsur*, or "rock."

was also called James, it was his care chiefly to sustain it. This was no easy task. For the first, second and third years, the memory of the martyred master, the echo of his inspiring words, and the proud consciousness of having become his body and successors, especially as long as the society had the means of support, might have all gone well; but time is a wonderful physician and poverty a reckless despot. Something more tangible, more substantial and concrete than traditions and memorials, was necessary to keep together a body of persons of very limited knowledge.

Therefore, Peter, with his eleven colleagues, at an early stage of the primitive Church advanced this corner-stone of faith: The Messiah is not only resurrected with God and in us, but he will soon come back to us in triumph and glory, erect the throne of David, reconstruct the kingdom of heaven, and all of us will be princes and priests in reality. Patience, piety and faith in the approaching second advent only are required of us that we may be crowned with glory when the Lord returns to his palace. I, Peter, was not mistaken when I said Jesus was the Messiah. Although he was crucified, nevertheless he will come back very soon, to accomplish and complete the great work of the redemption of Israel, the reconstruction of the kingdom and the re elevation of the throne of David.

This was something tangible, something full of flattering promises, something worldly and godly, good for the soul and pleasant to the flesh. It was like the fruit from the tree of knowledge, "Pleasant to the sight and good for food." It was something which his congregation could grasp, to which it could cling and cleave. It was a happy idea for momentary purposes.

As regards the possibility of such a returning from the realm of death, we all know that nothing seems impossible to faith

or fancy. However absurd an allegation may sound, it can, by the allegoric methods of expounding Scripture, be rendered acceptable and coated with a considerable crust of Scriptural argument. Aside from this consideration, however, there existed a party in Israel who, mistaking a poetical expression of Eze-kiel, believed that King David would resurrect and be the Messiah. The apostolic doctrine was merely analogous to this popular superstition. It was a mere change of name, and much more acceptable to those who had seen and admired Jesus and believed in his Messiahship.

It is true, the kingdom of heaven, the theocracy, and the throne of David or any other throne, are antagonistic conceptions. Theocracy and the king can not coexist. But Peter did not speak to Jewish lawyers, as his master did; he spoke to an humble, pious and believing band of unsophisticated men and women. They might have asked him, How do you know all this,—who went up to heaven and came down again, to broach the secrets of the Almighty? To this, Peter had two answers. In the first place, he said, Jesus, while on earth, told him so; and that is the time when those passages of the Gospel were originated in which Jesus announces his second advent as the Jewish Messiah—not as the son of God (that was of later origin), but as the Jewish Messiah; neither of which occurred to the mind of the son of man.

The second answer of Peter was, We are the body of Christ's spirit; but the apostles are the head of the body, which remains in perpetual connection with the spirit. By the *Bath-kol*, the medium through which the Pharisean doctors learned, directly or indirectly, from heaven what God or his angels said or did there—and those Pharisean doctors, if we believe what the Talmud says, were experts in that supernatural art—well, then, by the same *Bath-kol*, which is a holy ghost, an ethereal, angelic, heavenly messenger, or even an accidental voice or

noise, we learn directly from heaven what the spirit of the departed Jesus deigns to let us know. So we know of his second advent at an early day. Besides, Peter could always, by the allegoric method, point out to his simple-minded hearers an abundance of proof for his allegations.

If the congregation should have objected that those Pharisean doctors were learned men, who knew the secret arts, which the apostles did not know, as the current belief then was, Peter would have answered; That is the very thing. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love?" "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Knowledge is a vain thing leading to damnation; ignorance is bliss. The ignorant and the poor are the new heirs of the kingdom. That was also the time when, for the satisfaction of the illiterate, those passages of the Gospel were advanced in which wealth and knowledge are condemned, ignorance and poverty are exalted as the noblest virtues, the surest guides to heaven; although most all of the worthies of the Old Testament were represented as being both wealthy and wise.

In the words of Jesus, there was some misunderstood foundation for this peculiar doctrine. The rich and the learned were opposed to his mission, the restoration of the kingdom of heaven. They dreaded the consequences of the Messianic drama. [He could see in the poor and the ignorant only the heirs of the kingdom of heaven, especially as the wealthy and mighty around him were hirelings or servants of Rome. In the revolution which he expected, as in every other popular revolution, he could but expect the last to be the first, and the first to be the last; the highest to be the lowest, and the lowest to be the highest in the reconstructed kingdom of heaven. This, turned into a religious dogma, gave rise to voluntary pov-

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erty, idleness and ignorance as pleasing to the Almighty, an anti-social principle, not yet overcome in the Church.

Had the congregation further objected, To what purpose was all this,—why did not Jesus at once re-establish the kingdom,—to what purpose was he crucified at all?—(this question was so much more important, as the Pharisees believed in “No affliction without sin, and no death without iniquity”)—Peter would have answered, and he had merely to take it from the lips of his contemporary Pharisees: “The righteous is summoned away on account of the evil,” they expounded Isaiah; “he must die in consequence of the sins of others, or on account of the evil which is to come, and he should see no more.” Jesus died on account of the existing evils, the dominant wickedness; not indeed as a vicarious atonement in the sense in which Paul afterward construed the doctrine, this would not have done for Jews, but that all the people, seeing the calamity, that so great a man had been snatched from their midst so suddenly and violently, on account of their sins, should repent, receive remission of sins, and thus all the people be prepared for the reconstruction of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, Jesus was crucified.

The simple fact that Jesus died to save the lives of his disciples and of many innocent men, together with the Pharisean theory accounting for the death of the righteous, are the foundation and germ from which Paul’s doctrine of vicarious atonement was developed. The nascent Church had no knowledge of it. The apostles, like Jesus and John, preached remission of sins, according to the Pharisean theory, by repentance and self-elevation, and the re-establishment of the kingdom of God in Israel as a consequence of the remission of sins.

These were the doctrines of the primitive Church. These are the germs of the origin of Christianity. From these simple points the system was gradually developed.

Aside from these new doctrines, the apostles did not in anywise differ from their people, as they were all Jews, the sons of Jews, and firm believers in the doctrines of the Jews. What they added, viz, the dogmas of the resurrection and the second advent of the Messiah, did not alienate or estrange them from the Hebrew people, among whom all sorts of opinions and sects were tolerated. The masses of the Jews did not hate either Jesus or his disciples and followers. Their troubles originated not from doctrinal sources. The zealots were more political than religious fanatics, and the exciting questions of that age were much more of a political than of a religious nature.

But there was another difficult task to be performed by Peter and the apostles. The Church undoubtedly believed and hoped, prophesied and spoke in strange tongues. But the means of subsistence was another question; where should they be gotten? All faith turns faithless under the tyranny of hunger. No class of people could ever subsist on the manna of devotion and the quails of faith. The members of the nascent Church were human beings, to whom the question of subsistence was naturally very important, especially to Peter and the apostles, if they expected to uphold the cenobitical association of men and women who did not work. The means of subsistence had to be obtained from the people among whom they lived. Therefore, the consideration of this question leads us outside of the Church and brings us in contact with the world, which opens to our contemplation the second chapter in the Origin of Christianity.

The world is a storm-tossed ocean, in which a thousand passions and ten thousand interests heave the billows, roll the current with furious rapidity, furrow and whirl the impetuous deep, and roar a chorus of thunderclaps and hurricanes. Many an inexperienced mariner builds his trim vessel in a se-

cure haven; makes it safe, swift and manageable; provides it with all articles of necessity and comfort, and imagines it can outride any storm, and carry him safely over the great deep. But on the day of trial, when the tempest roars and the billows foam, then the masts break, the ribs groan and the mariner's wisdom fails.

This was, to a considerable extent, also the case with the apostles. They succeeded well in the narrow circle of friends and co-religionists; but sailing out upon the broad ocean of life, a new and unexpected combat opened, for which they were not so well prepared. The Messianic mania, we know from Tacitus, was almost extinct. Under the reign of Agrippa I. and several years after that, the Hebrew people were satisfied with the state of affairs and wanted no Messiah. But now came Peter and the apostles, announced that the Messiah had come, was crucified, and would come again to restore the kingdom. Men whose ideal of a Messiah was of a political nature chiefly, blending probably in one imaginary person the bravery of Joshua, David and Joab; of the hoary Mathathias and the lion-like Judah Maccabee; the wisdom of Solomon; the sweet, melodious echoes of Asaph and Jeduthun; the electrifying and burning eloquence of Isaiah; thus creating an ideal uniting in one person beauty, strength, wisdom and holiness—those men were required to abandon their lofty conception of a redeemer, and adopt in lieu thereof a crucified rabbi from Galilee. They could not do it, even had they tried, because the ideal was contrary to the national traditions and the Oriental imagination. They rejected Peter's Messianic doctrine.

Again, in a city influenced for centuries by Grecian and Roman culture; where the rationalistic and humanitarian school of Hillel counted its admirers by the thousands; where also the immortality of the soul was doubted by the wealthy, aris-

tocratic and influential Sadducees, and Jesus himself had said, "Let the dead bury the dead"; in such a city, and among an eminently practical people of merchants and scholars, Peter promulgated the doctrine of a savior returning from the realm of death to do the entire work by a miracle. As little as such a doctrine, if promulgated now, would be believed in this or any other city of the civilized world, so little, indeed, could it possibly have been believed then in the city of Jerusalem.

These doctrines finding no credence among the Jews of Jerusalem, the new faith met with no success—a fact which the author of the Acts also admits. In narrating the Pentecost miracle, a legend written late in the second century, he narrates that five thousand persons were converted in one day. But he says that all of them were foreigners. Therefore, God, who, in that part of the world and at that particular time, was always on hand with a miracle, made those pious teachers speak the various languages without any trouble, so that all those foreigners could understand them. *ah*

The historical fact, however, is, that in the year 66, when Cestius Gallus besieged Jerusalem, the Christians left the city to settle down at Pella, in Coelosyria, *well - Syria* for, like the modern Quakers; they were non-combatants; and all of them, men, women and children, numbered five hundred souls. It must be borne in mind that the Acts were not admitted in the canon of the New Testament as late as the year 407 A. C. *not to me with*

Meeting with no success in Jerusalem was an ill omen, for the Jews all over the world looked to that city for religious instruction. There was the seat of literature and the center of piety. It was a double misfortune; it retarded the progress of the cause and it cut off the supplies. Where should the support come from, if the people did not believe? And, without support, how could the nascent congregation wait in patience for the second advent? The author of the Acts is always on

hand with a miracle, but for all that he does not tell on what the congregation subsisted.

Peter and the apostles, however, were not the men to be easily defeated; they were too devoutly attached to their martyred master to yield easily to the pressure of circumstances. Although they appear to Mr. Renan a class of devout dervishes, or somewhat like the monks of the Middle Ages, who knew little, prayed much and devoutly, believed seriously and begged sanctimoniously, they were not at all without energy and enterprise. It is not so easy after all to stand up for a new idea and to support a congregation of persons who looked to them for the lessons of salvation and for their daily bread, in a populous and busy city. They found means to do two things—to propagate their faith and to earn the means of subsistence—and those means were borrowed from the Essenes.

The practice of medicine always was a lucrative business in densely populated cities; and the apostles had recourse to this means of support. Like the Essenes, they soon enjoyed the reputation of being very pious men, who must know all about the angels, the spirits and their capricious tricks. Like the Essenes, they practiced the arts of exorcism, necromancy and thaumaturgy, healed the sick, the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, drove out evil spirits, prophesied, held conversation with the angels, and worked sundry miracles.

According to a repeated statement of the ancient rabbis, on the authority of a contemporary of the apostles, Rabbi Jochanan ben Saccai, it was then a common practice among the heathens to expel an evil spirit from a man by placing a quantity of dried herbs about the poor man and setting them on fire, to smoke the evil spirit out like a freshman; and if he did not mind that, water was thrown on the victim, and the evil spirit was washed out. This had certainly a good deal to do with the adoption of the right of baptism by the Gentile

Christians, TO BE BAPTIZED WITH FIRE OR BAPTIZED WITH WATER.) According to Josephus, the evil spirits were then driven out in the name of King Solomon, which they dreaded exceedingly; and the maniacs were dosed with a tincture made of a certain root growing somewhere near Macherus. The apostles did the same thing with the name of Jesus that others did with the name of Solomon, and their fortune was made: Finally the whole congregation was instructed in these secret arts. Thus a rich mine of subsistence and an avenue to the progress of the faith was opened. Therefore, the historians of the Church unanimously testify that the primitive Christians, down to the third century, claimed to be in possession of these mysterious gifts of grace. Therefore, the apostle James was known to the ancient rabbis in the capacity of the thaumaturgist, who cured the sick by whispering magic spells into their ears. Therefore, the author of the Acts maintains the self-same fact, only that he clothes it in a mysterious garb. Therefore, he does not tell us the means of subsistence for the nascent congregation. *man* *f* *of*

Sickening indeed are the numerous stories of this kind recorded of Pagan priests and jugglers, and especially of Egyptians and Syrians. Jewish impostors, too, besides the self-deluded Essenes, according to the united testimony of Josephus, Juvenal and the Acts, had become renowned experts in this vulgar art of delusion, which became more common, coarse, and ludicrous as, in the progress of national misery, self-confidence, learning and enlightenment declined; until at last, when the Babylonian Talmud was edited, the hugest hobgoblin stories were received as sober facts, in accordance with the example set by the simple-minded authors of the Gospels and the Acts, and kept in vogue by the Fathers of the Church. I could cite all night from the Talmud miracles as huge and incredible as those of the New Testament, and they are quite amusing. But why should I offend your ears with superstitions against *ami* *6200* *720*

which our better nature revolts? Nevertheless, there were then many people in all parts of the world who believed all those things; there are now persons superstitious enough to believe similar absurdities; and a legion of preachers maintains that we must believe them, in order not to be cast among the stigmatized class of infidels.

It is a futile attempt to explain away the ghost stories of the Gospels, the Acts, or the Talmud. Such was the belief and practice of the vulgar among almost all nations of antiquity. The apostles and primitive Christians resorted to that practice for a livelihood. Whether they did or did not believe in it, can hardly be ascertained now from the meager sources before us. It must be added here that there were artificial monomaniacs, who, having spent a certain time among sepulchers, fasted and prayed themselves into a state of delirium, believed or professed to believe themselves to have attracted an evil spirit, and went forth prophesying and working miracles. This class of patients or impostors, or, perhaps, men suffering from a morbid imagination, and hysteric women, might indeed have been cured of their hallucinations by moral, mental or religious means. But the Gospels and the Acts refer to no imaginary ghosts—they mean facts. Their evil one and evil ones are real devils.

The most disgraceful phase in this lucrative practice was that the apostles claimed to have learned those superstitions from their martyred master, and in consequence thereof they were obliged to invent the stories of exorcism and necromancy which in after-times gave rise to those portions of the Gospels which represent the patriotic and enthusiastic Jesus as a vulgar sorcerer and juggler. This was a crime of which the apostles never should have been guilty. The natural consequence was that the character of Jesus was degraded in the estimation of sensible men, who, crediting those reports, must have

thought, exactly as we would to-day, that a man who adopts such contemptible means of superstition to blindfold the multitude can have no honest intentions, notwithstanding all the accommodating theories of our days. The end does not justify the means. Truth must prevail by its own inherent force. The next consequence was that the rabbis of the next century actually believed the reports of the apostles and maintained that Jesus was a sorcerer, an exorcist, who had learned necromancy or *kishuf* in Egypt, and repeat this several times in the Talmud. They considered it a very foolish thing, to use their own expression, but, believing the apostles' reports, they also believed that Jesus committed those follies.

So the apostles succeeded in supporting the congregation, in spreading the name of Jesus among the class who believed in exorcism. They succeeded even in living in wealth and affluence, if we are to believe what Paul says of them in an angry moment; but they did not succeed in gaining the sympathy or winning the admiration of the intelligent for their martyred master. They had no new ideas in theology or ethics to offer to the Hebrew; no broad, general and elevating principle to give to the intelligent: no startling truth to announce; they could not rouse the busy world from its moral lethargy.

The most serious consequence of this practice was trouble with the authorities. The law of Moses strictly prohibits all sorts of superstitions, and the law of Rome from the twelfth year of Augustus interdicted sorcery and exorcism. In our days the laws of all civilized nations do the same. Therefore, in the year 48, when Ananias II. was high-priest, Agrippa I. being dead, Peter and John were arrested and brought to trial before the court of priests. This was not wonderful. It is a wonder that they were dismissed with the warning, in strict accordance with the law, to give up that illegal practice of healing the sick and banishing evil spirits with the name of Jesus

or any other name. But they did not give it up, and were again arrested on the same charges. This time all the apostles were arrested, and the author of the Acts had to tell a number of miracles. The main fact, however, is that Gamaliel, a learned Pharisee, plead their cause, but did not fully succeed. They received the penalty of the law, which was "forty stripes," or, rather, thirty-nine, called in Hebrew *Mal-koth*. This, of course, stopped their medical practice in Jerusalem, and they were obliged to go to the country.

The author of the Acts narrates two more persecutions which are unhistorical. He has Peter and James rearrested, and James beheaded. But Josephus informs us that Simon and James, the two sons of Theudas, and not the apostles, were crucified by the apostate and Roman Governor Tiberius Alexander. The mistake came simply from the fact that, in 62 or 63, James, the brother of Jesus, was beheaded by another high-priest, Ananias; and a few years of history did not make much difference to the writers of the second century.

He narrates next the martyrdom of Stephen. The same story is chronicled also in the Talmud, only with the difference that in the Talmud the Hebrew name, Rabbi Judah *Hanahtum*, is mentioned, and the Roman authorities executed him in a most barbarous manner; and in the Acts, as usual, the Jews must have done it. In the Acts, all Romans and Greeks are saints and all Jews are Satans, which can not be true. The Stephen story is an old rabbinical tale, which may or may not be true; anyhow, in the manner narrated in the Acts, it is improbable.

The fact is that, after the second arrest, the apostles, evangelists and as many of the congregation as could do active work, were obliged to resort to evangelizing tours through the country, as far, probably, as Damascus and Antioch, because they could no longer sustain the congregation in Jerusalem.

This brought the Gospel outside of the Jewish capital, and it was spread there by the same means as in that city, and with little better success. Some converts may have been made — it is not certain — in Samaria, Gaza, Cæsarea, Lydda, Damascus, and elsewhere, but their number was small. Therefore, neither Josephus nor Philo knows anything about them. It is certain that, up to the year 53, there existed no Christian congregation outside of Jerusalem.

Some biographers of the apostles, and among them also Mr. Renan, paying no attention to the repeated statements of Paul in his epistles, maintain that the apostles conceived the brilliant idea of converting the heathens, and carried it into partial effect. Others ascribe this purpose to Jesus, thinking he proposed the conversion of the entire human family to himself and his disciples. Paul, however, claims to have been the first and only apostle to the Gentiles. If Jesus prohibited his disciples to go to the Samaritans, refused to heal the sick daughter of a Gentile woman, and said he was sent to the house of Israel only — then he certainly had no idea of converting the human family. His immediate disciples knew only what they had learned of their master, although they did not understand it all. They could certainly do nothing with the Græco-Roman population, whose languages they could not speak. The holy ghost or *Bath-kol*, did not enable them to speak articulate sounds and intelligible language. According to the description of Paul, the “strange tongue” spoken by those who claimed inspiration was a sort of peculiar groaning, random ejaculation, a moaning, murmuring or shrieking vociferation, which one of the company expounded as he understood it. Had the apostles been able to speak otherwise successfully, they could not possibly have used that “strange tongue,” which must have sounded ridiculous to a good many. Without the knowledge

of language and the power of speech, how could they think of converting the heathens?

Paul, who according to my theory is identical with the Acher of the Talmud, studied the Greek language at the feet of Gamaliel. "A thousand students were in the academy of my grandsire," said a descendant of Gamaliel; "five hundred of them studied the Greek." Young Paul or Acher, the Talmud maintains, had always a Grecian poem on his lips. When he rose in the academy, many a Greek book dropped from his lap. He could think of going to the Græco-Roman Pagans, and he is said to have been the first to conceive the Catholic idea.

Aside from these considerations, however, the author of the Acts narrates of Peter that he was called to Cæsarea to convert a devout Roman, Cornelius the centurion. On that occasion, Peter utters the Essenean doctrine, "Ye know how that is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." This was not unlawful to the Jew, it was to the Essene. Such being the doctrine of the Church previous to that supposed event, how could Jesus or the apostles have thought of converting heathens?

The fact is that the work of the apostles was narrowly circumscribed. They established a small congregation in Jerusalem, and made some converts among Jews outside thereof. They advanced the doctrines expounded in the first part of this lecture, lived on exorcism and thaumaturgy, and waited faithfully for the second advent. Although there was much heavenly expectation in their hope and faith, a separation of the political from the spiritual kingdom of heaven, the negation and rejection of life and happiness, freedom and justice on earth for the sake of heaven, were unknown to the Jews, hence also to the apostles. Jesus himself, according to Matthew,

had promised to his followers wealth and happiness here, and eternal bliss in life hereafter.

Notwithstanding the mistakes made by the apostles, there was a sublime ideal in their souls; and this was their martyred master identified with the lessons he had taught them, which elevated and invigorated them. It kept them above the hostile elements of necromancy, exorcism and persecution, to become the connecting link between Jesus and Paul. The poor man in the parable has but one lamb, but he loves it like his own child. Humble people need but one ideal to fill their souls, and that keeps them high above the storm-tossed ocean of selfish passions. The apostles lived on exorcism, but they lived for a cause, earnest, devout and pious, and such men are never without success. Every idealistic cause, every attempt to benefit mankind, stands under the special protection of Providence, so that none can utterly fail. Beneficial ideas are indestructible. They outlive their martyrs and their executioners. The treasures of the human family, baptized in tears and blood, are carefully guarded by the benign genius of history.

In the rabbinical literature, several successes of the apostles are noticed, especially at Capernaum and Capersamia. One of them is most remarkable, viz, the conversion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcan by the apostle James. This rabbi, the Talmud narrates, was actually arrested by Roman officers, and, in obedience to the edict against Christianity, was accused of the crime of being a Christian, which he did not deny, although he repented it.

The most important success, however, which the apostles could boast, was the conversion of Paul. The man whose colossal genius and gigantic energies grasped the pillars upon which the superstructure of Græco-Roman Paganism rested, bent and broke them like rotten staves, till with a thundering

noise down came the ancient fabric, with its gods, altars, temples, priests and priestesses, depositing *debris* that took centuries to remove and remodel; the man whose hands were against all, and against whom were all hands; who defied the philosophy of the philosophers, the power of the priests, and the religions of the world; who was all alone all in all;— this man was Paul of Tarsus, the great apostle to the Gentiles, with an original gospel of his own. 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 ancient heathenism from the Tigris to the Tiber, and from the Tiber to the Thames. With a skillful hand he threw the sparks upon the accumulated combustibles of error, corruption and slavery, and ancient society exploded, to make room and furnish the material for a new civilization. The conversion of this man was the apostles' great success. If it had not been for him, the nascent Church, like other Jewish sects, would have perished in the catastrophe of Jerusalem, because the apostles did not possess that vigor and energy to resist the violent shock. In Paul, however, the spirit of John and of Jesus resurrected with double vigor, and he became the actual founder of the Christianity of history. But with Paul begins the third chapter of my history, and I must expound it in my next lecture.



LECTURE III.

PAUL AND THE MYSTICS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:— Few and far apart are the brilliant stars in the horizon of history. Strike out a hundred names and their influence upon the fate of man, and you have no history.

Those brilliant stars, however, did not always make history from their own wealth, from the original resources of their minds. Ideas which tens of thousands have held, without an attempt to carry them into effect, and others have unsuccessfully attempted to realize, in the right time and under favorable circumstances are seized upon by an executive genius, and a new epoch in history is opened. The numerous minor spirits which contributed to the sum total of the creative idea disappear in the brilliancy of the one star which remains visible in history. The world is a machine-shop. Each artificer makes the part of a machine. One master mind combines the parts, and he is known as the master machinist.

Paul was one of those master machinists, one of those brilliant stars in the horizon of history. In him, the spirit of Jesus resurrected as eminently and vigorously as John had resurrected in Jesus. He was the author of Gentile Christianity. He conceived the idea of carrying into effect what all the prophets, all pious Israelites of all ages, hoped and expected, the denationalization of the Hebrew ideas and their promulgation in the form of universal religion, among the Gentiles, to conciliate and unite the human family under the great banner

conciliating and uniting.

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inscribed with the motto of "One God and one code of morals to all." All Jews of all ages hoped and expected that the kingdom of heaven should be extended to all nations and tongues; but Paul went forth to do it; this is his particular greatness.

The circumstances, of course, favored his enterprise. Græco-Roman Paganism was undermined. The gods stood in disrepute, and the Augurs smiled. The state religion was an organized hypocrisy. The learned believed nothing; the vulgar almost everything, if it was but preposterously absurd enough. The progress of Grecian philosophy and the inroads of Judaism in the Roman world were so considerable, that royal families had embraced Judaism, and the Emperor Tiberius had found it necessary to drive the Jews, together with the Egyptian priests, from Rome, because their religion had its admirers in the very palace of the Cæsars, as well as among priests, nobles and plebeians. All the devout Gentiles whom Paul met on his journeys were Judaized Greeks or Syrians; for the Pharisees traversed land and sea to make one proselyte. Therefore, when Paul preached in Asia Minor, Cicero and Cato *had* spoken in Rome; Seneca and Epictetus gave utterance to sentiments as nearly like those of Paul and other Jews as are the two eyes of the same head.

Again, on the other hand, Epicurism in its worst sequences, sensualism in its most outrageous form, the despotism and brutality of the Cæsars and their favorites, had so undermined the moral sentiments and religious feelings of the masses, that skepticism, fraught with shocking vices and unnatural crimes, coupled with contemptible hypocrisy and ridiculous superstition, demoralized the masses and brought truth itself into ill repute. To add to all this there came the steady decline of the Jewish state, the growing demonstration of fast-approaching ruin, and, in consequence thereof, the growth of superstition among the Hebrews, among whom a class of mystics sprung

up, who professed to know what God and his angels do, speak and think in the secret cabinet of heaven, where the throne of the Almighty stands, splendidly and minutely described by those mystics, who supposed that they received superior knowledge by special impressions from on high, without study or research on their part; and expected to see the status of social and political affairs suddenly changed by miraculous interpositions of the Deity, without human exertion and co-operation. This state of affairs was highly favorable to Paul's stupendous enterprise.

But who was Paul himself? Notwithstanding all the attempts of the author of the Acts to mystify him into as mythical a character as the Gospels made of Jesus, Paul is an open book in history. We have his genuine epistles, in which he gives considerable account of himself and his exploits. We have one portion of the Acts in which, contrary to the rest of that book, the author narrates in the first person plural, "we," which appears to be taken from the notes of one of Paul's companions, Luke, Timothy, Silas or any other. Then we have the Talmud, with its numerous anecdotes about *Acher*,— as the rabbis called Paul, which are of inestimable value to the historian. These sources enable us to form a conception of the man. A few remarks on his life will be found interesting.

Paul is not a proper name. It signifies "the little one," as the Jews used to set before their names *הקטן*. The author of the Acts states that his name was Saul. But, it appears, he knew no more about it than we do, and changed the P of Paul into an S, to make of it the Hebrew name Saul. In his epistles he invariably calls himself Paul, and not Saul. So the author of the "We" portion of the Acts always calls him Paul. Passing under an assumed name, the rabbis called him *Acher*, "another," i. e., one who passes under another or assumed name.

They maintain that his name was Elisha ben Abujah. But this name must be fictitious, because it is a direct and express reference to Paul's theology. It signifies "the saving deity, son of the father god,"* and Paul was the author of the "son of God" doctrine. The fact is, he was known to the world under his assumed name only.

Nothing is known of his youth, except a few spurious anecdotes recorded in the Talmud. When quite young, he studied the law and some Grecian literature at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, among the thousand students who listened to the wisdom of that master. He states that he was a very zealous Pharisee, who persecuted the Christians. But all of a sudden he embraced the cause of the persecuted, and became one of its most zealous apostles. We can easily imagine the nature of that persecution, although the Stephen story, like the Damascus story and the vision on the way, as narrated in the Acts, are spurious, because Paul never alludes to them and the Jews of Jerusalem had no jurisdiction in Damascus over anybody. But what caused his remarkable transition from one extreme to the other? First a Pharisee, with law and nothing but law, and then the author of the epistles, which reject and abrogate the entire law. Transitions of this nature require time, and are wrought by violent agencies only.

A number of stories narrated in the Talmud, together with those of the Acts, point to the fact that the youthful Paul, with his vivid imagination, witnessed many an act of barbarous violence and outrageous injustice. Occurrences of this nature were not rare under the military despotism of Rome in Judea. The soil was saturated with innocent blood. The world was governed by the sword, and Rome groaned under the unnatural crimes of her Cæsars. There was universal de-

* אֱלִישָׁע בֶּן אֲבוּיָה *

pravity among the governing class, and endless misery among the governed. The rabbis give us to understand that this state of affairs misled Paul into the belief that there was no justice in heaven or earth, no hope for Israel, no reward and no punishment, that the balance of justice was destroyed. It is quite natural that under such circumstances such a skepticism should overpower young and sensitive reasoners.

King Saul, in a state of despair, receiving no reply from the Prophets, none from the Urim and Thumim, deeply fallen as he was, went in disguise to the Witch of Endor. Goethe's Faust, in imitation thereof, receiving no answer to his questions addressed to heaven and eternity, no answer through his knowledge of nature's laws and nature's forces, no answer from the philosophy of his century and the theology of his priests, throws himself into the embrace of Mephistopheles. That is human nature. Exactly the same thing was done in the days of Paul, and exactly the same thing he himself did. There was the indescribable misery of the age, and there were the knowledge and theories of that overburdened century, and no answer, no reply to the questions addressed to heaven and eternity; and they went to the fountains of mysticism and secret knowledge to quench the thirst of the soul. There sprung up the visionary Gnostics among the Gentiles, and the Kabbalistic Mystics among the Jews. History notices the same rotation continually — Idealism, Sensualism, Skepticism, and finally Mysticism.

The mystic art among the Hebrews then was of two different kinds, either to attract an evil spirit, or to be transported alive into paradise or heaven. An evil spirit was attracted, as before stated, by fasting and remaining for days and nights alone in burial-grounds, till the brain was maddened and infatuated, when the artificial demoniac prophesied and performed sundry miracles. The transportation to heaven or paradise was more

difficult. The candidate for a tour into heaven would retire to some isolated spot, fast until the brain was maddened with delirium and the nerves excited to second sight by the loss of sleep. Then, in that state of trance, he would sit down on the ground, draw up his knees, bend down his head between them, and murmur magic spells, until, through the reversed circulation of the blood, the maddened brain and the unstrung nerves, he would imagine that he saw the heaven opening to his inspection, palace after palace thrown widely open to his gaze, hosts of angels passing within view, until finally he imagined himself entirely removed from the earth, transported aloft into those diamond palaces on high, or, as Paul calls it, "caught up into paradise," where he heard "unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter" (Cor. xi. 12), and the throne of God, with all the Seraphim and Cherubim, archangels and angels became visible, and their conversation intelligible to the enraptured and transported mystic, in a fit of hallucination, when the bewildered imagination sees objectively its own subjective phantasma, and hears from without, in supposed articulate sounds, its own silent thoughts. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to form a correct idea of the mystic eccentricities to which this awful practice must have led those who frequently indulged in it. Rabbinical mystics, like modern trance-speakers, gave vivid descriptions of the interior splendor and grand sceneries of heaven and of the conversations of angels. One of those descriptions is preserved in *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, others in various fragments of the Talmud.

Among those particularly noticed in the Talmud, as having been in heaven or paradise, there is also Acher, or Paul, who states so himself in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians (xii.). That passage gave rise to the story of Jesus appearing in person to Paul, just as the rabbinical mystics claimed to

have had frequent intercourse with the prophet Elijah, who had been transported alive to heaven.

So Paul passed the transition from the law-school of the Pharisees to the new school of mystics. In this state of trance, he discovered that central figure of the Kabbalistic speculation, the *Metathron*, the co-regent of the Almighty; or, as he otherwise was called, the *Synadelphos*, the confrere of the Deity, or Suriel, the "Prince of the Countenance," whom the Kabbalists imagined to be the chief marshal or chief scribe in heaven; who was once on earth, as Enoch or as Elijah, and was advanced to that high position in heaven.

It is the Demiurge, the highest magistrate in heaven, whom the gnostic Valentine calls a godlike angel, and of whom the rabbis said, "His name is like unto the name of his Master."

This central figure, blended with the Messianic speculations of that age, with the doctrines of Peter and the nascent Church, combined in Paul's mind to one mystic conception of the "Son of God," intelligible to Pagan ears. So he went forth and proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth the son of God. In substance, the expression is about the same as *Metathron* and *Synadelphos*, and the office which Paul ascribed to Jesus is precisely of the same nature with that which the Kabbalists ascribed to the angel who was the *Saar Haolom*, the prince or ruler of this world, who stands before God, or also sits before him, as Paul's Jesus stands before God, or sits at his right hand. It is precisely the same in both systems, the names only are changed; so that it is difficult to decide whether Paul was or the rabbis were the authors of the metathronic speculations, especially as these two angels only have Greek names, while all others are Hebrew or Chaldean, and later Kabbalists frequently put down Joshua or Jesus in the place of *Metathron*.

Those who believe that *Acher's* dualism of Deity שתי רשויות was the Persian *Ormuzd* and *Ahriman*, hence a good and an

evil principle, and that Metathron never was an evil demon, are as decidedly mistaken as those who believe that Paul had more than one God. Paul's son of God and Acher's Metathron are the same central figure before the throne of God, and the two authors are identical.

In that world of secret thoughts, Paul discovered the harmonization of discordant speculations, and the remedy for all existing evils. "The world must be regenerated by a new religion," was his great ideal. The ancient religions and the philosophies have produced the corruption which rages universally. They must be swept away. Society must be reconstructed on a new basis, and this basis is in the theology and ethics of Israel, separated and liberated from their climatical and national limitations, their peculiar Jewish garb. There was no hope left of saving the Jewish nationality and political organization from the hands of omnipotent Rome, which swallowed and neutralized kingdoms and nations with wonderful ease; nor was there any particular necessity for it, if society at large was reconstructed on the new basis. The object of Jesus was to reconstruct the kingdom of heaven *in Israel*, and he was crucified. All Israel had the same object in view, and stood at the brink of dissolution. If the basis and principles of the kingdom of heaven became the postulate of society at large, Jesus is resurrected in the world, and Israel is saved, was Paul's main idea.

The Pharisean rabbis hoped that this would come to pass at some future day לעתיד לבוא when, they maintained, all sacrifices and all laws would be abolished, and all the nations of the earth would be one family, with one God and one moral law. Paul seized upon the idea, and added to it the simple dogma of Peter, "The Messiah has come." That hoped-for future is now. God's promise to Abraham, "And there shall be blessed by thee, and by thy seed, all the families of the earth,"

is to be fulfilled at once. So he came forth from his mystical paradise an apostle of Jesus and a new redeemer of Israel. He argued exactly as the Pharisean doctors did who maintained that the Messiah would come when all mankind should be guilty or all righteous. In the estimation of Paul, at that particular time all mankind was corrupt and demoralized, and so that was the time for the Messiah to make his appearance.

He went to work at once. He began to preach his new Christianity at Damascus about the year 51, and found out that the world was not prepared for his ideas. He had a narrow escape at Damascus, where the governor and soldiers pursued him. Like the spies at Jericho, he was let down in a basket over the city walls, and made his escape. So *he* narrates the story. The author of the Acts, true to his hostility to the Jews, of course brings them in as the persecutors. But Paul, in general, never speaks otherwise than with the highest regard and love of his kinsmen and his brothers according to the flesh.

The failure at Damascus did not discourage Paul. It only convinced him that he was too young (he could not at that time have been much over twenty-one years); that he was not sufficiently prepared for the great enterprise; that it was not such an easy task to throw down the superannuated heathenism and to reorganize society on a new basis. He retired into Arabia and remained there nearly three years, to perfect a plan of operation. Nearly three years he spent in silent contemplation, to discover the proper means, to take the right hold upon the heathen world, and to unfurl a new banner of heaven upon this wicked earth. In 53 or 54 we meet him again at Antioch, with his new and original Gospel—the Gospel for the Gentiles—prepared for his mission and ready to embark in the great enterprise, to wage active war upon all existing systems of religion and philosophy, and to replace all of them by Paul's Gos-

pel. He had been in Jerusalem fifteen days, had conversed with Peter and nobody else, but he repeatedly tells us that he had taken advice of none, consulted none, was appointed by nobody and learned nothing of anybody. The Gospel was his gospel, and he was an apostle by the appointment of God Almighty himself, who had revealed his son to him. In Antioch he established the first congregation of Jews and Gentiles, and called them Christians. So Paul was the actual author of Christianity among the Gentiles.

What was Paul's Gospel? Paul, setting out on his journeys with the great idea of converting heathens, was obliged to paganize the Gospel. The heathens knew nothing of the Jewish Messiah, and he gave him the name popularly known among them—he called him the Son of God, which was a common name in mythology. The Son of God and Mary was a term as popular among heathens as it was foreign to the Jews, among whom Jesus was to remain the Messiah, only that he became also the Metathron. This explained to Jewish mystics the possibility of the second advent, and gave a metaphysical foundation to the resurrection doctrine. The kingdom of heaven, or the theocracy, was another unintelligible idea to the heathen. Israel's laws and form of government were as odious and decried among the Pagans as the hostility to that people was fierce and implacable. Paul made thereof a theological kingdom of heaven, when all the dead shall resurrect in spiritual bodies, and the living shall be changed accordingly, together with this earth and all that is thereon; and declared all the laws of Israel abrogated, so that only the spirit thereof, the precepts and not the laws, should be obligatory in the new state of society.

The sins and wickedness of the world are forgiven to all who believe in the son, and whose flesh is crucified with him, to resurrect with him in purity; for he died a vicarious atone-

ment for all. He was the last sacrifice, to blot out the sins of all who have faith in him.

The crucified one did not resurrect merely in the spirit, of which the heathens could not form a satisfactory conception, because the immortality of the soul was by no means a general belief among them, and their gods were no spirits; he resurrected in his very body, and was caught up to heaven, to sit or stand there at God's right hand, to come down again in proper time. "Here, then, is your tangible proof of immortality," he said to the heathens. "Like the crucified one, all of you will resurrect from the dead, or be changed on the day of judgment." This was plain language to heathens, who knew that but lately Cæsar had been caught up to heaven as Romulus was before him, and asked no questions as to how a human body can rise in the atmosphere and become incorruptible; none as to what means above or below, up or down, as to where God is and where he is not, where his right hand, where before and where behind him; or as to whether the world is full of his glory. No such questions were asked, and there was the ocular demonstration of immortality, tangible and intelligible to the grossest intellect.

The Jewish nationality and the Jewish law are at their end, and the world is the heir to that covenant and to the blessing of God by Abraham and his seed. With the new covenant the old one ceases. It has fulfilled its destiny. It was a state of preparation for this period of universal salvation to all who have love, hope and faith. With Adam and the flesh came the sin, law and death; with Jesus the flesh ceases, hence, no more sin, law or death.

These are the main features of Paul's Gospel: The son of God, the theological kingdom of heaven, the vicarious atonement, the bodily resurrection of the crucified one, the abrogation of the law and the beginning of the new covenant. He

was the first man to utter these doctrines ; with him Christianity begins, and he named it.

But Paul knew well that doctrines alone would be insufficient to rouse the heathen world from its demoralized state, its dreary and stupid dreams ; and he resorted to the most terrible and most shocking of all messages. He came to the heathens with the terror-striking proclamation : “ The end is nigh ! ” The whole earth, with all the creatures thereon ; the whole human family, with all its wickedness, all its atrocious crimes, will be destroyed in one moment. All of you, men, women and children, with all your vices and crimes, will be suddenly summoned before the Eternal and All-just ; you have to go, all of you, and appear before the omniscient God. The end is nigh, the destruction of the human family is certain and right before you. It will come soon. It may come any day, at any moment.

“ The end is nigh.” This message, fraught with all the terrors which imagination can invent and the most eloquent lips can possibly utter—the fathomless theme which comprises all the fury of the elements, indefinitely increased by the ignited fancy ; all which man dreads ; all the terrors of death and all the horrors of destruction — with this dreadful message Paul approached the heathens and announced it, as the messenger of the Most High. He thundered unto the masses : The end of all flesh is nigh, and you with all your wickedness must appear before the everlasting Judge. So he crushed them to the ground, and then he hurled at their bewildered heads and sore hearts all their crimes and follies, all their demoralization and hypocrisy. So his thunderbolts fell on the terrified masses, who must have fallen, prostrate and crushed, at his feet.

Now Paul’s Gospel came in. Here is your choice. There is death and damnation ; here is life and happiness everlasting. God has sent his Son in advance of the approaching catastro-

phe to warn you, and he is appointed now to conduct the end of all flesh. Cling to him and be saved, or believe not and be condemned forever. So he came to the heathens. This was his Gospel. How did he succeed? We will explain after a brief pause.

All passages in the Gospels and the Acts which have reference to the above christology, to the end of things or against it (in which the Synoptics most fatally contradict one another), are the products of writers long after Paul, when the attempts to reconcile Jewish and Gentile Christianity were made. For with Paul begins the new form of Christianity, and the struggle with the representatives of the old form. Within ten years he traversed the land from Antioch to Athens, in three different journeys, and established his bishopric, the first Christian congregations among the Gentiles. He organized them fully, with deacons and deaconesses, preachers and prophets; and he was their bishop, their oracle, their revelation and their demigod. He let his converts believe that they could do wonderful things, in healing the sick, driving out demons, prophesying and speaking with strange tongues, because it served his purposes, although he did none of these things. He gave them the holy ghost, *i. e.*, he regenerated their feelings and pacified their stormy passions, suppressed their brutal lusts and elevated their aspirations to higher ideals. He did not feel that sovereign contempt for money which the master did whom he glorified; for he, like the other apostles, took his pay, and argued with the Corinthians, like a good Pharisean lawyer, that bishops and preachers must be paid—an argument well understood by the dignitaries of the Church to this day.

Wonderful, indeed, is the progress which Paul made among the Gentiles in ten years. Like a pillar of fire, he traversed the deserts of heathenism; like a second Elijah, he battled against the priests and prophets of Baal, and conjured down

the fire from heaven to his assistance. . Within ten years he laid the foundation of a new civilization, of the reorganization of society on the new basis. He did not live to see it realized, but he saw the new system take root and promise golden fruit. Wonderful, we maintain, was his success; for he was not only opposed by the entire heathen world, and by the orthodox Jews, although he proclaimed their God and their doctrines, their religion and their hopes, but was also most strenuously opposed by the apostles and the nascent congregation in Jerusalem, whose master he glorified and whose cause he made the cause of the world. The dissensions between Paul and the apostles were of a very serious character, and there was ample cause for them.

In the first place, he took it upon himself to be an apostle, and they had their college of twelve, to which none could be added, especially not Paul, who had never seen Jesus of Nazareth. He maintained that God had appointed him, God had revealed his son and his Gospel to him; but the apostles did not believe it, and never acknowledged him as an apostle. At the end of his journeys, Peter, James and John, three out of twelve, acknowledged him as an apostle to the Gentiles, but not to the Jews. The rest never did, which, of course, was a great trouble and drawback to Paul among his own converts.

In the second place, they could never forgive him for the idea of going to the Gentiles. Peter, who had become a pious Essene and considered it unlawful to go to the house or into the company of a Gentile; James, who dreaded the idea of eating of the bread of the Gentile, and made a hypocrite in this point of Peter at Antioch—and they were the heads of the Church—could not forgive Paul's innovation in going to the Gentiles. Paul was sensible enough to silence them by begging money for them, and to appoint the Sunday for collec-

tions to be made for the saints of Jerusalem. But it was too much for them that Paul went to the Gentiles.

In the third place, he changed their whole religion into a new sort of mythology. He made of Jesus a son of God, of which they had no knowledge. He preached vicarious atonement, bodily resurrection, the end of the old covenant and the beginning of a new, the end of all flesh, the last judgment, all of which was foreign to them; not one word of all that had their master told them, and they knew only what he did tell them. They naturally looked upon him as an unscrupulous innovator. They had not experience and forethought enough to understand that Paul's success among the heathens depended on that means. They were pious men, who prayed much, believed seriously, and had no knowledge of the world as it was.

In the fourth place, they could not possibly give their consent to Paul's abrogation of the whole law, knowing, as they did, how their master respected every tittle, every iota of the law; that he had come to fulfill the law, and to re-establish the theocracy; how could they possibly think of the idea of abolishing Sabbath and holidays, circumcision and ablutions, all and everything, to be guided by the phantom of hope, love and faith, against which James argues in his epistle with all the energy of his soul. Those inexperienced saints did not know that the Pharisean doctors held similar theories, and that Paul could not possibly hope to meet with any success among the Gentiles if he had come to them with the laws of the Jews. They were Roman citizens, who contemned the laws of the barbarians. Had Paul come with the word Judaism on his lips, he would have surely failed. Had he come to enforce a foreign law, he would have been laughed at as a madman. They did not know that Paul cared not for an hundred and one laws, as long as the essence and substance could be saved

and preserved; that he held that laws are local, the spirit is universal, that laws are limitations, the spirit is free and the property of all men of all ages and climes; that he was determined to drop everything which could retard his progress.

In the fifth place, and this was the worst, they could not forgive him for preaching the theological kingdom of heaven. A kingdom of Israel, a throne of David, a Davidian prince, a Zion and a Jerusalem in heaven, and slavery, misery and oppression on earth, was so new and foreign to them, so contrary to what they had heard from their master, that they could not accept it. What should become of Peter's Messiah, of the hopes and promises connected with the second advent, if all at once the whole scheme is transported from earth to heaven! It was too much disappointment, they could not endure it. Those men did not understand that Paul had carefully to avoid every conflict with the Roman authorities. He was too prudent to be crucified. They could not comprehend that his great object was not to remove the evil at once; he intended to sow the seed, to bring forth the plant; to give to the heathens correct notions of God, duty, responsibility, purity, holiness, morality, justice, humanity and freedom, which in proper time should necessarily break the chains, revolutionize the sentiments and elevate the views, hopes, aspirations and designs of the nations. They could not comprehend that their Messiah and kingdom of heaven, together with his terrible message of the end of all flesh and the last judgment day, were means, and nothing but means, to captivate and reform the heathen. His Son of God was crucified and resurrected from the dead to forewarn all of the approaching end of all flesh; to show that in a little while all the dead should resurrect and the living should be changed to spiritual beings. He had been given all power by the Almighty to conduct the catastrophe of the world, and would be present at the last judgment day. But

after all that is over, the earth and man changed to a new state of spiritual life, then the Son of God returns the kingdom to the Father, and God will be again all in all. So the Son of God was a general superintendent, the demiurge for the time being, a doctrine of which the apostles had no knowledge, and to which they could not give their consent. He could not get them to understand that these were the means for the conversion of the Gentiles, and that he had quite another gospel for the enlightened portion of the community. They could not see that among heathens, used to apotheosis, man-worship and plastic gods, ideas, to become effective, must put on concrete and tangible bodies. They could not imagine that the sensuality and corruption of the age required heroic and terror-striking means to rouse and to move the masses; and so the dissensions and troubles between Paul and the nascent Church increased with the success of Paul among the Gentiles. His epistles, one and all, are polemics, not against heathenism, or against Judaism, but against his colleagues in Jerusalem, whom, together with their doctrines, he treats in a most reckless manner. They could not write to counterbalance Paul — in fact, there were no writers of any note among them. Therefore, only one side of the polemics, that of Paul, is fully represented in the New Testament; and the side of the Jewish Christians remained mostly matter of tradition.

Messengers were sent to follow Paul to undo his Gospel and preach that of the apostles; to introduce the law and circumcision among the Gentile Christians. Those messengers in many cases succeeded, notwithstanding the thundering epistles of Paul. So his influence was weakened and his progress retarded among the Gentiles, till finally, after ten years of hard work, he concluded upon going to Jerusalem and, if possible, effecting a compromise with the apostolic congregation. It was a dangerous time for him to go Jerusalem; for just then

the fanatic high-priest, Ananias, had convened a court of his willing tools, tried James, the brother of Jesus, and, finding him guilty, of what God only knows, had him and some of his associates executed—a bloody deed, which cost him his office, on account of the loud and emphatic protestations of the Jews before Agrippa II. and the Roman governor. Therefore, Paul was cautioned by prophets and friends not to go to Jerusalem. But he was not the man to be frightened by dangers; he was the very type of boldness and courage. He went to Jerusalem to effect a conciliation with the Church. A synod met in the house of James the apostle, who had succeeded the former James as head of the Church, and Paul was told to do that against which his conscience, his honor, his manhood must have revolted; he was required to play the hypocrite in Jerusalem, in order to pacify the brethren who were angry at him. The thousands of Jews, they said, who were zealous for the law, and were informed how Paul taught the people to forsake Moses, to give up circumcision and the ancient customs, hearing of his presence in Jerusalem, “the multitude must needs come together,” which points to the Jewish Christians faithful to the law; therefore, they advised him to go through the mockery of a purification at the temple, “to be at charges,” as they called it, with some who had vowed a vow, and make the prescribed sacrifices after the purification.

Poor man! After so much labor, such ardent toils, such numerous perils, dangers, anxieties, trials, reverses and triumphs, after ten long years of such work and such dangers, he is not safe in Jerusalem among his own kinsmen and among those whose master he glorified, whose doctrines he taught and whose interests he protected. How small must he have appeared to himself when walking up the Temple Mount in the company of the four men, whose expenses he paid, to be purified with them: “And all may know that those things, whereof

they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law." [The] man who had defied a world, to submit to the humbling dictation of his colleagues, who were children in comparison with him—this is mortifying to the utmost. This is the time of which it is said in the Talmud that Paul or Acher narrated, that on passing behind the *sanctum sanctorum* he heard the *Bath-kol* or holy ghost, exclaim, "Return, all ye froward children; all return, except Paul, who has known me and rebelled against me." Paul never forgot, never forgave, this humiliation. It estranged his feelings altogether from his colleagues in Jerusalem, and he embraced the first best opportunity to rid himself entirely of his Jewish associations.

The opportunity soon offered. While near the Temple, some Jews from Asia Minor recognized him. A disturbance ensued. He was arrested and locked up in the castle by the Roman commander. Here the author of the Acts brings in a terrible tumult; speeches, trials, a Jewish mob, with a noble Roman stepping in, in time, to wind up dramatically—not one word of which is historical. Paul, standing accused as the ringleader of the new sect who expected the second advent of the Messiah, could only appear dangerous to the zealous and vigilant Roman authorities. Nothing else was necessary to put his life in jeopardy. In the night he made up his mind to appeal to Cæsar, because he was a Roman citizen. Therefore, he was sent to Cæsarea, to the governor, under the protection of soldiers. Not a sound was heard in his favor among the Jewish Christians. Not an angel appeared. Not a solitary miracle was wrought; none dreamt a dream; nobody had a vision; the holy ghost was as silent as the grave; none of all the Christians in Palestine showed his face, when Paul, loaded with chains, was transported from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. This silence speaks volumes. They did not care much about the innovator. There-

fore, Paul's epistles from his prison in Cæsarea are thunderbolts against the law, circumcision, and his colleagues in Jerusalem. It is the offended man, the wounded lion, who retaliates in his anger.

In Cæsarea another mock trial is described by the author of the Acts. There can be little doubt that Ananias, the Sadducean high-priest who had slain James, thirsted also after the blood of Paul. But it is certainly not true that Felix was governor of Judea when Ananias was high-priest. Felix and Festus had been removed from their offices before Ananias was made high-priest, as the authentic sources of history show. If tried at Cæsarea at all (which is doubtful, because Paul had appealed to Cæsar), he was tried before Albinus. His speeches recorded in the Acts contain sentences of Paul, but many more additions from the author of the Acts.

It matters little, however, whether Paul was tried before Albinus or Felix, or whether there was a trial at all. He had appealed to Cæsar, in order to estrange himself from his colleagues in Jerusalem and to come before his converts as an expatriated man, although Agrippa himself had said: "This man might have been set at liberty, had he not appealed unto Cæsar." Fortunately, however, he was detained in Cæsarea, when Nero in Rome put to death the Christians in his own gardens with exquisite cruelty, and added mockery and derision to their sufferings. Had he been brought to Rome *then*, no angels could have saved his life, and no power could have protected him for two years. He came to Rome in the year 65, when the cruelty of Nero's proceedings against the Christians filled every breast with compassion, and humanity relented in favor of the Christians. Then it was possible for Paul to have a hearing in Rome, where he lived in a hired house for two years.

Neither Paul nor Peter was ever bishop of Rome, nor was either of them beheaded in Rome or anywhere else. All the

legends and myths concerning them are void of truth. We know that Paul, who was then about thirty-five years old, wrote from Rome epistles in defense of his Gospel and against his colleagues in Jerusalem, in the same spirit as those from Cæsarea. We know, furthermore, that he went from Rome to Illyricum, where he preached his Gospel. We know that he returned to Asia, and wrote the quintessence of his Gospel in his Epistle to the Romans. We know that many passages in his epistles were written after the destruction of Jerusalem, when Paul was about forty years old, and his principal activity commenced still later, in opposition to Rabbi Akiba and his colleagues. We know from the Talmud that he married and left daughters. We know also numerous stories of Acher or Paul and his disciple, Rabbi Mair. *Mair, y.*

Paul always speaks affectionately of the Jews, whom he calls "My brethren and my kinsmen according to the flesh — to whom pertaineth the adoption, the glory, the covenant, and the giving of the law." (Read also Romans xi. 11: "I say, then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.")

Long after the death of the apostles, the Christianity of Paul and the Messiahism of Peter were Platonized by the Alexandrian eclectics in a semi-gnostic manner, which gave birth to the fourth Gospel, according to John, and the two epistles of John the Elder, not the apostle, about 160 A. C., of which the Synoptics have no idea. They had only the Christianity of Paul and of Peter before them. An original Peter Gospel, Paul's epistles, and the different traditions of the various congregations, were their sources, which they attempted to blend into one system. All the Gospel-writers lived in the second century; were not acquainted with the particulars of the story; had an imperfect knowledge of the Jews, their laws and doc-

trines; wrote in favor of the Romans, whom they wished to convert, and against the Jews, whom they could not convert.

The third century inherited four distinct systems of Christianity; that of Jesus with the pure theocracy, that of Peter with the Messiah and his second advent, that of Paul with the Son of God and the approaching end of all flesh, and that of John with the Logos and the self-aggrandizing demi-god or man-god on earth. The difficulties and dissensions arising from the attempts at uniting all these contradictory systems in one, ended with the Council of Nice in the beginning of the fourth century, and the establishment of an orthodox creed, the excommunication of the Jewish Christians and the establishment of the Church as a State institution. Then the sword and the pyre established doctrines.

On comparison you will find that Jesus became the savior of the Gentiles by the exertion of Paul; that the means which Peter and Paul adopted for momentary purposes have been turned into main dogmas; that the religion which Jesus taught and believed is partly laid aside, and the rest is unimportant in Christology, but he himself has been adopted in place of his religion; and that the entire New Testament has no knowledge of the Trinity and the orthodox creed. On comparison you will discover that, if any of our modern congregations are Christian, the apostolic congregation of Jerusalem was heretic. If the Pope is a Christian, Paul was not. If the orthodox creed tells what one must believe in order to be a Christian, then Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew. If the religion and the theocracy which Jesus preached are to become the universal religion, all dogmas must fall, and God alone be all in all. Man must become his own priest, prince and prophet. Justice must govern the nations, love must construe the law, virtue and righteousness must lead to satisfaction and happiness, and man's consciousness of God, immortality, morals and moral

responsibility, must be his catechism, his guiding star, his protecting angel in life and death. No dogmas; truth, in the name of God!

I see it, although it is not now; I behold it, although it is not nigh—a star will arise from Jacob in whose soft brilliancy will shine forth all the great and redeeming truth. Freedom and humanity, justice and love in the name of God are the right religion; to strive for them is divine worship, to love them is holiness.

This was the object of Paul. The means to accomplish that object were the necessities of the age to convert that generation. He could not dream of the idea that the means would obscure the object, that the servant would occupy the master's seat. His was a fearless, powerful and unyielding character, terribly in earnest to break down the ancient world and create a new one, and his success, though incomplete, was wonderful. Men like Jesus and Paul, whose great aim was to benefit and to elevate human nature, however widely we may differ from them, deserve the student's laborious research, the philanthropist's most profound admiration, the monuments which the human mind rears to their memory. Great works are the testimony of their authors, and great minds are the diadem and honor, the ornament and pride of human nature. The God Jesus and the supernatural Paul appear small in the focus of reason. The patriotic and enthusiastic Jesus and the brave, bold, wise and mighty Paul are grand types of humanity among those hundred stars in the horizon of history which have made the history of the human family.

I.

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