

THE
LIFE & WORDS OF CHRIST

BY
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"THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN."

—JOHN I. 4.

VOL. I.

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1877.

TO MY DIOCESAN,
THE RIGHT REVEREND EDWARD HAROLD
LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER;

THIS LIFE OF

"The Chief Bishop"

AND

"Great Shepherd of the Sheep"

IS INSCRIBED

FROM THE HEART.

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P R E F A C E .

No apology is needed for the publication of another Life of Christ, for the subject, to use the words of Mr. Carlyle, is "of quite perennial, infinite character, and its significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest."

The freshness and interest of the name of Jesus, and its power as a great factor in the spiritual history of the world, increase with each generation. The influence of His life, His words, and His death, have, from the first, been like leaven cast into the mass of humanity. He made religion spiritual instead of ceremonial and external; universal, instead of local. He gave us the magnificent dowry of a faith in One Common Father of the whole human race, and, thus, of a world-wide brotherhood of all mankind. He confirmed the doctrine of our immortality, and scattered abroad the germs of a heavenly life by His fundamental requirements of love to God and our neighbour. All reforms of individual and public life lie veiled in these principles, awaiting the advance of our moral sense, to apprehend and apply them. They have already given freedom to the slave; raised woman; purified morals; mitigated war; created liberty; and made humanity a growing force, in things private, civil, and political. All that love to our fellow-man can prompt

finds itself only a copy of that Life which was spent in continually doing good, and the noblest self-sacrifice for others finds itself anticipated by Calvary.

To the individual Christian, JESUS is the Divine Saviour, to believe in Whom is life everlasting : to know Whom is to have peace with God. Love has no diviner emblem than the Good Shepherd : Beneficence no ideal so perfect, as that "it is more blessed to give than to receive:" Fidelity to duty no loftier standard than a life laid down at its command : Self-sacrifice no dream so perfect as the record of His death on the Cross.

To write the story of such a life is no easy task, but it is one beyond all others important for the best interests of the age. It is impossible to describe the infinite dignity of His person, but His words and acts are His legacy to us, which it is vital to study and apply.

I have tried in this book to restore, as far as I could, the world in which Jesus moved; the country in which He lived; the people among whom He grew up and ministered; the religion in which He was trained; the Temple services in which He took part; the ecclesiastical, civil, and social aspects of His time; the parties of the day, their opinions and their spirit; the customs that ruled; the influences that prevailed; the events, social, religious, and political, not mentioned in the Gospels, that formed the history of His lifetime, so far as they can be recovered.

In this picture, He, Himself, is, of course, the central figure, to which all details are subordinate. I have tried to present His acts and words as they would strike those who first saw or heard them, and have added only as much eluci-

dation to the latter as seemed needed. All His Sayings and Discourses are given in full, for a Life in which He is not His own interpreter, must be defective.

No one can feel more keenly than myself how open such a book must be to criticism. Where the best and wisest have differed, I could not expect that all will agree with me, and I cannot hope to have escaped oversights, or even errors, in treating a subject so extensive. I can only plead my honest desire for truth and correctness, in mitigation of judgment.

I trust, however, that my book, as a whole, presents a reliable picture of the Life of Our Lord in the midst of the world in which He moved, and that it will throw light on the narratives in the Gospels, by filling up their brief outlines, where possible.

For the various sources to which I have been indebted I must only refer to the books named at the side of each page, and the list of authorities at the beginning. I have used them freely, but always, so far as I know, with due acknowledgment.

For the admirable map prefixed to this volume, I am indebted to the courtesy of Major Wilson, R.E., late of the Palestine Survey,—and that of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society. To him and to them I return my best thanks.

And, now, go forth, My Book, and may He whose honour thou seekest, bless thee, and thy Unknown Reader!

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE life of Jesus Christ, which is to be told in these pages, must ever remain the noblest and most fruitful study for all men, of every age. It is admitted, even by those of other faiths, that He was at once a great Teacher, and a living illustration of the truths He taught. The Moham-medan world give Him the high title of the *Masih* (Messiah), and set Him above all the prophets. The Jews confess admiration of His character and words, as exhibited in the Gospels. Nor is there any hesitation among the great intellects of different ages, whatever their special position towards Christianity; whether its humble disciples, or openly opposed to it, or carelessly indifferent, or vaguely latitudinarian.

CHAP. I.

We all know how lowly a reverence is paid to Him in passage after passage by Shakspeare, the greatest intellect known, in its wide, many-sided splendour. Men like Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Newton, and Milton, set the name of Jesus Christ above every other. To show that no other subject of study can claim an equal interest, Jean Paul Richter tells us that "the life of Christ concerns Him who, being the holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages."¹ Spinoza calls Christ the symbol of divine wisdom; Kant and Jacobi hold him up as the symbol of ideal perfection, and Schelling and Hegel as that of the union

¹ Über den Gott in der Geschichte und im Leben, *Sämmtl. Werke*, 33, 6.

CHAP. I.

² Conversations
with Ecker-
mann, III. 371.

of the divine and human. "I esteem the Gospels," says Goethe, "to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested upon earth."² "How petty are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp," says Rousseau, "compared with the Gospels! Can it be that writings at once so sublime and so simple are the work of men? Can He whose life they tell be Himself no more than a mere man? Is there anything, in His character, of the enthusiast or the ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in His ways, what touching grace in His teachings! What a loftiness in His maxims, what profound wisdom in His words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in His replies! What an empire over His passions? Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die without weakness and without display? My friend, men do not invent like this; and the facts respecting Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ. These Jews could never have struck this tone, or thought of this morality, and the Gospel has characteristics of truthfulness so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that their inventors would be even more wonderful than He whom they portray." "Yes, if the death of Socrates be that of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."³

³ Emile, I. iv.
109, 111.

⁴ Sartor Resartus, 137, 140.

⁵ Channing's
Works (one
vol.), 241.

⁶ Briefe an
Andres, pt. vi.
98.

Thomas Carlyle repeatedly expresses a similar reverence. "Jesus of Nazareth," says he, "our divinest symbol! Higher has the human thought not yet reached." "A symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest."⁴ Dr. Channing, of Boston, the foremost man in his day among American Unitarians, is equally marked in his words.⁵ "The character of Jesus," says he, "is wholly inexplicable on human principles." Matthias Claudius, one of the people's poets of Germany, last century, writes to a friend,⁶ "No one ever thus loved [as Christ did], nor did anything so truly great and good as the Bible tells us of Him ever enter into the heart of man. It is a holy form,

which rises before the poor pilgrim like a star in the night, and satisfies his innermost craving, his most secret yearnings and hopes." "Jesus Christ," says the exquisite genius, Herder, "is in the noblest, and most perfect sense, the realized ideal of humanity."⁷

⁷ Art. "Herder," Herzog's Encyc. vol. v. 751.

No one will accuse the first Napoleon of being either a pietist or weak-minded. He strode the world in his day like a Colossus, a man of gigantic intellect, however worthless and depraved in moral sense. Conversing one day, at St. Helena, as his custom was, about the great men of antiquity, and comparing himself with them, he suddenly turned round to one of his suite and asked him, "Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?" The officer owned that he had not yet taken much thought of such things. "Well, then," said Napoleon, "I will tell you." He then compared Christ with himself, and with the heroes of antiquity, and showed how Jesus far surpassed them. "I think I understand somewhat of human nature," he continued, "and I tell you all these were men, and I am a man, but not one is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him."⁸ "The Gospel is no mere book," said he at another time, "but a living creature, with a vigour, a power, which conquers all that opposes it. Here lies the Book of Books upon the table [touching it reverently]; I do not tire of reading it, and do so daily with equal pleasure. The soul, charmed with the beauty of the Gospel, is no longer its own: God possesses it entirely: He directs its thoughts and faculties; it is His. What a proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ! Yet in this absolute sovereignty He has but one aim—the spiritual perfection of the individual, the purification of his conscience, his union with what is true, the salvation of his soul. Men wonder at the conquests of Alexander, but here is a conqueror who draws men to Himself for their highest good; who unites to Himself, incorporates into Himself, not a nation, but the whole human race!"

⁸ Bertrand's Memoirs. Paris, 1844.

CHAP. I.

I might multiply such testimonies from men of all ages and classes, indefinitely; let me give only one or two more.

Among all the Biblical critics of Germany, no one has risen with an intellect more piercing, a learning more vast, and a freedom and fearlessness more unquestioned, than De Wette. Yet, listen to a sentence from the preface to his Commentary on the Book of Revelation, published just before his death, in 1849:⁹ "This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Jesus Christ, the Crucified, and that nothing loftier offers itself to humanity than the God-manhood realized in Him, and the kingdom of God which He founded—an idea and problem not yet rightly understood and incorporated into the life, even of those who, in other respects, justly rank as the most zealous and the warmest Christians! Were Christ in deed and in truth our Life, how could such a falling away from Him be possible? Those in whom He lived would witness so mightily for Him, through their whole life, whether spoken, written, or acted, that unbelief would be forced to silence."

Nor is the incidental testimony to Christ of those who have openly acknowledged their supreme devotion to Him less striking. There have been martyrs to many creeds, but what religion ever saw an army of martyrs willingly dying for the personal love they bore to the founder of their faith? Yet this has always been the characteristic of the martyrs of Christianity, from the days when, as tradition tells us, Peter was led to crucifixion with the words ever on his lips, "None but Christ, none but Christ," or when the aged Polycarp,—about to be burned alive in the amphitheatre at Smyrna,—answered the governor, who sought to make him revile Christ¹⁰—"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King who has saved me?" Nearly seventeen hundred years passed from the time when the early confessor died blessing God that he was counted worthy to have a share in the number of martyrs and in the cup of Christ; and a man of high culture and intellect lies dying, the native of an island peopled only by outside barbarians in the days of Polycarp.

⁹ De Wette's
Offenh. 3rd
Auf. p. vi.

¹⁰ Eusebius,
H. E. bk. 4,
c. 15.

The attendants, watching his last moments, see his lips move, and bending over him, catch the faint sounds, "Jesus, love!—Jesus, love!—the same thing,"—the last words uttered before he left them. It was the death-bed of Sir James Macintosh. Thus the character of Christ still retains the supreme charm by which it drew towards it the deepest affections of the heart in the earliest age of the Church; and such a character must claim, above all others, our reverent and thoughtful study.

If we attempt to discover what it is in the personal character of Jesus Christ, as shown in His life, that thus attracts such permanent admiration, it is not difficult to do so.

In an age when the ideal of the religious life was realized in the Baptist's withdrawing from men, and burying himself in the ascetic solitudes of the desert, Christ came, bringing religion into the haunts and homes and every-day life of men. For the mortifications of the hermit He substituted the labours of active benevolence; for the fears and gloom which shrank from men, He brought the light of a cheerful piety, which made every act of daily life religious. He found the domain of religion fenced off as something distinct from common duties, and He threw down the wall of separation, and consecrated the whole sweep of existence. He lived, a man amongst men, sharing alike their joys and their sorrows, dignifying the humblest details of life by making them subordinate to the single aim of His Father's glory. Henceforth the grand revolution was inaugurated, which taught that religion does not lie in selfish or morbid devotion to personal interests, whether in the desert or the temple, but in loving work and self-sacrifice for others.

The absolute unselfishness of Christ's character is, indeed, its unique charm. His own life is self-denial throughout, and He makes a similar spirit the test of all healthy religious life. It is He who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" who reminds us that life, like the wheat, yields fruit only by its own dying; who gave us the ideal of life in His own absolute self-oblivion. We feel instinctively that this Gospel of Love alone is divine, and that

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we cannot withhold our homage from the only perfectly Unselfish Life ever seen on earth.

There is much, besides, to which I can only allude in a word. He demands repentance from all, but never for a moment hints at any need of it for Himself. With all His matchless lowliness, He advances personal claims which, in a mere man, would be the very delirium of religious pride. He was divinely patient under every form of suffering,—a homeless life, hunger and thirst, craft and violence, meanness and pride, the taunts of enemies and betrayals of friends, ending in an ignominious death. Nothing of all this for a moment turned Him from His chosen path of love and pity. His last words, like His whole life, were a prayer for those who returned Him evil for good. His absolute superiority to everything narrow or local, so that He, a Jew, founds a religion in which all mankind are a common brotherhood, equal before God; the dignity, calmness, and self-possession before rulers, priests, and governors, which sets Him immeasurably above them; His freedom from superstition, in an age which was superstitious almost beyond example; His superiority to the merely external and ritual, in an age when rites and externals were the sum of religion: all these considerations, to mention no others, explain the mysterious attraction of His character, even when looked at only as that of an ideal Man.

When, from His character, we turn to His teachings, the claims of His Life on our reverent study are still further strengthened. To Him we owe the expansion of whatever was vital in Ancient Judaism from the creed of a tribe into a religion for the world. The Old Testament reveals a sublime and touching description of God as the Creator and the All-wise and Almighty Ruler of all things; as the God, in whose hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind;¹¹ the God of Providence, on whom the eyes of all creatures wait, and who gives them their meat in due season;¹² as a Being of infinite majesty, who will by no means clear the guilty, but yet is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth: as keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression

¹¹ Job 12. 10.

¹² Ps. 145. 15.

and sin, and as pitying them that fear Him, like as a father pitieth his children. But it was reserved for Christ to bring the character of God, as a God of Love, into full noon-day light, in His so loving the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life.¹³ In the New Testament He is first called Our Father in Heaven—the Father of all mankind.^a The Old Testament proclaimed Him the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Portion of Israel: Christ points the eyes of all nations to Him as the God of the whole human race.

¹³ John 3, 16.

^a The letters in the text refer to notes at the end of the volume.

The fundamental principles of Christianity are as new and as sublime as this grand conception of God, and spring directly from it. The highest ideal of man must ever be, that his soul reflects the image of his Creator, and this image can only be that of pure, all-embracing love, to God and man, for God is love. Outward service, alone, is of no value: the pure heart, only, loves aright: it, only, reflects the divine likeness; for purity and love are the same in the Eternal. A religion resting on such a basis bears the seal of heaven. But this divine law constitutes Christianity.

The morality taught by Christ is in keeping with such fundamental demands. Since love is the fulfilling of the law, there can be no limitation to duty but that of power. It can only be bounded by our possibilities of performance, and that not in the letter, but in spirit and in truth, both towards God and our neighbour. The perfect holiness of God can alone be the standard of our aspiration; for love means obedience, and God cannot look upon sin. To be a perfect Christian is to be a sinless man—sinless through the obedience of perfect love. Such a morality has the seal of the living God on its forehead.

It is to be remembered, in realizing our obligations to Christ, that there was a perfect novelty in this teaching. Antiquity, outside the Jewish world, had no conception of what we call sin. There is no word in Greek for what we mean by it: the expression for it is synonymous with physical

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¹⁴ Düllinger.
The Gentile
and the Jew,
&c., i. 294.

evil.^{14 b} There was either no guilt in an action, or the deity was to blame, or the action was irresistible. Priests and people had no aim or desire in sacrifices, prayers, or festivals, beyond the removal of a defilement, not considered as a moral, but a physical stain; and they attributed a magical effect to propitiatory rites through which they thought to obtain that removal; this effect being sure to follow if there were no omission in the rite, even though the will remained consciously inclined to evil!¹⁵

¹⁵ Düllinger.
The Gentile
and the Jew,
i. 219.

The Roman was as free from having any conception of sin as the Greek. Even such moralists as Seneca had only a blind spiritual pride which confounded God and nature, and regarded man—the crown of nature and its most perfect work—as God's equal, or even as His superior, for the divine nature, in his creed, reaches perfection in man only. Every man, he tells us, carries God about with him in his bosom; in one aspect of his being he is God—virtue is only the following nature, and men's vices are only madness.^c

Compare with this the vision of God—high and lifted up—of awful holiness but of infinite love,—and the doctrine of human responsibility, which the heart itself re-echoes—as taught by Christ; and the study of His life becomes the loftiest of human duties.

We owe it no less to Christ that the belief in a future life, with its light or shadow depending on a future judgment, is now part of the creed of the world. Judaism, indeed, in its later ages at least, knew these revelations, but Judaism could never have become the religion of mankind. Pagan antiquity had ceased to have any fixed ideas of anything beyond this life. Immortality was an open question; the dream of poets rather than the common faith. But Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Doctrines such as these, illustrated by such a Life, and crowned by a death which He Himself proclaimed to be a voluntary offering “for the life of the world,”¹⁶ could not fail to have a mighty influence.

¹⁶ John 6. 51.

The leaven thus cast into the mass of humanity has already largely transformed society, and is destined to affect it for good, in ever-increasing measure, in all directions. The one

grand doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man, as man, is in itself the pledge of infinite results. The seminal principle of all true progress must ever be found in a proper sense of the inherent dignity of manhood; in the realization of the truth that the whole human race are essentially equal in their faculties, nature, and inalienable rights. Such an idea was unknown to antiquity. The Jew, speaking in the Fourth Book of Esdras,¹⁷ addressed God—"On our account Thou hast created the world. Other nations, sprung from Adam, Thou hast said are nothing, and are like spittle, and Thou hast likened their multitude to the droppings from a cask. But we are Thy people, whom Thou hast called Thy first-born, Thine only-begotten, Thy well-beloved." In the Book Sifri, the Rabbis tell us—"A single Israelite is of more worth in the sight of God than all the nations of the world; every Israelite is of more value before Him than all the nations who have been or will be."

¹⁷ Chap. 6. 55

To the GREEK, the word "humanity," as a term for the wide brotherhood of all races, was unknown. All races, except his own, were regarded and despised as "barbarians." Even the Egyptians, in spite of their ancient traditions and priestly "wisdom,"—the Carthaginians, the Phœnicians, Etruscans, Macedonians, and Romans, not to mention outlying and uncivilized peoples, were stigmatized by this contemptuous name. The Greek fancied himself appointed by the gods to be lord over all other races; and Socrates only gave expression to the general feeling of his countrymen when he thanked the gods daily for being man and not beast, male and not female, Greek and not barbarian.

The ROMAN, in common with antiquity at large, considered all who did not belong to his own State, as *hostes*, or enemies; and hence, unless there were a special league, all Romans held that the only law between them and those who were not Romans was that of the stronger, by which they were entitled to subjugate such races if they could, plunder their possessions, and make the people slaves.¹⁸ The fact that a tribe lived on the bank of a river on the other side of which Romans had settled, made its members

¹⁸ Mommsen's
Römische
Geschichte,
I. 158.

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"rivals," for the word means simply the dwellers on opposite sides of a stream. It was even objected to Christianity, indeed, that its folly was patent, from its seeking to introduce one religion for all races. "The man," says Celsus, "who can believe it possible for Greeks and Barbarians, in Asia, Europe, and Libya, to agree in one code of religious laws, must be utterly devoid of sense."¹⁹ Antiquity had no conception of a religion which, by readily uniting with everything purely human, and as readily attacking all forms of evil, could be destined or suited to the wants of all humanity. Nor did it deign to think that the aristocracy of the race could stoop to have a religion in common with the barbarian to whom it almost refused the name of man.

It was left to Christ to proclaim the brotherhood of all nations by revealing God as their common Father in Heaven, filled towards them with a father's love; by His commission to preach the Gospel to all; by His inviting all, without distinction, who laboured and were heavy laden, to come to Him, as the Saviour sent from God, for rest; by His receiving the woman of Samaria and her of Canaan as graciously as any others; by His making Himself the friend of publicans and sinners; by the tone of such parables as that of Dives and Lazarus; by His equal sympathy with the slave, the beggar, and the ruler; by the whole bearing and spirit of His life; and, above all, by His picture of all nations gathered to judgment at the Great Day, with no distinction of race or rank, but simply as men.

In this great principle of the essential equality of man, and his responsibility to God, the germs lay hid of grand truths imperfectly realized even yet.

Thus, it is to this we owe the conception of the rights of individual conscience as opposed to any outward authority. There was no dream of such a thing before Christ came. The play of individuality, which alone secures and exemplifies those rights, was unknown or restricted.²⁰ Among the Greeks, the will of the State was enforced on the individual. Morality and goodness were limited to what was voted by the majority as expedient for the well-being of the community at large. When a man had paid the gods the

¹⁹ Neander's Ch. History, I. 129, Torrey's Translation. Merivale's Conversion of the Roman Empire, 135.

²⁰ Hagenbach's Kirchengeschichte, 10.

traditional sacrifices and ceremonies, he had little more to do with them. Not only could he not act for himself freely in social or private affairs; his conscience had no liberty. The State was everything, the man nothing. Rome knew as little of responsibility to higher laws than its own, and had very limited ideas even of personal freedom. Christ's words, "One is your 'Teacher,' and all ye are brethren;" "One is your 'Father,' even the Heavenly;" "One is your 'Guide,' even the Christ," were the inauguration of a social and moral revolution.²¹

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The SLAVE, before Christ came, was a piece of property of less worth than land or cattle. An old Roman law enacted a penalty of death for him who killed a ploughing ox; but the murderer of a slave was called to no account whatever. Crassus, after the revolt of Spartacus, crucified 10,000 slaves at one time. Augustus, in violation of his word, delivered to their masters, for execution, 30,000 slaves, who had fought for Sextus Pompeius. Trajan, the best of the Romans of his day, made 10,000 slaves fight at one time in the amphitheatre, for the amusement of the people, and prolonged the massacre 123 days.²²

²¹ Matt. 23.
8-10.
The literal rendering

The great truth of man's universal brotherhood was the axe laid at the root of this detestable crime—the sum of all villanies. By first infusing kindness into the lot of the slave, then by slowly undermining slavery itself, each century has seen some advance, till at last the man-owner is unknown in nearly every civilized country, and even Africa itself, the worst victim of slavery in these later ages, is being aided by Christian England to raise its slaves into freemen.

²² Hagenbach's
Kirchen-
geschichte, i.
18.

AGGRESSIVE WAR is no less distinctly denounced by Christianity, which, in teaching the brotherhood of man, proclaims war a revolt, abhorrent to nature, of brothers against brothers. The voice of Christ, commanding peace on earth, has echoed through all the centuries since His day, and has been at least so far honoured that the horrors of war are greatly lessened, and that war itself—no longer the rule, but the exception—is much rarer in Christian nations than in former times.

The poor, in antiquity, were in almost as bad a plight as

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²² Quintil. Decl.
301, iii. 17.

the slave. "How can you possibly let yourself down so low as not to repel a poor man from you with scorn?"²³ is the question of a rhetorician of the imperial times of Rome, to a rich man. No one of the thousands of rich men living in Rome ever conceived the notion of founding an asylum for the poor, or a hospital for the sick. There were herds of beggars. Seneca often mentions them, and observes that most men fling an alms to a beggar with repugnance, and carefully avoid all contact with him.²⁴ Among the Jews, the poor were thought to be justly bearing the penalty of some sin of their own, or of their fathers. But we know the sayings of Christ—"It is more blessed to give than to receive:" "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me:" "Give to the poor." The abject and forlorn received a charter of human rights when He proclaimed that all men are brethren: sprung from the same human stock; sons of the same Almighty Father; one family in Himself, the Head of regenerated humanity.

²³ Tholuck d.
Sitt. Char. d.
Heidenthums.
67. Haus-
rath's Neutest.
Zeitgeschichte
II. 3. Renan.
Les Apôtres,
304 ff.

The condition of WOMAN in antiquity was little better than that of the slave.²⁵ She was the property of her husband, if married; if unmarried, she was the plaything or slave of man, never his equal. The morality of married life, which is the strength and glory of any people, was hardly known. Pompey and Germanicus were singular in the fidelity that marked their marriage-relations, on both sides, and were famous through the singularity. The utter impurity of the men reacted in a similar self-degradation of the other sex. In Rome, marriages became, as a rule, mere temporary connections. In order to escape the punishments inflicted on adultery, in the time of Tiberius, married women, including even women of illustrious families, enrolled themselves on the official lists of public prostitutes. St. Paul only spoke the language which every one who knows the state of morals of those days must use, when he wrote the well-known verses in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans. The barbarians of the German forests alone, of the heathen world, retained

a worthy sense of the true dignity of woman. "No one there laughs at vice," says Tacitus, "nor is to seduce and to be seduced called the fashion." "Happy indeed," continues the Roman, thinking of the state of things around him, "those states in which only virgins marry, and where the vow and heart of the bride go together!" "Infidelity is very rare among them."²⁶ The traditions of a purer time still lingered beyond the Alps; the afterglow of light that had set elsewhere.

These traditions, thus honoured in the forests of Germany, were formulated into a supreme law for all ages and countries by Jesus Christ. Except for one crime, husband and wife, joined by God in marriage, were not to be put asunder. Woman was no longer to be the toy and inferior of man. Polygamy, the fruitful source of social corruption, was forbidden. Man and woman were to meet on equal terms in lifelong union: each honouring the other, and both training their children amidst the sanctities of a pure family life.

The enforcement of these and kindred teachings, destined to regenerate humanity, required lofty sanctions. That these are not wanting, in the amplest fulness, we have in part seen already, and shall see more and more as we advance. Meanwhile, enough has been said to show why, even apart from the mysterious dignity of His divine nature, God manifest in the flesh, and even independently of His being the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, Christ's life and sayings, alike unique among men, deserve the reverent study of all.

"From first to last," said the great Napoleon,²⁷ on one occasion, "Jesus is the same; always the same—majestic and simple, infinitely severe and infinitely gentle. Throughout a life passed under the public eye, He never gives occasion to find fault. The prudence of His conduct compels our admiration by its union of force and gentleness. Alike in speech and action, He is enlightened, consistent, and calm. Sublimity is said to be an attribute of divinity: what name, then, shall we give Him in whose character were united every element of the sublime?"

²⁷ *Sentiments de Napoléon sur le Christianisme.—Par le Chevalier de Beaupierre.*

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“I know men; and I tell you that Jesus is not a man. Everything in Him amazes me. His spirit outreaches mine, and His will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between Him and any other being in the world. He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and His sentiments; the truth that He announces; His manner of convincing; are all beyond humanity and the natural order of things.

“His birth, and the story of His life; the profoundness of His doctrine, which overturns all difficulties, and is their most complete solution; His Gospel; the singularity of His mysterious being; His appearance; His empire; His progress through all centuries and kingdoms;—all this is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery.

“I see nothing here of man. Near as I may approach, closely as I may examine, all remains above my comprehension—great with a greatness that crushes me. It is in vain that I reflect—all remains unaccountable!

“I defy you to cite another life like that of Christ.”

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY LAND.

THE contrast between the influences which have most affected the world, and the centres from which they have sprung, is very striking. Greece, the mother of philosophy and art, for all time, is not quite half the size of Scotland; Rome, the mighty mistress of the world, was only a city of Italy; Palestine, the birthplace of our Lord, and the cradle of revelation, is about the size of Wales. From Dan,¹ on the north, to Beersheba, on the south, is a distance of only 139 miles; and the paltry breadth of twenty miles, from the coast to the Jordan, on the north, increases slowly to only forty between the shore of the Mediterranean, at Gaza, and the Dead Sea, on the south.

When it is remembered that America was unknown till within the last four centuries, the position of Palestine on the map of the ancient world was very remarkable. It seemed the very centre of the earth, and went far to excuse the long-prevailing belief that Jerusalem was the precise central point.² On the extreme western limit of Asia, it looked eastward, towards the great empires and religions of that mighty continent, and westward, over the Mediterranean, to the promise of European civilization. It was the connecting link between Europe and Africa, which could then boast of Egypt as one of the great centres of human thought and culture; and it had the dateless past of the East for its background.

Yet its position towards other lands was not less striking than its real or apparent isolation. Separated from Asia by the broad and impassable desert, it was saved from becoming a purely Eastern country, either in religion, or in the political

CHAP. II.

¹ Near the modern Banias.

² A spot is still marked by a circle of marble pavement, and a short column, under the dome of the Greek Church at Jerusalem, as the exact centre of the world. Handbook of Syria and Palestine, II. p. 164.

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decay and retrogression which have, sooner or later, marked all Eastern States. Shut in, by a strip of desert, from Egypt, it was kept, in great part, from the contagion of the gross morality and grosser idolatry of that land; and its western coasts were washed by the "Great Sea," which, for ages, was as much a mystery to the Jew, as the Atlantic to our ancestors, before the era of Columbus. There could have been no land in which the purpose of God to "separate" a nation "from among all the people of the earth,"³ to be the depositary of divine truth, and the future missionaries of the world, could have been so perfectly carried out. Nor did its special fitness as a centre of heavenly light amongst mankind pass away till the whole scheme of revelation had been completed; for by the time of Christ's death the Mediterranean had become the highway of the nations, and facilitated the diffusion of the Gospel to the cities and nations of the populous West, by the easy path of its wide waters. The long seclusion of ages had already trained the Jew in religious knowledge, when forced or voluntary dispersion sent him abroad to all lands, with his lofty creed: the passing away of that seclusion opened the world to the ready dissemination of the message of the Cross.

It is an additional peculiarity of the Holy Land, in relation to the history of religion, that its physical features, and its position, together, brought it, from the earliest ages, in contact with the widest range of peoples and empires. Egypt and it are two oases in wide-spreading deserts, and as such attracted race after race.⁴ Vast migrations of northern tribes towards the richer southern countries have marked all ages; and Egypt, as the type of fertility, was a special land of wonder, to which these wandering populations ever turned greedy eyes. In a less degree, the Holy Land shared this dangerous admiration. It was the next link to Egypt in the chain of attractive conquests—Egypt itself being the last. As in later times the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Persian, the Greek, the Roman, and the Turk successively coveted the valley of the Nile, and took possession of it, so in the very earliest ages, as many indications prove, wave after wave of immigration had overflowed it. In all these

³ 1 Kings 8, 53.

⁴ Ewald's *Geschichte*, I. 308 ff.

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inroads of new nationalities, the Holy Land, as the highway to Egypt, necessarily shared, and hence, as centuries passed, race after race was brought in contact with the Jew, in spite of his isolation, and the Jew into contact with them. Such a fact was of great significance in the religious education of the world. It leavened widely distant nations, more or less, with the grand religious truths which had been committed to the keeping of the Jew alone; it led or forced him abroad to distant regions, to learn, as well as to communicate; and it reacted to ensure the intense religious conservatism to which the Jew, even to-day, owes his continued national existence. That was a fitting scene, moreover, for the advent of the Saviour of the world, in which, small though its bounds, He was surrounded not by the Jew alone, but by a population representing a wide proportion of the tribes and nations of the then-known earth. The inscription on the cross, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, was the symbol of the relation of Christ's life, and of His death, to all humanity.

But perhaps the most striking peculiarity of Palestine as the spot chosen by God for His revelations of religious truth to our race, and for the incarnation of the Saviour of mankind, is that it presents within its narrow bounds the characteristics of climate and productions scattered elsewhere over all the habitable zones—from the snowy north to the tropics. The literature of a country necessarily takes the colour of its local scenery and external nature, and hence a book written in almost any land is unfitted for other countries in which life and nature are different. Thus the Korân, written in Arabia, is essentially an Eastern book, in great measure unintelligible and uninteresting to nations living in countries in any great degree different, in climate and modes of life, from Arabia itself. The sacred books of other religions have had only a local reception. The Bible alone finds a welcome among nations of every region over the earth. It is the one book in the world which men everywhere receive with equal interest and reverence. The inhabitant of the coldest north finds, in its imagery, something that he can understand, and it is a household book

in multitudes of homes in the sultriest regions of the south.

Intended to carry the Truth to all nations, it was essential that the Bible should have this cosmopolitan attractiveness. Yet it could not have had it but that such a country as Palestine was chosen to produce it. Within the narrow limits of that strip of coast, as we might call it, are gathered the features of countries the most widely apart. The peaks of Lebanon are never without patches of snow, even in the heat of summer. Snow falls nearly every winter along the summits of the central ridge of Palestine, and over the table-land east of the Jordan, though it seldom lies more than one or two days. On the other hand, in the valley of the Jordan, summer brings the heat of the tropics, and the different seasons, in different parts, according to the elevation, exhibit a regular gradation between these extremes. Thus, within the extent of a single landscape, there is every climate, from the cold of northern Europe to the heat of India. The oak, the pine, the walnut, the maple, the juniper, the alder, the poplar, the willow, the ash, the ivy, and the hawthorn, grow luxuriantly on the heights of Hermon, Bashan, and Galilee. Hence the traveller from the more northerly temperate lands finds himself, in some parts, surrounded by the trees and vegetation of his own country. He sees the apple, the pear, and the plum, and rejoices to meet the familiar wheat, and barley, and peas, and potatoes, and the cabbage, carrots, lettuce, endive, and mustard. The Englishman is delighted to find himself surrounded by many of the flowers of his native land; for out of the 2,000 or 2,500 flowers of Palestine, perhaps 500 are British. It looks like home to see the ranunculus, the yellow water-lily, the tulip, the crocus, the hyacinth, the anemone, mignonette, geraniums, mallows, the common bramble, the dog-rose, the daisy, the well-known groundsel, the dandelion,—sage, and thyme, and sweet marjoram, blue and white pimpernel, cyclamens, vervain, mint, horehound, road-way nettles, and thistles; and ponds with the wonted water-cress, duck-weed, and rushes.

The traveller from more southern countries is no less at

home; for from whatever part he come, be it sunny Spain or Western India, he will recognize well-known forms in one or other of such a list as the carob, the oleander and willow, skirting the streams and water-courses; the sycamore, the fig, the olive, the date-palm, the pride of India, the pistachio, the tamarisk, the acacia, and the tall tropical grasses and reeds; or in such fruits as the date, the pomegranate, the vine, the orange, the shaddock, the lime, the banana, the almond, and the prickly pear. The sight of fields of cotton, millet, rice, sugar-cane, maize, or even of Indian indigo, and of patches of melons, gourds, pumpkins, tobacco, yam, sweet potato, and other southern or tropical field or garden crops, will carry him back in thought to his home.

There can be no more vivid illustration of the climate of any land than the vegetation it yields, and Palestine, tried by this test, reproduces climates and zones which, in other countries, are separated by many hundred miles.

A book written in such a land must necessarily be a reflection, in its imagery and modes of thought, so far as they are affected by external nature, of much that is common to men all over the earth. The Scriptures of the two Testaments have had this priceless help in their great mission, from Palestine having been chosen by God as the land in which they were written. The words of prophets and apostles, and of the great Master Himself, sound familiar to all mankind, because spoken amidst natural images and experiences common to all the world.

Though essentially a mountainous country, Palestine has many broad and fertile plains. It is a highland district, intersected throughout, and bordered on the western side, by rich, wide-spreading lowlands.

The plain on the western side extends from above Acre, with an interruption by Mount Carmel, along the whole coast, under the respective names of the plain of Acre, the plain of Sharon, and the Shefelah, or low country, the land of the Philistines in early ages.^a From this border plain the country rises, throughout, into a table-land of an average height of from 1,500 to 1,800 feet above the Mediterranean; the general level being so even, and the hills so close

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together, that the whole length of the country, seen from the coast, looks like a wall rising from the fertile plain at its foot. Yet the general monotony is broken, here and there, by higher elevations. Thus, to begin from the south, Hebron is 3,029 feet above the sea; Jerusalem 2,610; the Mount of Olives 2,724; Bethel 2,400; Ebal and Gerizim 2,700; Little Hermon and Tabor, on the north side of the plain of Esdraelon 1,900; Safed 2,775; and Jebel Jermuk 4,000.

This long sea of hills is full of valleys running east and west, which form so many arms of torrent beds, opening into the Jordan valley or the Mediterranean. These valleys, on the eastern side of the water-shed, towards Jordan, are extremely steep and rugged; as, for instance, the precipitous descent between Mount Olivet and Jericho, which sinks over 4,000 feet in a distance of about fifteen miles. The great depression of the Jordan valley makes such rugged and difficult mountain gorges the only passes to the upper country from the east. There is not a spot, till the plain of Esdraelon joins the valley of the Jordan, open enough to manœuvre more than a small body of foot soldiers. The western valleys slope more gently, but, like the eastern, are the only means of communication with the plains, and offer such difficulties as explain the security of Israel in ancient times, entrenched among hills which, at the best, could be reached only by rough mountain passes.^b The Jew lived, in fact, in a strong mountain fastness stretching like a long wall behind the plain beneath.

The appearance and fertility of this highland region, which, alone, was at any time the Holy Land of the Jews, varies in different parts. The southern district, below Hebron, is a gradual transition from the desert, from which it is approached in slow ascent. It was known in Bible times as the Negeb, or south country, and is an uninviting tract of barren uplands. As we pass north into the hills of Judah and Benjamin there is somewhat more fertility, but the landscape is monotonous, bare, and uninviting in the extreme, for most of the year. In spring, even the bald grey rocks which make up the view are covered with verdure and bright flowers,^c and the ravines are filled with torrents of rushing water, but in

summer and autumn the look of the country from Hebron up to Bethel is very dreary and desolate.⁵ The flowers vanish with the first fierce rays of the summer sun : they are "to-day in the field, to-morrow cast into the oven." The little upland plains, which, with their green grass, and green corn, and smooth surface, relieve the monotony of the mountain-tops farther north, are not found in Judea, and are rare in Benjamin. The soil, alike on plain, hill, and glen, is poor and scanty. Natural wood disappears, and a few small bushes, brambles, or aromatic shrubs, alone appear on the hill-sides.⁶ "Rounded hills, chiefly of a grey colour," says Dean Stanley—"grey partly from the limestone of which they are formed, partly from the tufts of grey shrub with which their sides are thinly clothed—their sides formed into concentric rings of rock, which must have served in ancient times as supports to the terraces, of which there are still traces to the very summits ; valleys, or rather the meetings of those grey slopes with the beds of dry water-courses at their feet—long sheets of bare rock laid like flagstones, side by side, along the soil—these are the chief features of the greater part of the scenery of the historical parts of Palestine. These rounded hills, occasionally stretching into long undulating ranges, are for the most part bare of wood. Forest and large timber are not known."⁷ Fountains are rare in this district ; and wells, covered cisterns, and tanks cut out in the soft white limestone, take their place.

Such are the central and northern highlands of Judea. In the west and north-western parts, which the sea-breezes reach, the vegetation is more abundant. Olives abound, and give the country in some places almost a wooded appearance. The terebinth, with its dark foliage, is frequent, and near the site of Kirjath-jearim, "the city of forests," there are some thickets of pine and laurel.⁸

But the eastern part of these hills—a tract nine or ten miles in width by about thirty-five in length—between the centre and the steep descent to the Dead Sea—is, and must always have been, in the truest sense a desert. Van de Velde well describes it as a bare arid wilderness : an endless succession of shapeless yellow and ash-coloured hills,

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Dict. of Bible
Art. "Palestine."

Porter, in
Cyclo. Bib.
Lit. : Art.
"Palestine."

Sinai and
Palestine, 186.

Robinson's
Palestine,
il. 21.

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⁹ Syria and Palestine, ii. 39.

¹⁰ Seidou's Memoir, 204.

without grass or shrubs, without water, and almost without life.⁹ Another traveller speaks of it as a wilderness of mountain-tops, in some places tossed up like waves of mud, in others wrinkled over with ravines, like models made of crumpled brown paper, the nearer ones whitish, strewn with rocks and bushes.¹⁰ Such is the desert or wilderness of Judea, the scene of the earlier retirement of John the Baptist, and the popularly supposed scene of the Temptation of our Lord.

Though thus barren and uninviting as a whole, in our day, the universal presence of ruins proves that Judah and Benjamin had a teeming population in former ages. Terrace cultivation utilized the whole surface, where there was the least soil; and in such a climate, with an artificial supply of water, luxuriant fertility might be secured everywhere except on the bare rock. The destruction of these terraces has doubtless allowed much soil to be washed into the valleys, and lost, and the destruction of the natural forests of which there are still traces must have greatly diminished the supply of water. Even in the now utterly barren districts of "the south" abundant proofs have been discovered that cultivation was anciently extensive.¹¹ The fact that there are no perennial streams in the western wadys, while there are many in those trending to the Jordan on both sides, where the forests or thick shrubberies of oleanders and other flowering trees still flourish, speaks volumes as to the cause of the present sterility.

¹¹ The Desert of the Tih, by E. H. Palmer, *passim*. Quarterly Statement of Pal. Ex. Fund, Jan. 1871.

Passing northward from Judea, the country gradually opens and is more inviting. Rich plains, at first small, but becoming larger as we get north, stretch out between the hills, till at last, near Nablous, we reach one a mile broad and six miles long. The valleys running west are long, winding, and mostly tillable: those on the east are less deep and abrupt than farther south, and, being abundantly watered by numerous fountains, are rich in orange groves and orchards. Nablous itself is surrounded by immense groves of olive-trees, planted on all the hills around. Nowhere in Palestine are there nobler brooks of water.¹² The rich uplands produce abundant crops of grain when cultivated; yet it is, on the

¹² Rob. Pal. iii. 302.

whole, a region specially adapted for olives, vineyards, and orchards.¹³ The mountains, though bare of wood, and but partially cultivated, have none of that arid, worn look of those of some parts farther south.

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¹³ Sinai and Pal.
226.

North-west of the city of Nablous the mountains gradually sink down into a wide plain, famous as that of Sharon, mostly an expanse of sloping downs, but dotted here and there with huge fields of corn and tracts of wood, recalling the county of Kent,¹⁴ and reaching to the southern slopes of Carmel, with their rich woods and park-like scenery.

¹⁴ Lord Lindsay,
236.

Passing still northward, from Samaria to Galilee, another wide plain of great fertility—that of Esdraelon—stretches out from the northern side of the luxuriant Carmel. It might, under a good government, yield vast crops, but the inhabitants are few and poor, and tillage is imperfect.^d The country now rapidly improves. Vegetation is much more luxuriant among the hills of Galilee than elsewhere west of the Jordan. Fountains are abundant and copious, and many of the torrent beds are never dry. The hills become more and more richly wooded with oaks and terebinths, while ravines occur here and there thickly clothed, in addition, with the maple, arbutus, sumach, and other trees. The hills of Judea are barren; those of Samaria have been well compared to the hilly districts of the south of Scotland; but those of Galilee are more like the rich hills of Surrey. Yet the whole region is thinly peopled. This highland paradise has far fewer inhabitants than even the bleak mountains of Judea, where “for miles and miles, there is often no appearance of life, except the occasional goat-herd on the hill-side, or the gathering of women at the wells.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Sinai and Pal.
117.

The coast of the Holy Land, as has been said, is a long plain. This, on the north, is a mere strip, till near Acre, but it spreads out from that point into a flat, rich, loamy plain, at first only a few feet above the sea level. Corn-fields and pasture-lands reach several miles inland. South of Carmel it expands into the plain of Sharon, now left bare and parched in many parts; its ancient forests long ago destroyed, except in stray spots, and cultivation little known. As we go south, the soil is lighter and drier, and the vegetation

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scantier, till we reach the Shephelah,^e or "low country" of the Bible, the ancient Philistia, which begins in rolling downs, and passes into wide-spreading corn-fields and vast expanses of loamy soil to the far south.

The eastern boundary of Palestine is the deep chasm in which the Jordan has its channel. The name of that river indicates its course: it means "the descender."^f Rising in the mountains of Lebanon, it flows south, through the marshy Lake Merom and the Lake of Galilee, to the Dead Sea, in a course of about 150 miles. From the Lake of Galilee, its channel is a deep cleft in the mountain range, from north to south, and so broken is its current that it is one continued rapid. Its bed is so crooked that it has hardly half a mile straight; so deep, moreover, is it, below the surface of the adjacent country, that it can only be approached by descending one of the steep mountain valleys, and it is invisible till near its entrance into the Dead Sea, at a level of 1,317 feet below that of the Mediterranean. There is no town on its banks, and it has in all ages been crossed at the same fords; no use can be made of it for irrigation, and no vessel can sail the sea into which it pours its waters. It is like no other river.

CHAPTER III.

PALESTINE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST.

AT the birth of Christ the striking spectacle presented CHAP. III.
 itself, in a degree unknown before or since, of the world united under one sceptre. From the Euphrates to the Atlantic; from the mouths of the Rhine to the slopes of the Atlas, the Roman Emperor was the sole lord. The Mediterranean was, in the truest sense, a Roman lake. From the pillars of Hercules to the mouths of the Nile, on its southern shores; from the farthest coasts of Spain to Syria, on its northern; and thence round to the Nile again, the multitudes of men now divided into separate nations, often hostile, always distinct, reposed in peace under the shadow of the Roman eagles. There might be war on the far eastern frontier, beyond the Euphrates, or with the rude tribes in the German forests on the north, but the vast Roman world enjoyed the peace and security of a great organic whole. The merchant or the traveller might alike pass freely from land to land; trading vessels might bear their ventures to any port, for all lands and all coasts were under the same laws, and all mankind, for the time, were citizens of a common State.

At the head of this stupendous empire a single man, Octavianus Cæsar—now better known by his imposing title, Augustus—ruled as absolute lord. All nations bowed before him, all kingdoms served him. It is impossible for us, in the altered condition of things, to realize adequately the majesty of such a position. Rome, itself, the capital of this unique empire, was itself unique in those ages. Its population, with its suburbs, has been variously estimated; some writers, as Lepsius,¹ supposing it to have been eight millions, others, like De Quincey,² setting it down as not less than

¹ Quoted in
 Dict. of
 Geogr.
 The Cæsars,
 page 2.

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³ Rom. Empire, iv. 525.

⁴ Hoeck, Römische Geschichte, II. 131. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, II. 376. Diet. of Geog. II. 746.

⁵ Milman's Gibbon, vol. III. 120.

four millions at the very least, and not impossibly half as many more. On the other hand,³ Merivale gives it as only half-a-million, while others⁴ make it two millions and a half. Gibbon estimates it at twelve hundred thousand, and is supported in his supposition by Dean Milman.⁵ The truth lies probably between the extremes. But the unique grandeur of Rome was independent of any question as to its size or population; the fact that arrested all minds was rather that a mere city should be the resistless mistress of the habitable world.

Round the office and person of the Cæsar, who only, of all rulers, before or since, was in the widest sense a *monarch* of the whole race of men,—that is, one ruling alone, over all nations,—there necessarily gathered peculiar and incommunicable attributes of grandeur. Like the far-stretching highways which rayed out from the golden milestone in the Roman Forum to the utmost frontiers, the illimitable majesty of the Emperor extended to all lands. On the shadowy, resistless, uncertain, but ever-advancing frontiers of a dominion which embraced almost the whole habitable world, as then known, the commands issued from the imperial city were as resistless as in Italy. There were, doubtless, some unknown or despised empires or tribes outside the vast circumference of the Roman sway, but they were regarded, at the best, as Britain looks on the wandering hordes or barbarous and powerless empires beyond the limits of her Indian possessions. Gibbon has set the grandeur of Rome in a vivid light, by describing the position of a subject who should attempt to flee from the wrath of a Cæsar. "The empire of the Romans," says he, "filled the world,"⁶ and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the Senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus,^a or on the frozen banks of the Danube,^b expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without

⁶ Decline and Fall, I. 133. Ed. 1821.

being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. 'Wherever you are,' said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, 'remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror.'

At the birth of Christ this amazing federation of the world into one great monarchy had been finally achieved. Augustus, at Rome, was the sole power to which all nations looked. His throne, like the "exceeding high mountain" of the Temptation, showed "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory," spread out around it far beneath, as the earth lies in the light of the sun. No prince, no king, or potentate of any name could break the calm which such a universal dominion secured—"a calm," to use De Quincey's figure, "which, through centuries, continued to lave, as with the quiet undulations of summer lakes, the sacred footsteps of the Cæsarean throne."⁷

⁷ Works, ix. 7.

It was in such a unique era that Jesus Christ was born. The whole earth lay hushed in profound peace. All lands lay freely open to the message of mercy and love which He came to announce.

Nor was the social and moral condition of the world at large, at the birth of Christ, less fitting for His advent than the political. The prize of universal power, struggled for through sixty years of plots and desolating civil wars, had been won at last, by Augustus. Sulla and Marius, Pompey and Cæsar, had led their legions against each other, alike in Italy and the Provinces, and had drenched the earth with blood. Augustus himself had reached the throne only after thirteen years of war, which involved regions wide apart. The world was exhausted by the prolonged agony of such a strife; it sighed for repose, and perhaps never felt a more universal joy than when the closing of the Temple of Janus in the twenty-ninth year before Christ announced that at last the earth was at peace.

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The religions of antiquity had lost their vitality, and become effete forms, without influence on the heart.^c Philosophy was the consolation of a few—the amusement or fashion of others; but of no weight as a moral force among men at large. On its best side, that of Stoicism, it had much that was lofty, but its highest teaching was resignation to fate, and it offered only the hurtful consolation of pride in virtue, without an idea of humiliation for vice. On its worst side—that of Epicureanism—it exalted self-indulgence as the highest end. Faith in the great truths of natural religion was well-nigh extinct. Sixty-three years before the birth of Christ,⁸ Julius Cæsar, at that time the Chief Pontiff of Rome, and, as such, the highest functionary of the state religion, and the official authority in religious questions, openly proclaimed, in his speech in the Senate, in reference to Catiline and his fellow-conspirators—that there was no such thing as a future life; no immortality of the soul. He opposed the execution of the accused on the ground that their crimes deserved the severest punishments, and that, therefore, they should be kept alive to endure them, since death was in reality an escape from suffering, not an evil. “Death,” said he, “is a rest from troubles to those in grief and misery, not a punishment; it ends all the evils of life; for there is neither care nor joy beyond it.”⁹

⁸ According to the usual reckoning.

⁹ Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* c. 51.

Nor was there any one to condemn such a sentiment even from such lips. Cato, the ideal Roman, a man whose aim it was to “fulfil all righteousness,” in the sense in which he understood it, passed it over with a few words of light banter; and Cicero, who was also present, did not care to give either assent or dissent, but left the question open, as one which might be decided either way, at pleasure.^d

Morality was entirely divorced from religion, as may be readily judged by the fact, that the most licentious rites had their temples, and male and female ministrants. In Juvenal’s words, “the Syrian Orontes had flowed into the Tiber,”¹⁰ and it brought with it the appalling immorality of the East. Doubtless, here and there, throughout the empire, the light of holy traditions still burned on the altars of many a house-

¹⁰ *Sat.* III. 62.

hold;¹¹ but it availed nothing against the thick moral night that had settled over the earth at large. The advent of Christ was the breaking of the "dayspring from on high" through a gloom that had been gathering for ages; a great light dawning on a world which lay in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

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¹¹ Renan, *Les Apôtres*, 306.
Plutarch, Demosthenes, 2.

To understand the condition of things in the Holy Land in the lifetime of Jesus, it is necessary to notice the history of the reign that was closing at His birth, for religious and political affairs acted and reacted on the spirit of the nation as only two phases of the same thing.

The reign of Alexander Jannæus,¹² of the Maccabæan or Asmonean line, had been marked by the bitterest persecutions of the Pharisaic party, whose insolence and arrogant claims had caused the king to throw himself into the hands of their Sadducean rivals. After his death these disputes continued under Queen Alexandra,¹³ who favoured the Pharisees, but the disquiet culminated, after her death, in the far worse evil of a civil war between her two sons, the elder, Hyrcanus, a weak, indolent man; the younger, Aristobulus, on the other hand, bold and energetic. Hyrcanus had been made high priest, and Aristobulus had been kept from all power during Alexandra's life—the Pharisaic party themselves holding the reins of government; but she was hardly dead before Aristobulus forced his brother to resign the throne, to which he had succeeded, and left him only the high priesthood. Hyrcanus would, apparently, have quietly acquiesced in this change, but the evil genius of Aristobulus and of the nation was present in the person of an influential Edomite,^o Antipater, who had gained the confidence of Hyrcanus. Stirred up by this crafty intriguer, the elder brother re-claimed the throne—Arab allies were called in—Jerusalem was besieged, and both the brothers appealed to the Roman generals in Syria for a decision between them.^f As the result, Pompey, then commanding in the East, appeared on the scene, in the year 63 B.C.; got possession of the country by craft; stormed the Temple, which held out for Aristobulus, and inaugurated a new era in Palestine. The Pharisees had hoped that both of the

¹² B.C. 105—78.

¹³ B.C. 78—69.

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brothers would be put aside, and the theocracy, which meant their own rule, restored; but Pompey, while withholding the name of king, set up Hyrcanus as high priest and ruler, under the title of ethnarch. All the conquests of the Maccabæans were taken from him: the country was redistributed in arbitrary political divisions; the defences of Jerusalem thrown down, and the nation subjected to tribute to Rome. This itself would have been enough to kindle a deep hatred to their new masters, but the seeds of a still more profound enmity were sown, even at this first step in Roman occupation, by Pompey and his staff insisting on entering the Holy of Holies, and thus committing what seemed to the Jew the direst profanation of his religion.

Antipater had allied himself from the first with Rome, as the strongest, and was now the object of furious hatred. The nation had supposed that Pompey came as a friend, to heal their dissensions, but found that he remained as their master. Their independence was lost, and Antipater had been the cause of its ruin. It is perhaps of him that the author of the Psalms of Solomon speaks when he says, "Why sittest thou, the unclean one, in the Sanhedrim, and thy heart is far from the Lord, and thou stirrest up with thy sins the God of Israel?" Treachery, hypocrisy, adultery, and murder are charged against him, and he is compared to a biting serpent.¹⁴ Yet the guilt of the people, it is owned, had brought these calamities on them. Through this, the ram had battered the holy walls, the Holy of Holies had been profaned, the noblest of the Sanhedrim slain, and their sons and daughters carried off captive to the West, to grace Pompey's triumph. At the thought of this the Psalmist is still more cast down, and humbles himself in the dust before the retributive hand of Jehovah.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ps. Salom. 4.

¹⁵ Ps. Salom. 2.
1. 2; 8. 15, 18;
17. 14, &c.

But there was no peace for Israel. War lingered on the southern borders, and in B.C. 57 Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, once more overthrew the government of Hyrcanus and Antipater, but the Romans forthwith came in force, and crushed the revolt by another conquest of Jerusalem. In this campaign a cavalry colonel, Mark Antony, so especially distinguished himself, that the keen-sighted

Antipater, seeing he had a great future, formed friendly relations with him, which led to the weightiest results in later years. CHAP. III.

Hyrcanus and his favourite were now again in power, but they had a troubled life. The people rose again and again, only to be as constantly crushed. In B.C. 56 Aristobulus, who had escaped from Rome, began the war once more, and the next year, his son Alexander made another vain revolt. In B.C. 52, when the Parthians had revenged themselves by the destruction of the legions of Crassus—who, in time of peace, had plundered the Temple to fill his own treasures—the Jews rose still once more, but Cassius, who had escaped with the wreck of the army of Crassus from the Parthian horsemen, soon crushed the insurrection, and Antipater emerged as, at last, the unfettered lord of the country.¹⁶

¹⁶ Jos. Ant. xiv. 7. 3.

The civil war which broke out, in the year 49, between Pompey and Cæsar, for a time promised a change. Judea, like all the East, adhered to Pompey, and Cæsar therefore set the imprisoned Aristobulus free, and gave him two legions to clear his native country of the adherents of his rival. Antipater and Hyrcanus already trembled at the thought of a popular revolt, supported by Rome, when news came that Aristobulus had suddenly died—no doubt of poison—and that his son Alexander had been beheaded, in Antioch, by Pompey's orders.¹⁷ Antipater had thus managed to get his enemies out of the way. When Pompey's cause was finally crushed, next year,¹⁸ at Pharsalia, Hyrcanus and Antipater, like the princes round them, were in a false position. Six weeks later,¹⁹ Pompey lay murdered on the Egyptian sands. Meanwhile, Cæsar, who had landed in Egypt, at the head of hardly 4,000 men, to settle the disputes for the throne of that country, was attacked by the native soldiery and the restless population of Alexandria, and reduced to the most desperate straits. At this moment a motley army of Eastern vassals came to his relief, anxious to efface at the earliest opportunity the remembrance of their relations to Pompey. It included hordes of Arabs from Damascus, and bands of Itureans from beyond Jordan, but

¹⁷ Jos. Ant. xiv. 7. 4.

¹⁸ Aug. 9, B.C. 48.

¹⁹ Sep. 28.

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its strength lay in 3,000 chosen troops brought by Antipater. The strange host was nominally commanded by Mithridates of Pergamos, a bastard of the great Mithridates, but Antipater was the real head. He induced the Bedouin leaders on the opposite side to withdraw, and persuaded the Egyptian Jews to supply Cæsar with provisions. After fierce fighting, the Roman fortune triumphed, and Cæsar, now enamoured of Cleopatra, then one-and-twenty years of age, remained conqueror. Alexandria was heavily punished: the Egyptian Jews received extensive privileges,²⁰ but the affairs of Palestine were left to be settled when Cæsar came back from Pontus, in Asia Minor, to which he had been summoned to repel an invasion from Armenia.

²⁰ Bell. Jud. ii. 18. 7. c. Ἀπριον, ii. 4. 5.

On his return to Syria, in the autumn of the year 47, Antipater hastened to meet him, as did also Antigonus, a son of Aristobulus. But the wounds of Antipater, received in rescuing Cæsar from destruction, weighed more than the hereditary claims of Antigonus, who, feeling this, fled to the Parthians, to seek the aid which Rome refused. In other respects, the Jews were treated in the friendliest way. Those of Lesser Asia were confirmed in the privilege of unchecked remittance of their Temple contributions to Jerusalem. Their synagogues were put under the protection of the Temple laws, and they were once more granted immunity from all demands for public service on the Sabbath, and on the preparation-day, from the sixth hour.²¹ In Palestine, Hyrcanus was sanctioned as high priest; the five divisions of the land previously made were put aside, and the whole united under Antipater, as procurator.²² The Jews in all the towns of Syria and Phenicia were put on the same favoured footing as those of the Holy Land itself. No troops were to be raised in Judea, nor any Roman garrisons introduced. The Temple tax and the Roman dues were regulated according to Jewish usage. Hyrcanus, as high priest, received the rank of a Roman senator, and was made hereditary ethnarch, with the right of life and death, and of legal decision on all questions of ritual. Still more, the right was granted to fortify Jerusalem again, and Antipater, for his own reward, was made a Roman citizen, with freedom from taxes on his property. The

²¹ Ant. xvi. 6. 2; xiv. 10. 6.

²² Ant. xiv. 8. 3. Bell. Jud. i. 10. 3. ἐπιτροπος ἐπιμελητής.

Idumean dynasty may be said to have begun from this date, as the procuratorship granted to Antipater made him henceforth independent of Hyrcanus. All these concessions he took care to have forthwith confirmed at Rome, and graven on plates of brass.

These diplomatic successes, however, failed to make Antipater popular. He assumed some of the public duties of Hyrcanus, to show the Sanhedrim that the civil power had been rightly transferred from the incapable hands of the high priest. But the suspicion sank ever deeper in the popular mind, that the final setting aside of the Maccabæan family was designed, and it was even said that the Essene Menahem had told Herod, Antipater's son, years before, as he met him on the street, that he would grow up to be the scourge of the Maccabæans, and would in the end wear the crown of David.²³ Yet Hyrcanus could not shake himself ¹² *Ant. xv. 10. 5.* free, even had he had the energy to do so, for he needed the help of the alien to protect him against his own family. His daughter Alexandra had lost, on his account, both husband and father-in-law, by foul or legal murder. His nephew, Antigonus, lived in a foreign land as a claimant of the throne; his grand-children were the orphans of Alexander, who had fallen under the axe of the headsman. The house of the Idumean, the alien in Israel, was nearer to him than his own flesh and blood.

Antipater, in accordance with the tradition of his house, had married a daughter of the Bedouins—the fair Kypros—to preserve the connection with the sheikhs of the desert by which his father had grown rich. She bore him four sons, Phasael, Herod, Joseph, and Pheroras, and a daughter, Salome. Of these, Antipater, as ruler of the country, named Phasael governor of Jerusalem, and Herod—a young man of twenty-five—he sent to Galilee, to put down the bands of desperadoes, who thickly infested it, half robbers, half religious zealots, fighting against the hated Romans. Herod was well qualified to maintain the honour of his house. He was a fearless rider, and no one threw the spear so straight to the mark, or shot his arrow so constantly into the centre. Even in later years, when strength and agility begin to fail

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in most, he was known to have killed forty wild beasts in one day's hunting. Herod took prisoner Hezekiah, the dreaded leader of the "robbers," and his whole band, and put them all to death. But his success only enraged the patriots of Jerusalem. In violation of the right put exclusively into the hands of Hyrcanus, as high priest, by Cæsar, he had slain free Jews—and these, men fighting for the Law, and against the heathen intruders into the heritage of Jehovah; and the Sanhedrim—the high council—forced their nominal leader, whose legal prerogative had been thus invaded, to summon the offender before them. Herod obeyed, after having made Galilee safe, but appeared with a powerful escort; and at the same time, a message was sent by the proconsul of Syria not to injure him. He would, however, have been sentenced to death, had not Hyrcanus left the chair, and counselled his young friend to leave Jerusalem. Gnashing his teeth, Herod rode off to Damascus, to the proconsul, from whom he shortly after bought the governorship of Cœle-Syria and Samaria, for which, as a Roman citizen, he was qualified, returning soon after, with a strong force to Jerusalem, to avenge the insult offered him. But, at the entreaty of his father, whom his boldness confirmed in authority, he withdrew, without violence.

All Palestine was now in the hands of Herod's house, for Antipater ruled Judea, and Herod himself was over Samaria and Cœle-Syria. The Roman generals were uncertain whom to follow. Cæsar's fortunes seemed waning in Africa. Bassus, one of Pompey's party, seized Tyre, and sought to seduce the soldiers of Sextus Cæsar, the Syrian proconsul. Antipater sent a mixed force, and Herod led the cavalry of Samaria, to the proconsul's help. Bassus was beaten, but Sextus Cæsar himself was murdered by his own soldiers, and for two years Phasael and Herod had to maintain a difficult war. At last, in the year 44, the news came, when all were expecting Cæsar in the East, that he was murdered. The schemes of Herod's family seemed ruined.

Things, however, soon righted themselves. Antony began to play a leading part in Rome, and had all the edicts of Cæsar confirmed, to prevent hopeless confusion. Interest

led Antipater for the time to join Cassius, Cæsar's murderer. CHAP. III.
 Herod won favour as the first to pay him the war tax of about £150,000, levied on Galilee.²⁴ Antipater showed equal zeal; but when the people were too poor to pay the enormous sum demanded, Cassius sold their sons and daughters as slaves, to make it up. Feeling Herod's usefulness, the republican leader, on leaving Judea, named him procurator of Cœle-Syria, and gave him also military power over all Judea, promising him the crown, if all went well. The Idumean family were still on the top of the tide. But Antipater's course was run. Shortly before the Feast of Tabernacles, in the year 43, he died of poison given him in his wine. The murderer was well known—a follower of Hyrcanus, Malichus by name—who wished to excite insurrection in the Maccabæan's favour, against the Romans and their Idumean viceroy. Herod and his brother, with well-acted craft, feigned friendliness with him, till, a year later, they got him into their power, and murdered him, in turn, with the help of Cassius. Hyrcanus kissed the hands of his new master, and cursed the murdered man as the enemy of his country! ²⁵ ²⁴ Bell. Jud. l. 11. 2.
 ²⁵ Bell. Jud. l. 11. 8.

The year 43 closed with wild troubles all over the land. Malich's son on the south, and Antigonus on the north, invaded the land; but Herod overthrew them both. The weak Hyrcanus, who still dreaded the house of Aristobulus, received the conqueror in Jerusalem, with childish gratitude. Herod availed himself of this to ask Mariamne, daughter of Alexander, whom Pompey had beheaded, and granddaughter of Hyrcanus himself, in marriage. He had already one wife, Doris, who had borne him a son, Antipater; but she was now sent away, and went off to bring up her son in deadly hatred of the Maccabæan family, who had taken her young husband from her.

The hopes of the Jewish patriots revived once more after the battle of Philippi, in the autumn of the year 42. It was left to Antony to pay the soldiers after the battle what had been promised them; and to raise the vast sums required, by war taxes and the sale of titles,²⁶ he moved towards Asia. ²⁶ Dio Cassius, xlviii. 24
 Here a deputation of Jews protesting against Herod and Phasael's government waited on him; but Herod had

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always been friendly to the Romans, and was better provided with money than the people. Antony, for his part, hated the Jews, and liked Herod, as the son of an old comrade, with whom, eighteen years before, he had fought against the very people who now accused his son before him. Hyrcanus himself appeared in Ephesus on behalf of the two brothers, and they themselves played their part so well that they were not only confirmed in their own positions, but received substantial favours besides.

Antony was one of those undisciplined natures which revolutionary times produce—a man of powerful but neglected parts, who had grown up in the shattered and utterly immoral Roman world; unbridled in his passions, and, amidst all the energy of his will, without moral restraint. When in Egypt, as colonel of horse, he had for the first time seen Cleopatra, then fourteen years old, but already flirting with the son of Pompey. In the years B.C. 46 to 44 she was living in Cæsar's gardens at Rome as that great man's mistress, and there Antony had been amongst the most zealous in paying her honour. After Cæsar's death he had done her service, and tried to get her son Cæsarion put on the list of Cæsar's heirs. But, like Herod, she had been forced to go to war against Antony, because the camp of Cassius was nearer than that of his opponent. For this she was summoned before him, and made her appearance at Tarsus, in Cilicia, in the summer of 41. She was now twenty-eight, but still in the bloom of her beauty, and displayed her charms so effectively that Antony was forthwith her slave. His worst deeds begin from the time he met her. To please her he caused her sister to be dragged out of a temple in Miletus and murdered, and he put to death all she chose to denounce. She herself hastened to Egypt, whither Antony panted to follow her.

In Antioch, in Syria, in the autumn of the same year, he would have put to death a Jewish deputation sent to protest against the two brothers, had not Herod prevented him. The two were, moreover, appointed tetrarchs, with all formality. At Tyre, to which he had advanced, thousands of Jews threw themselves in his way with loud, persistent,

fanatical cries that he should depose the brothers. Angry before, he was now furious, and set his troops on them and hewed them down, killing even the prisoners taken. He then moved on to spend the winter with Cleopatra.

Throughout Judea and even in Egypt the deepest despondency reigned among the Jews. The advent of the Messiah was to be preceded by times of darkness and trouble, and so gloomy seemed the state of things then prevailing that it appeared as if the long-expected One must be close at hand. The belief or, at least, hope, found expression in the writings of the day. The Jewish Sibylline Books, composed in Egypt in these years, predicted that "when Rome once rules over Egypt, then will the greatest of the kingdoms, that of the Immortal King, appear among men, and a Holy Lord shall come, who will rule all the countries of the earth, through all ages, as time flows on." ²⁷

²⁷ Sib. iiii. 42—62.
Hilgenfeld,
Die Jüdische
Apokalypik,
53 ff.

In Palestine there was great excitement. After their bloody inauguration into their office by Antony, the two tetrarchs, Phasael and Herod, could count on few faithful subjects, and a new storm soon rose from the East which threatened to destroy them. Since they had sold themselves to the Romans, the exiled Maccabæan prince had conspired more eagerly with the Parthians, and had been supported in his appeal by Roman exiles of the party of Brutus and Cassius. The Parthians hesitated long, but at last the rumour came that they were preparing for war. Jerusalem trembled, for the Euphrates was undefended, and there were still garrisons of the republicans, which could not be trusted, all through Syria. The action of Antony in such a crisis was impatiently awaited; but feasting and pleasures reigned in Alexandria. The queen played at dice with the Triumvir; drank and hunted with him; wandered through the streets by night with him, playing rough tricks; she, dressed as a servant-woman, he, as a servant-man. She let him escape her neither by night nor day. Her extravagance was unparalleled; at a dinner she drank crushed pearls, that the cost of a meal might come to a million sesterii,²⁸ as she had

²⁸ About £8,340.

wagered it would. There was no end of her light follies, to amuse him; she had foreign pickled fish hung by divers on

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his hooks as he fished, and induced the senator Plancus to dance as Glaucus, naked, at one of her banquets, painted blue, his head wreathed with sea-weed, and waving a tail behind him, as he went gliding on all fours.²⁹ The costliest meals were at all times ready in the castle, for the cook never knew when they would need to be served up.

Sunk in this sensual indulgence, Antony left it to the proconsul of Syria to defend that province, till forced, in the spring of the year 40, to go to Greece, to manage a war which his wife had stirred up, to draw him away from Cleopatra. Meanwhile, Asia Minor was overrun by the Parthians, and Phasael and Herod saw themselves exposed to an early inroad, against which they were helpless.

And now, to use the fine figure of Hausrath,³⁰ there rose again before Hyrcanus, as if from some long-disused churchyard, the ghost of that dynastic question which for thirty years had haunted the palace, and could not be laid. His nephew Antigonus came from Chalcis,³¹ where he had been living with a relative, and obtained help from the Parthian leader, on the promise of giving him 1,000 talents³¹ and 500 wives, if he were restored to the throne. At Carmel, Antigonus was greeted with shouts, as king, and he hastened on to Jerusalem, where part of the people joined him. The tetrarchs succeeded in driving him and his adherents into the Temple, and shutting them up in it; but daily fights took place in the streets, and, as Pentecost was near, and crowds of armed and half-armed pilgrims arrived in the city, the brothers were, in their turn, shut up in their palace, from which, however, their soldiers made constant sallies, butchering the crowds like sheep. At last the cup-bearer of the Parthian prince came to the gate with 500 cavalry, asking entrance as a mediator between the factions, and was admitted by Phasael, who was even weak enough to let himself be persuaded to set out for the Parthian headquarters, taking Hyrcanus with him, to conclude arrangements for peace. At Ptolemais³² they found themselves prisoners, and were soon after fettered and put in confinement. Herod, meanwhile, had refused to listen to similar treacherous invitations, and having mounted his family on

²⁹ Plat. Ant. 29.
Vellei. Pat. ii.
83.

³⁰ l. 198.

³¹ £243,000 (Attic talents).

³² Acre.

mules by night, set off with them, in the darkness, towards the strong fortress Masada, on the Dead Sea, where his brother Joseph had command, reaching it only after terrible fighting in the passes of the hills. Leaving his women behind in safety, and taking his men with him, he now fled towards Edom; but as he had no money, the sheikhs of Mount Seir refused to receive him.³³

³³ Jor. Ant.
xiv. 13, 9.

In the meantime the Parthians had thrown off the mask in Jerusalem, had plundered the city,³⁴ and were sweeping like a devouring fire through the land, proclaiming Antigonus everywhere as king. In the camp, Hyrcanus was the first to do homage to the new sovereign, but Antigonus flew at him, and with his own teeth bit off his ears, to unfit him for ever for the high priesthood, and then sent him beyond the Euphrates as a prisoner. Phasaël escaped further insult by a voluntary death. Deprived of weapons, he beat out his brains against the walls of his dungeon. Antigonus now assumed the name of Mattathias, from the founder of the Maccabæan family,—and the titles of high priest and king. But his position was insecure, for Masada still held out, and was defended by Joseph, Herod's brother, for two years, till Herod relieved it. The barbarities of the Parthians, moreover, undermined his authority. On their small horses of the steppes they scoured the country in troops, mangling the men, maltreating the women, burning down whole towns, and torturing even the defenceless. No wonder that, though a Parthian never watered his horse in the Jordan after the year B.C. 38, the memory of these mounted hordes lingered in the minds of the people, so that even St. John introduces them in the Apocalypse, as a symbol of the plagues of the final judgment, which were to destroy a third part of men.³⁵

³⁵ Rev. 9. 17 f.

Herod, repelled from Idumea, fled to Egypt, which Antony had left at the beginning of the year 40. Cleopatra, however, gave him a friendly and even distinguished welcome, thinking she could win him over to her service, and use him as general against the Parthians. But Herod had higher aims. Braving the danger of autumn storms, he set sail for Rome, was shipwrecked off Rhodes,

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built a new trireme with borrowed money, reached Italy soon after, and on getting to Rome found there both Octavian and Antony. Before them he had his cause pleaded so skilfully that the Senate unanimously appointed him King of Judea,³⁶ and he was formally installed in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, with the usual heathen sacrifices. Seven days later he was on his way back to Palestine, and the cause of Antigonus was doomed. This new dignity, however, carried in its bosom the seeds of all Herod's future misery. Hyrcanus, though disqualified for being high priest, could yet be ethnarch, and his grand-child Aristobulus, brother to Mariamne, Herod's betrothed, was alive. Herod's kingship was a wrongful usurpation of the rights of both.

Meanwhile, the position of Antigonus was getting desperate. The cruelties of the Parthians, the failure to take Masada, and a fresh outbreak on a great scale, in Galilee and on the lake of Gennesareth, of zeal against the heathen oppressors of the land, had turned the Rabbis and the Sanhedrim, hitherto his supporters, against him. Nor were the people more friendly. As he left the Temple on the Day of Atonement, accompanied by a crowd, to conduct him to his palace, the multitude turned away to follow two Rabbis who chanced to pass.³⁷ Yet Herod was still, in the eyes of the nation, only "the servant of the Asmoneans."³⁸

Herod began the war against Antigonus with the assurance of Roman help, but Silo, the Roman general, let himself be bribed by Antigonus, and Herod had to struggle single-handed. The Romans only plundered Jericho, and quartered themselves idly on the nation at large. Herod had to turn against the zealots of Galilee, since he could get no help towards more serious efforts; and he soon extirpated them. The Parthians, however, by this time had been driven out of Asia Minor and Syria, and finally crushed, in a great battle on the Euphrates. Two new legions were now free to aid Herod, but their general, like Silo, cared only for making money, and, like him, took a bribe from Antigonus. In the meantime, Joseph, Herod's brother, fell in battle, and this roused Herod, who was always faithful to

³⁶ B.C. 40.³⁷ Joma, 72.³⁸ He is called this in the Talmud, Sanh. 19 a.b. Baba Bathra 3 b.

his family, to fury. With only a nondescript army he burst on Galilee and Judea, and drove the Maccabæans before him like chaff. Except Jerusalem, the whole land was now his, and he set himself to the task of taking the capital. For two years, with only raw recruits who knew nothing, veterans who had forgotten everything, Itureans who took his pay and did as little as possible for it, and treacherous³⁹ allies, he had fought against a fanatical people, who turned every hamlet and cavern into a fortress. It needed a genius and a superhuman energy like his to triumph in such a war. In the early spring of 37 B.C. he proceeded to invest Jerusalem, but thought it politic, before the siege actually began, to go to Samaria and marry Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, his rival and enemy. The Samaritans, in their hatred of the Maccabæan dynasty, had⁴⁰ been Herod's devoted supporters in the war; and he had honoured their loyalty by placing his bride, and the rest of his family in their keeping, at Samaria, when it first broke out. He was no sooner married than the work of blood once more began. Jerusalem was besieged by his army of Samaritans, friendly Jews, wild Idumeans, and mercenaries from Phenicia and Lebanon,⁴¹ and fell on the 10th of June,⁴² after a fierce struggle, which was followed by wild pillage and slaughter. Antigonus was taken prisoner, and was put to death by the Roman general, at Herod's entreaty, after he had suffered the outrage, hitherto unknown towards a prince, of being scourged like a slave. Thus another Asmonean was out of the way. The family had reigned 126 years. Herod was now really king. A great bribe to the Roman army freed the country of the burden of the Roman support, and the misery of its lawlessness. A bloody proscription, after the pattern of that of the Roman triumphate, mowed down all enemies within the city, the gates of which were closed till the executions were ended. In the midst of this, Antony, once more beside Cleopatra, in Egypt, and needing endless wealth for their mutual prodigalities, sent a demand to all the kingdoms he controlled,—Judea amongst others,—for a vast sum of money. Herod had only an empty treasury; a country strewn with ruins

³⁹ Bell. Jud. l. 17, 1—3. Ant. xiv. 13, 3, 4, 10.

⁴⁰ Ant. xiv. 16, 4, 14.

⁴¹ Ant. xiv. 16, 1, 3, 4; xv. 7, 10. Bell. Jud. l. 17, 6.

⁴² B.C. 37.

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and smoking heaps; and moreover, it was the Sabbath year, in which the laws made by Cæsar prohibited the levying any tax.⁴³ The proscription had therefore to be made a means of raising funds, as had been done by Octavian and Antony, at Rome. Forty-five of his richest opponents were put to death, and their property confiscated so ruthlessly, that even their coffins were searched at the city gates for jewels or money. Many were glad to escape death by giving up all they had. "The oppression and tyranny had no limit,"

⁴³ Ant. xv. 1. 2. says Josephus.⁴⁴ Herod, however, was none the richer, for he had to send off the whole crown treasures of the Asmoneans to Laodicea, to help to make up the amount demanded from him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF HEROD.

THE position of Herod was difficult in the extreme. He had everything to reorganize.¹ Galilee lay exhausted by brigandage, entire towns were unpeopled, as Lydda, Thamna, Gophna, and Emmaus, whose inhabitants had been sold by Cassius as slaves.² Jericho had been taken and plundered once and again: five towns round it lay in rubbish and ashes; Marissa had been burned down by the Parthians;³ and in the midst of all, the bleeding land had to be harried afresh, to satisfy Cleopatra and her slave, Antony. But the genius of Herod ere long built up a strong government out of this chaos, surrounding himself with his old friends, and ruthlessly crushing his enemies. Filling posts, where needful or desirable, with foreigners of any nation, he yet strove to keep on a good footing with the Rabbis, and Pharisee party at large, but gradually took from their Sanhedrim and schools the legal and civil powers they had exercised, leaving them the control only of municipal and ecclesiastical details. A high priest was appointed, such as the times seemed to demand. No native could be trusted; Hyrcanus, who still survived in Babylon, was disqualified; Aristobulus, the king's brother-in-law, was too young, and Herod was a born Idumean. A Rabbi from Babylon was therefore selected, as likely to give no trouble, but the rule was introduced, as an extra precaution, that the office should, henceforth, be held, by any one, only for a short time. Hyrcanus was wiled from the East⁴ that Herod might have him in his own power, and prevent his being played off against him in case of another Parthian war.

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¹ B.C. 37.² Bell. Jud. i. 11.
^{2.} Ant. xiv. 11.³ Bell. Jud. i. 13.
^{9.} Ant. xiv. 15.
^{12.} Bell. Jud. i. 13. 4.⁴ B.C. 36.

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But Herod's position was a fatal one. Willing to treat his subjects well, Rome, to whom he owed his crown, forced him to oppress them. He wished to reign as a Jew, but he had made a thank-offering in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus for the crown. He knew that he could be popular only by observing the Law, but his being king at all was illegal. He flattered the Rabbis, but they were his deadliest enemies. Yet all this was little to the troubles which his ambition had prepared for him in his own household. Had he founded an entirely new dynasty, his relations would have been on his side, and he could have relied on a party. But he had been unwise enough to marry into the family he had overthrown, in the hope of gaining a colour of legitimacy for his reign; and in doing so he had at once failed to appease the injured, and had brought his mortal enemies round him, as his relations. The marriage with Mariamne, by which he hoped to strengthen his title, carried with it his keenest indictment. In Aristobulus, his brother-in-law, he saw only a rival, and he betook himself to the usual remedy of tyrants—murder—to make himself safe. But this only made his position so much the worse, for his best-loved wife knew that he had murdered her brother, and their very children had more right to the throne than himself. His suspicions were thus roused at his every step in his own palace, and could only be appeased by fresh crimes. He raged against his own flesh and blood, and made himself wretched as a man, to be secure as a king.⁵

⁵ Hausrath, i.
214, 215.
⁶ B.C. 36.

Towards the close of the year⁶ a great disaster befell the Triumvir, Antony. His troops, deserted by their barbarous allies, had to retreat from Media, marching for twenty-seven days through a wasted country, pursued by the Parthians, and often in want of food or water. Twenty thousand foot, and four thousand horse, perished, and all the army train was lost, before he reached the Araxes, on the Caspian Sea, and eight thousand more died before he got to Sidon on the sea-coast. Here he waited for Cleopatra, who was alarmed at hearing that his wife Octavia was coming to meet him, and, pretending that she would die if he deserted her, so unmanned him that he left his army to his officers

and went off with her to Egypt.⁷ He was now entirely in her hands, and the neighbouring powers soon felt the results.

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Pistarch,
Antony.

Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne and Aristobulus, was sorely aggrieved that her son should not have been made high priest, as was his right, and plotted with a crafty officer of Antony's suite, then at Jerusalem, to get Antony to help her in the matter. He asked and got the portraits of both brother and sister to send to his master, but it was with the design of getting Antony enamoured of Mariamne and of thus raising a rival to Cleopatra, and his scheme succeeded. Antony fell in love with the Jewish queen, and was only kept from acting on his passion by his fear of the jealousy of his Egyptian mistress. He confined himself for the time to asking Herod to send the boy to him.

Herod was alarmed, and induced Antony to withdraw his request, which he said would lead to a revolt if granted; but seeing how things stood, he deposed the high priest and appointed Aristobulus, then seventeen, in his place.⁸ Unfortunately for the lad, the Jews hailed his elevation with delight. The result was that Herod, soon after, got him held under the water in a bath, at Jericho, till he was drowned, and pretended it was an accident.

B.C. 35.

Alexandra and Mariamne, knowing the truth, thirsted for revenge, and plotted with Cleopatra to obtain it. She on her part was anxious to get hold of Judea, and only used the plotters for this end. Herod was summoned before Antony,⁹ but he ordered, before he left, that, should he not return, Alexandra should be put to death as a punishment, and Mariamne, also, killed, to prevent her falling into the hands of Antony. Unfortunately for all, this was told them in his absence, and Mariamne, roused to frenzy, greeted him, on his coming back, with an outburst of the long pent-up hatred she felt at his crimes. Alexandra was forthwith thrown into chains; his sister Salome's husband, who had betrayed the secret, was put to death; Mariamne, whom he passionately loved, was spared a little longer.

⁹ To Laodicea.
B.C. 34.

Other troubles, from outside, now, for a time, thrust the domestic miseries into the background. Herod had discovered Cleopatra's designs, which were to get all the country,

CHAP. IV. from Egypt to Syria, for herself. Antony was to be persuaded on one pretext or other, to dethrone the different rulers. She did actually get him to put Lysanias, the ruler of the Lebanon district, to death, on pretence of his being in league with the Parthians, and got his principality, which she presently farmed out. Herod was now between her possessions, on both north and south, and feared lest her influence with Antony might be his ruin.

She next begged and got part of the Nabatæan kingdom:¹⁰ then the whole sea-coast of Palestine from the river Eleutherus to Egypt—Tyre and Sidon excepted—and, finally, Herod had to give up to her the Oasis of Jericho with its balsam plantations¹¹—the richest part of his kingdom.¹² The summons to Laodicea and the taking away of Jericho seemed to show that Herod's influence with Antony was shaken, and opposition consequently raised itself once more. Plots were again rife on every side, at home and abroad. Cleopatra was his constant terror, for at any moment she might spring some new mine under his feet. Even the Maccabæans were once more raising their heads. The Rabbis, whose schools had flourished immensely since their exclusion from politics, began to interfere with them again. Hillel and Schammai were, respectively, the heads of the more liberal and the harsher parties. But Herod was too much occupied by great affairs to trouble himself about them.

Things were rapidly coming to a crisis in the Roman Empire. The object of the Egyptian queen in lavishing her blandishments on Antony became more and more apparent. She had entangled him in her snares only to serve herself, and the great Samson laid his head unsuspectingly on her Delilah lap. She dreamed of bringing the whole Eastern empire of Rome, through him, under Egyptian rule, and of becoming the empress of half the world; and it seemed as if he were willing it should be so. He gave mortal offence at Rome by celebrating his triumphs, not there, but at Alexandria. He gave Cleopatra the title of the "queen of kings." Their two sons, Ptolemy and Alexander, were to be "kings of kings." He gave Syria, Phenicia, and Cilicia to the former, and Armenia and Media,

¹⁰ Bell. Jud. i. 20.
¹¹ Ant. xv. 4. 1.

¹¹ B.C. 34.

¹² Lightfoot's
Chorog. Cent.
93 f.

with Parthia, as soon as it should be overcome, to the latter; while to their daughter, the young Cleopatra, he handed over Cyrenaika.¹³ Cleopatra herself was made Queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya, and Cœle-Syria, her son Cæsarion sharing them with her. After the example of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies, both he and she assumed divine honours—Cleopatra as Isis, Antony as Osiris—and their statues were set up in sacred places.¹⁴ Public feeling at Rome was outraged and alarmed. The popular poets sent verses afloat in which Antony sought to make the Jupiter of Rome give way to the barking, dog-headed Anubis, threatened the galleys of Rome with being outsailed by the boats of the Nile, and would fain frighten the trumpets of Rome with the clattering sistrum.¹⁵ Cæsar laid the facts before the Senate, and Antony, in return, made charges against Cæsar. War—long inevitable—at last broke out, and was decided in the sea-fight at Actium.¹⁶ Cleopatra had persuaded her dupe to fight on the water rather than on land, that she might flee to Egypt at the first signs of defeat, and she did this in the midst of the battle, when victory was yet entirely doubtful. Ever his ruin, she thus completed her fatal triumph, for the weak man, as if he could not live without her, forthwith deserted his forces, though his ships were still fighting stoutly, and he had 100,000 foot, and 12,000 horse, on the sea-shore, who had never fought at all. It was noticed that on the day of Actium a terrible earthquake took place in Palestine, killing 10,000 persons and endless cattle.¹⁷ Herod, seeing Antony fallen, forthwith made peace with Cæsar. Fresh plots of Alexandra had been discovered, in which Hyrcanus, now eighty years old, was to be played off against him; but they only led to the revolting sight of the last of the Maccabæans, in extreme old age, being beheaded by his son-in-law.¹⁸ Herod's hands were getting redder and redder with the blood of his kindred. With Cæsar he managed things well, entertaining him royally on his way through Palestine to Egypt, and providing supplies for his army on their march, with equal wisdom and munificence. Meanwhile Antony and Cleopatra spent their last days in feasting and revelry, varied with ghastly trials, before them, of every known poison, by turns,

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¹³ B.C. 33.¹⁴ Dio. 50, 5.
Vellei, ii. 8.¹⁵ Prop. Eleg. v.¹⁶ Sep. 2, B.C. 31.¹⁷ Ant. xv. 5, 2.
Hell. Jud. i. 19, 3.¹⁸ In Spring.
B.C. 30.

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19 B.C. 30.

20 Plutarch,
M. Antonius.

on different prisoners, to see which caused the easiest death.¹⁹ In the autumn of 30 B.C. Antony stabbed himself mortally, and Cleopatra soon after ended her life by poison, leaving Herod to breathe freely for the first time in long years.²⁰ Octavian took him into favour, for he needed such a man as a protection on the eastern borders, to defend them against the Parthians. Jericho was given back, Samaria was incorporated with his kingdom, with various coast towns, and some territory beyond the Jordan. Cleopatra's body guard of 400 Gauls was presented to him by Octavian. But if he had honour and rewards, it was at the cost of an expenditure, to do honour and homage to his imperial master, that seemed to have overstrained his resources.

21 Ant., xv. 2. 4.

22 B.C. 29.

Once more safe from dangers that might well have overwhelmed him, Herod found, on his return from attendance on Octavian, such troubles at home as darkened his whole future life. The quarrels of his seraglio had come to a head. Alexandra and her daughter Mariamne were now the only two left of the old royal race, and were so much the more hated by the kindred of Herod. Mariamne—tall and noble in person²¹—had the pride of a daughter of kings, and let Salome, Herod's sister, feel it. In Herod's absence she discovered that, for the second time, he had left orders to kill her and her mother if he did not return; and she showed what she thought of this when he did come back, by receiving him with undisguised aversion. Her enemies took advantage of this to fan Herod's anger by every scandal they could invent against her, till, in the end, he believed she had been unfaithful, and the fair queen, deserted and betrayed by all, was handed over to the headsman.²² Herod's remorse, when she had thus actually perished, was awful. He lost his reason for a time, would call for her, lament over her, kept his servants calling her as if she were still alive, gave up all business, and fled to Samaria, where he had married her, to seek relief from his thoughts in hunting. At last he fell into violent illness, and lay seemingly hopeless. Alexandra, furious at her daughter's murder, thought this the right moment to attempt to set Mariamne's two sons on the throne, which was theirs by right, more than their father's.

A plague had broken out, and this the Rabbis construed into divine vengeance for the queen's death. The news roused the tyrant, ill as he was. Alexandra was instantly put to death, and many others shared her fate;²³ but already a new suspicion had risen to torment the wretched man. Alexandra's proclamation of his sons as the rightful heirs had made them, also, his fancied enemies. Among the people the memory of Mariamne was sacred, and their hopes were set on her sons.

Octavian was now sole ruler of the Roman world, under the high name of Augustus, and an era of restoration and refinement took the place of destruction and tumult. With the widespread peace, trade revived, and prosperity returned to Judea among other countries. The patronage of literature and art, the construction of public works, and the rebuilding and beautifying of Rome and the cities and towns of the provinces, were now the fashion, set by Augustus, and slavishly followed by vassal kings. In imitation of him, Herod patronized men whose writings could shed a lustre on his court—notably the two brothers, Nicolaus and Ptolemy, of Damascus, both, able and faithful public servants. Nicolaus was a voluminous and skilful author as well.* Other Greeks and half-Greeks were put in offices of trust or honour, as members of the government, or ambassadors, or as tutors and travelling companions to his sons. Most of them served Herod honourably to the last, but there were not wanting some of the Greek sycophants who at that time infested all courts, and one of the worst of these, Eurykles the Lacedæmonian, who amassed wealth by espionage and false witnesses, was destined to be the bad genius of Herod's later years. The biting wit of the Rabbis spoke of the whole heathen government of the court as "the proselytes of the king's table."²⁴

²⁴ Grätz, III, 318.

A shrewd and able man like Herod, whose leading thought was to flatter and serve Augustus, so as to secure his permanent favour, was of great use in a disturbed border country, to one who, like Augustus, was as much disinclined as unqualified for war. When, therefore, Herod determined in the year B.C. 23 to send Mariamne's two sons

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to Rome, Cæsar received them with every honour, and gave the lads every facility for growing up in the midst of high Roman life. But they little knew in how dark a gloom all this early splendour would set! By a curious coincidence it was their tutor's son, with whom they rose to manhood, whom Virgil²⁵ had flattered as an infant by applying to him, in the fourth Eclogue, the Messianic hope of the Jews. Of this "Messiah" of Virgil they were now the youthful friends. Herod himself took his sons to Rome,²⁶ and was honoured by a gift from Augustus of the district of Lebanon, and of the lawless territories of Iturea and Trachonitis, with the fertile plains of the Hauran. The former swarmed with robbers, like Galilee in Herod's youth, and the two latter were filled with wild clans of borderers, who were the terror of the land at large. But on his return, Herod soon reduced them so thoroughly that they were peaceful even under his successors. A year after,²⁷ Herod could personally report his success to Cæsar's minister Agrippa, at Mitylene, to which he went to meet him. Two years later Herod received from Augustus,²⁸ in person, at Antioch, the districts of Ulatha and Panias, to round off his kingdom suitably. He now reigned over a larger kingdom than any preceding Jewish monarch. The glory of David seemed to be outshone. From Lebanon to the far South, and from the edge of the Desert to the sea-coast, was Jewish territory. Nor was the political glory granted to Herod less than the material. He was made the representative of Agrippa in the East, and it was required that his counsel should be taken, before anything of moment was done by consuls or governors. Amidst these flatteries from Augustus it was necessary to do something to conciliate the Jews. Hence, in the year 24 Herod had married a Jewish maiden—Mariamne, daughter of Boëthos, a priest of Alexandrian origin, who was raised to the high priesthood, to dignify the alliance with "the fairest woman in the world,"—Jesus, the son of Phabi, the high priest at the time, being set aside in his favour. Boëthos was a great accession to the small body of the Sadducean dignitaries, but, in politics, was, of course, a Herodian.

²⁵ B.C. 70—19.²⁶ B.C. 23.²⁷ B.C. 22.²⁸ B.C. 20.

So much intercourse with heathenism, however, and the splendid flatteries by which Herod sought to retain and increase the power of his master, were not without their effects on Judaism. Even in the days of the Syrian kings, Palestine had been encircled by Greek towns and cities, and the immigration of heathen settlers had, in Herod's day, made the towns of the Philistine coast and of the Decapolis much more Greek than Jewish. The only bounds to Herod's introduction of foreign novelties were his dread of national opposition. Greek had become the court dialect of the Empire, as French was that of Europe in the days of Louis XIV., and still remains to a great extent; and hence it was universally favoured and spoken by the upper classes in Herod's dominions. Samaria received a Greek name,²⁹ = Sebaste. had Greek coins, and Greek idolatry. The first act of Herod, after Augustus had aggrandised him so greatly, was to build a temple of white marble to his patron, at Pnias, the future Caesarea Philippi, lying finely on one of the southern spurs of Lebanon. Before long, venturing to bring heathenism nearer the centre of the land, he built another temple to Caesar in Samaria, and surrounded it by a consecrated approach, a furlong and a half in circumference. A grand palace was also begun in Jerusalem itself, in the heathen style, with wide porticoes, rows of pillars, and baths, its one wing receiving the name of Caesar, the other that of Agrippa. Herodium, which he built on the hill, at the mouth of the deep gorge leading to the Dead Sea, where he had so bravely defended himself against the Parthians, was planned as a Roman castle, rising over an Italian town, with public buildings and stately aqueducts. His grandest undertaking, after the Temple, was the creation of Caesarea,³⁰ on the coast. The name was another 29 B.C. 22—10. flattery of the Emperor; that of one of the great signal towers on the smaller harbour was Drusion, after Caesar's son. The great pier was adorned with splendid pillars. Broad quays, magnificent bazaars, spacious basilicæ, for the courts of law and other public uses, and huge sailors'-homes, invited a great commerce; and on an eminence above rose a temple, with a colossal statue, visible far out at sea, of

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Augustus, as Jupiter Olympus, and another of Rome deified as Juno. Theatres and amphitheatres were not wanting. A grand palace, designed for Herod himself, became later the Prætorium of the Roman procurators. Temples to Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, Hercules, Bacchus, Minerva, Victory, and Astarte, soon adorned the town, and showed the many-coloured heathenism of its population. It was, moreover, provided with a system of magnificent underground sewers in the Roman manner. Cæsarea was in every respect a foreign city. Its population was more heathenish than Jewish, and their mutual hatred often led to fierce riots.³¹

³¹ Ant. xx. 8, 7, 9.
Bell. Jud. ii. 13.
7; 14. 4, 5; 18.
1.

In Jerusalem itself a theatre and amphitheatre were erected. Countless foreign proselytes and numerous heathens had settled in the city. The coins bore Greek inscriptions. Among the troops of Herod were Thracian, German, and Gallic regiments.³² So thoroughly, indeed, had foreign elements gained a footing, even in the fanatical capital, in spite of the Rabbis, that, while the people at large retained their native dialect, many Greek words had been permanently incorporated with it.³³ The very Temple displayed proofs of the irrepressible influences of the great world outside Judea. Its outer court was thronged by heathens, and countless gifts presented by heathen princes and nobles adorned the walls of the court of the priests.³⁴ The Ptolemies had enriched it by numerous costly gifts.³⁵ Sosius, when he took Jerusalem, in concert with Herod, vowed a golden crown. Among the Temple vessels were wine jars which had been presented by Augustus and his Empress.³⁶ It was, indeed, a common thing for Romans to make gifts of this kind.³⁷ They very often, also, presented offerings. When Pompey had taken Jerusalem, his first care was to provide the usual sacrifices.³⁸ Agrippa, the friend and patron of Herod, offered a hecatomb on his visit to Jerusalem fifteen years before Christ, and Augustus provided that sacrifices should be offered daily at his expense to the Most High God; and such an example must have had countless followers.³⁹ All the hatred between Jews and heathen was not strong enough to prevent the Temple becoming, like all the famous

³² Ant. xvii. 8, 3.

³³ Schürer, 378.

³⁴ Luke 21. 5.

³⁵ Ant. xii. 2;
xiii. 3, 4.

³⁶ c. Apion. ii. 5.
Bell. Jud. vii.
3, 3.

³⁷ Ant. xiv. 16, 4;
4, 4.
Bell. Jud. i. 7, 6.

³⁸ Bell. Jud. i. 7, 6;
ii. 17. 3; iv.
3, 10.

³⁹ Phil. Legat. ad
Cal. § 23 ed.
Mang. ii. 569.
Bell. Jud. ii.
17, 2—4.

sanctuaries of the age, a gathering point for the world at large. CHAP. IV.

There was, clearly, much to keep a fanatical people in a constant tension, and to make them more fanatical still. Heathen temples, with their attendant priests, pompous ritual, and imposing sacrifices, abounded in the land. Gaza, in the south, was virtually a Greek city,⁴⁰ and worshipped a local Jupiter as the town god, "who sent rain and fruitfulness on the earth," and associated with him, in its idolatry, another Jupiter—the Victory Bringer—Apollo, the Sun, and Hercules, and the goddesses Fortune, Io, Diana, Juno, and Venus.⁴¹ Ascalon worshipped Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, the Sun, Minerva, Mercury, Castor and Pollux, and the Syrian Moon goddess Astarte, as the heavenly Venus—the warlike, spear-bearing, Queen of Heaven. On the rocks at Joppa, the marks of the chains were shown which had been forged for Andromeda. A laurel-crowned Jupiter was worshipped at Dora, north of Cæsarea.⁴² At Ptolemais the favourite divinity was the goddess Fortune, but with her, Jupiter, Apollo, Diana, Venus, Pluto and Persephone, and Perseus, with the Egyptian Serapis, and the Phrygian Cybele, had their respective worshippers.

In Tyre, the old worship of Baal and Astarte—the Sun and Moon—retained their pre-eminence, with a Greek colouring of the idolatry. In Damascus Greek heathenism was in the ascendant. Jupiter, Hercules, and Bacchus, Diana, Minerva, Fortune, and Victory had their temples, and were stamped on the local coins. In the future province of Philip heathenism was predominant. In Panias or Cæsarea Philippi, as we have seen, Herod built a temple for the worship of Augustus, but the leading divinity was the god Pan, as the old name of the town—Panias—indicates; Jupiter, however, and Astarte, with a horn of plenty, Apollo, and Diana, had also their votaries, and no doubt their temples. Heathenism flourished in Batanæa, Trachonitis, and Auranitis. Helios, the Sun, was the great object of worship, and so deep-rooted was this idolatry that the early Christian missionaries knew no other way of overthrowing it than by changing it into the name of the

⁴⁰ Bell. Jud. ii. 6. 3.

⁴¹ Schürer, 379.

⁴² Schürer, 381.

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 43 Schlirer, 388.

prophet Elias, and turning the temples into churches dedicated to him.⁴³ Round this central divinity, however, the worship of Bacchus, Saturn, Hercules, Minerva, Fortune, Venus, Victory, Peace, and other divinities flourished more or less. The cities of the Decapolis were very heathen.

Thus, all round the central district of Palestine, and to some extent even within its limits, heathenism had already in Herod's day, and, consequently, in Christ's, its temples, altars, idols, and priests. Jehovah was no longer the sole God. With a few exceptions of Syrian or Egyptian divinities, Greek names and rites marked the source of the corruption, though we have given the Roman names as better known. Of all this aggressive heathenism Herod, so far as he dared, was the ostentatious patron. If he could hardly venture on much within the narrow limits of Judea, cenotaphs, mausolea, and other monuments offensive to a Jew, were seen along all the leading roads, and so many places were called by new Latin names, in honour of the imperial family, that a traveller might think he was in Italy. Nor was Herod ever without money to bestow on neighbouring heathen cities, as a mark of friendliness, in building gymnasia, piazzas, theatres, and aqueducts, or in the shape of prizes to be striven for in the circus. It seemed as if the throne of David existed only to spread heathenism. It was clear to the Jews that Herod's heathen subjects were nearest his heart, since, amidst all his lavish munificence to them, he had done nothing to beautify a single Jewish town except Jerusalem, to which his additions were, themselves, heathen. The most appalling reports respecting him spread from mouth to mouth. He had preserved the body of Mariamme for seven years in honey for the most hideous ends: he had strangled all the great Rabbis, except Baba-ben-Boutra, and him he had blinded.⁴⁴ The most intense hatred of him prevailed.

⁴⁴ Derenbourg,
 151.

It was with the extremest mistrust, therefore, that the Rabbis heard in the year B.C. 20 that Herod intended replacing the humble temple of the Exile by one unspeakably more splendid. It is said that Baba-ben-Boutra had seen a crack in the old structure, and counselled Herod to build another

in its place, as an expiation for the murder of Mariamne and the Rabbis, and to conciliate the people for his favour to heathenism.⁴⁵ The prophecies were played off by him, to win popular sanction to his undertaking, for Haggai had foretold that a new temple of surpassing glory would one day be built.⁴⁶ But so great was the distrust, that all the materials of the new temple needed to be brought together before a stone of the old one could be touched. At last, on the regnal day of Herod, in the year B.C. 14, the unfinished structure was consecrated, and the lowing of 300 oxen at the Great Altar announced to Jerusalem that the first sacrifice in it was offered. But scarcely was the consecration over than national gratitude was turned into indignation by his setting up a great golden eagle—the emblem of heathen Rome—over the great gate, in expectation of a visit from distinguished strangers from the imperial city. The nation was not duped as the king had expected. In spite of his having begun a temple so magnificent that even a Jewish saying owns that he who had not seen it had seen nothing worth looking at, an abyss yawned between him and them.⁴⁷ He had burned the registers of Jerusalem to destroy the pedigrees of which the people boasted: he had tried to make it be believed that he was the descendant of a foreign Jewish family, but no one regarded him as anything but the slave of their kings. All felt that his conduct was as little Jewish as his birth; and that he was rather a Roman proconsul than the King of Israel.⁴⁸ Even the worst of the Maccabæan house were bound to the national faith by the functions of the pontificate, but though Herod might be made King of Judea by the favour of Rome, no earthly power could make him a descendant of Aaron, without being which he could not be high priest.

In vain Herod tried to make himself beloved. He had done much to deserve gratitude in these later years,⁴⁹ and yet the nation wrote his virtues in water, and his faults in brass. A dreadful famine, followed by pestilence, had spread misery and death in the thirteenth of his reign.⁵⁰ No rain had fallen at the required times, and the crops

⁴⁵ Derenbourg, 102.⁴⁶ Haggai 2. 3. 9.⁴⁷ Derenbourg, 104.⁴⁸ Ant. xv. 9. 5; xvi. 3. 4.⁴⁹ B.C. 25—24.⁵⁰ Ant. xv. 9. 1.

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utterly failed, so that there was no food for either man or beast. Men said it was a judgment of God for the defilement of His land by their king's crimes and heathen innovations, for Mariamne's blood, now four years shed, still seemed to cry for vengeance, and since her murder a theatre and circus had profaned Jerusalem, and heathen games, in which men fought with men, to the death, had been set on foot with great pomp. Samaria, the hated rival of Jerusa-

⁵¹ Begun B.C. 27.

lem, was even then, moreover, being rebuilt,⁵¹ with a heathen temple in it, in which a man—Augustus—was to be worshipped. Herod felt the peril of his position, and acted from policy, as others might have done from the wisest and most energetic philanthropy. Selling the very plate in his palace, and emptying his treasury, he sent funds to Egypt and bought corn, which he brought home and distributed, as a gift, among all the people, for their money had been spent for the merest necessities before this relief came. He even provided clothing for the nation in the winter, where it was wanted, for sheep and goats alike had been killed for food, and he supplied seed corn for next spring, and thus the evil time was tided over.⁵² For a while it seemed as if the people would really become loyal. But his best acts of one moment were spoiled the next. The bazaars and schools muttered treason continually. One year Herod remitted a

⁵² Ant. xv. 9, 2.

third of the taxes,⁵³ but tongues went against him none the less, and presently he seemed to justify their bitterness by decreeing that all thieves should be sold as slaves to other countries, where, as the people said, they would lose the blessing of Abraham, could not keep the Law, and would be lost for ever.⁵⁴ Meanwhile Agrippa visited Jerusalem again,⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Hauserath, i. 253.

⁵⁵ B.C. 15.

and bore himself so wisely that thousands escorted him to the sea-coast when he left, strewing his path with flowers.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Ant. xvi. 2. 1.

⁵⁷ B.C. 14.

Next year⁵⁷ Herod returned the visit at Sinope, lavishing bounty on heathen and Jewish communities alike, on his journey out and back. The Jews of each city of Asia Minor seized the opportunity of his passing, to complain, through him, to Agrippa, that the privileges granted them by Cæsar were not observed. The Greeks, on the other hand, reviled them as bloodsuckers and cancers of the community, who

refused to honour the gods, and hence had no right to such favour, but Herod prevailed with Agrippa on behalf of the Jews. For once, Jerusalem received its king heartily when he returned; he, on his side, acknowledging the feeling by a remittance of a quarter of the taxes of the year.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Haurath, i. 253.

The dismal shadow that had rested over the palace in past times had been in part forgotten while the two sons of the murdered Mariamne were in Rome. In the year B.C. 17, however, the old troubles had begun again,—to darken at last into the blackest misery. Herod had recalled his sons from Rome. Alexander, the elder, was eighteen; Aristobulus, the younger, about seventeen. They had grown tall, taking after their mother and her race. In Italy and Judea alike, their birth and position, amidst so many snares, won them universal sympathy. Roman education had given them an open, straightforward way, however, that was ill-fitted to hold its own with their crafty fawning Idumean connections, in Jerusalem. Their morals had, moreover, suffered by their residence in Rome, so that Alexander, at least, appears to have exposed himself to charges against which Jewish ecclesiastical law denounced death.⁵⁹ In any case they were heirs to the hatred that had been borne towards their mother. Her fate doubtless affected their bearing towards their father, and it was said that they wished to get the process against Mariamne reversed, and her accusers punished. Their ruin was doubtless determined from the first; and their unsuspecting frankness, which showed their aversion to the other members of the family, gave materials for slander, and aided in their destruction. Herod sought to reconcile the strife by the course usual at the time, and married Aristobulus to his sister Salome's daughter Berenice, who was, unfortunately, still, entirely under the hostile influence of her mother,⁶⁰ though she afterwards grew to be a worthy woman. Alexander, as became the heir to the throne, was married to a king's daughter, Glaphyra, of the family of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia—a daughter of a prostitute of the temple of Venus in Corinth,⁶¹ whom Archelaus had married. The bride might be fair, but she was not prudent, and filled the

⁵⁹ Bell. Jud. i. 24. 7.

⁶⁰ Ant. xvi. 7. 3.

⁶¹ Strabo, xii. 3.

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⁶² Bell. Jud. i.
24. 2.

palace in Jerusalem with stories of her contempt for Herod's family as compared with her own.⁶² Whatever Aristobulus said to his wife was carried to Salome, and spies were set on the two young men, to report what they could. The quarrels of the women grew fiercer daily, and involved the two brothers fatally. Nothing else was spoken of in the city but the strife in the palace. Another element of mischief was soon added. Herod's youngest brother, Pheroras, joined the party of Salome. He had married a slave girl, who was so devoted to the Pharisees that she got her husband to pay for them the penalties Herod had imposed, for their having refused to take the oath of allegiance. Pheroras, who was a true Edomite in his fickle faithlessness, was a born conspirator. He had plotted already against Herod, and resolved, in revenge for Glaphyra's loose tongue about his low marriage, to join Salome, and hunt the two youths to death.

On Herod's return from his visit to Agrippa in Asia Minor, in the winter of B.C. 14, he found the palace in a ferment, and heard for the first time that the youths intended to apply to Augustus to have the process against Mariamne reversed. In his rage, he resolved to recall Antipater, his eldest son, who, with his mother, had been banished from the court on account of Mariamne, and who was thus a deadly enemy of her sons. This step was the ruin of Herod's peace. Antipater instantly joined Salome's party: watched every step and caught every word of the unsuspecting youths: never himself accused them to his father, but played the part of Iago consummately, in exciting the suspicious to which Herod's guilty conscience was only too prone. The presence of an elder brother not having sufficed to humble the two, Antipater's mother, Doris, was also recalled to court; that they might see how their hopes of the throne were vanishing. Their enemies, moreover, did their best to stir them up against each other,⁶³ to work more harm to both.

⁶³ Ant. xvi. 7. 4.

Antipater, ere long, got himself named as heir, and was sent, as such, to Rome, in the year B.C. 13, but even from Italy he managed to deepen his father's suspicions so much, that

Herod himself went to Rome,⁶⁴ taking the two young men with him, to have them tried before Caesar for intended CHAP. IV.
a B.C. 10. parricide. They defended themselves so well, however, that an outward reconciliation followed, and Herod returned to Jerusalem with them, as joint heirs, with Antipater, of his dominions.

But the quiet was soon disturbed. The mutual hatred of the women, and the plots of Pheroras and Antipater, though for a time fruitless, made progress in the end. The slaves of the youths were tortured, at their suggestion, and accused Alexander of conspiracy; and he, weary of life, and furious at the toil laid for him, was foolish enough to say that he was guilty, but only in common with all Herod's relations, except Antipater. The unfortunate young man made an exception in his case as a special and trusted friend! The whole of Herod's connections were now unanimous for his death, but it was not to happen yet. His father-in-law found means to appease Herod once more, which was the easier, as Herod had discovered the deceit of Pheroras, and had found his sister Salome carrying on intrigues which he did not approve.

He was indeed to be pitied. The family quarrels embittered his existence, and his suspicions had been so excited that he trusted nobody. Every one was suspected, and could only defend himself by raising suspicions against others.⁶⁵ A Greek at court determined to profit by the 65 Fell. Jud. i. 26.
2.
Ant. xvi. 8. 2. position of affairs and bring it to a final crisis. Trusting to get money from Antipater, Herod, and Archelaus, alike, if he ended the matter, he laid his plans to bring about the death of the young men. Forging documents and inventing acts, he made Herod believe that his sons were really plotting his death. The tyrant forthwith had them thrown into chains, and their slaves put to torture, stoning those who confessed any guilt. Nothing kept him from putting the princes to death but fear of offending Augustus, for even Salome tormented him day and night to kill them, though one was her son-in-law. At last⁶⁶ 66 B.C. 8. Herod sent to Rome for permission from Augustus to put them to death. The request cost him the crown of Arabia, Augustus declaring that the man who could not keep his house in

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order was unfit to be trusted with additional kingdoms. Yet he gave him permission to do as he thought fit with his sons. A court, one-half of Romans, one-half of Jews, was now held at Berytus, and Herod appeared as prosecutor. In vain the Roman proconsul brought his three sons with him to excite the grey-headed despot's fatherly feelings. He acted like a madman: detailed his injuries with the utmost passion, and supplied the want of proof by bursts of fury. The sentence was given as he desired, and he had the satisfaction of having pursued his own sons to the death. In the year B.C. 7, the princes were strangled at Samaria, where Herod had married their mother.

If the hoary murderer hoped for peace by this new crime he was deceived.⁶⁷ Antipater lived with his two brothers, Archelaus and Philip, at Rome, and, there, first excited them against his father, and then betrayed them to him. Pheroras, Herod's brother, he sought to make his tool in killing Herod. He was afraid that if he did not destroy his father soon his own infinite villany in the past would be discovered. Pheroras was, in fact, in a false position. His wife and her relations were strongly on the side of the Pharisees, who wished above everything to destroy Herod, and put Pheroras, as their friend, on the throne. Prophecies were circulated by them, that it was the will of God that Herod and his sons should lose the kingdom, and that Pheroras and his wife should inherit it. Their tool, Herod's eunuch, Bagoas, was to have a son who would be the Messiah.^b Many were won over in the palace, but the plot was discovered, and many Rabbis and others put to death. Herod demanded that Pheroras should divorce his wife, but he preferred to leave the court and go to Perea with her, rather than forsake her.⁶⁸ Here he soon after suddenly died,⁶⁹ report said, by poison. Herod, however, had his body brought to Jerusalem, and appointed a great national mourning on his account.

Inquiry respecting his death at last brought to light the whole secret history of years. He had died by taking poison, sent by Antipater to kill Herod. The plot was found to have wide ramifications where least suspected.

⁶⁷ Herod's age, about 64.

⁶⁸ Pell. Jud. l. 29. 4.

⁶⁹ B.C. 5.

Even the second Mariamne was proved to have been privy to it, and her son Herod, was on this account, blotted out of his father's will.⁷⁰ Thus, as Josephus says, did the ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus go round all the palace, and bring the most deeply hidden secrets to light, summoning to the judgment seat those who seemed freest from suspicion.⁷¹

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⁷⁰ a.c. 5.⁷¹ Bell. Jud. i. 30, 7.

Antipater was now unmasked, and Herod saw the kind of man for whom he had sacrificed his wife and his sons. With pretended friendliness he sent for him from Rome, nor did any one warn him of his danger, though proceedings had gone on many months against his mother, ending in her divorce. Perhaps, says Josephus, the spirits of his murdered brothers had closed the mouths of those who might have put him on his guard.⁷² His first hint of danger was given by no one being at Cæsarea to receive him, when he landed, but he could not now go back, and determined to put a bold face on it. As he rode up to Jerusalem, however, he saw that his escort was taken from him, and he now felt that he was ruined. Herod received him as he deserved, and handed him over for trial to the Syrian proconsul. All hastened to give witness against one so universally hated. It was proved that he had sought to poison his father. A criminal who was forced to drink what Antipater had sent for Herod presently fell dead. Antipater was led away in chains.

⁷² Bell. Jud. i. 31, 2.

The strong nature of Herod at last gave way under such revelations, which he forthwith communicated to his master at Rome. A deadly illness seized him, and word ran through Jerusalem that he could not recover.⁷³ The Rabbis could no longer repress their hatred of him, and of the Romans. Their teachings through long years were about to bear fruit. Two were especially popular, Judas, the son of Sariphai, and Matthias, the son of Margolouth, round whom a whole army of young men gathered daily, drinking in from them the spirit of revolution.⁷⁴ All that had happened was traced to the anger of Jehovah at Herod's desecration of the Temple and city, and violations of the Law during his whole reign. To win back the divine

⁷³ a.c. 4.⁷⁴ Bell. Jud. i. 33, 2.

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favour to the nation, the heathen profanations erected by Herod in the Temple must be pulled down, especially the golden eagle over the great gate. Living or dying, they would have eternal rewards for this fidelity to the laws

⁷⁵ Ant. xvii. 6. 2.

of their fathers.⁷⁵ Such counsels from venerated teachers were like fire to the inflammable passions of youth. In the middle of the day a vast crowd of students of the Law rushed to the Temple; let themselves down with ropes from the top of the great gate, tore down the hated symbol of Rome and of idolatry, and hacked it to pieces in the streets.⁷⁶ Mobs rose in other parts of the city, also, to throw down other objects of popular hatred, but the troops were turned out, and the unarmed rioters were scattered, leaving forty young Pharisees in the hands of the military. Brought before Herod and asked who had counselled them to act as they had done, they answered, touchingly, that they did it in obedience to the Law. In vain he tried to alarm them by saying they must die: they only replied that their eternal reward would be so much the greater. The two Rabbis and the young men were sent to Jericho for trial before Herod, and the Rabbis and the ringleaders were burned alive, the others being beheaded. On the night after they suffered there was an eclipse of the moon, which fixes the date as the 11th of March, B.C. 4.

Authorities for
Chapters III. &
IV.:-

Joseph. Ant.
xv., xvi., xvii.
1-8, Bell. Jud.
i. 15-33.
Rabbinical
Traditions in
Derenbourg,
pp. 149-165.
Ewald, Ge-
schichte, iv.
543-585.
Schnecken-
burger, Zeit-
geschichte, 175
-200.
Hansrath, Zeit-
geschichte, i.
218-284.
Winer, Real-
wörterbuch, i.
481-483.
Herzog's Real
Ency. vi. 8-14.
Kelm, Ge-
schichte Jesu,
i. 173-189.
Schenkel's Bi-
bel Lex. iii. 27,
38.
Menke's Bible
Atlas, sheets
4 and 5.
Schürer's Zeit-
geschichte, 173
-223.
Dict. of My-
thology & Biog.
Art., "Hero-
des," "Tyr-
annus," "An-
tonius," "Cle-
opatra."

Death was now busy with Herod himself. His life had been a splendid failure. He had a wide kingdom, but his life had been a long struggle with public enemies or with domestic troubles, and in his old age he found that all this misery, which had made him the murderer of his wife, her mother, and his two sons, not to speak of other relations and connections, had been planned for selfish ends by those whom he had trusted. The curse had come back on him to the full, for his eldest son had sought to murder him. His government had been no less signal a failure, for revolt had burst into flames at the mere report of his death. The strong man was bowed to the dust at last. A loathsome disease prostrated him, and he suffered such agonies that men said it was a punishment for his countless iniquities.⁷⁷ Carried across the Dead Sea to the sulphur

⁷⁷ Ant. xvii. 6. 5.

baths of Callirhoe, he fainted and almost died under the treatment. All round him were alarmed lest he should do so before ordering the execution of Antipater, but an attempt on the part of the prisoner to bribe his gaoler was fatal to him. Augustus had granted permission for his execution, with the caustic irony, that it was better to be Herod's sow than his son.⁷⁸ Five days after Antipater had fallen Herod himself expired.⁷⁹ He was in his seventy-first or seventy-second year when he died.

⁷⁸ Macrob.,
Saturn. II. 4.
⁷⁹ March 16,
B.C. 4.

CHAPTER V.

THE JEWISH WORLD AT THE TIME OF CHRIST.

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¹ B.C. 533.

WHEN the conquest of Babylon by Darius and Cyrus¹ had transferred the fate of the Jews, then in captivity in that empire, to the victorious Persian, their long exile had had its natural effect in rekindling their zeal for the religion of their fathers, and of intensifying their desire to return to their own land. Before Cyrus finally advanced to the conquest of the great city, more than twenty years had been spent, for the most part, in distant military operations.² But long before he drew near Babylon, the Jewish leaders, stimulated by the assurances of the prophets then living, or of earlier date, felt sure of his victory, and of the speedy deliverance of their nation from their hated oppressors. The glorious promises of the later chapters of Isaiah, and the exultation of many of the Psalms of the period, are doubtless only illustrations of the intense spiritual excitement that prevailed in the Jewish community, throughout the lands of their exile, during the years immediately preceding the fall of Babylon. All that was noblest in them had been roused to an enthusiasm which might, perhaps, become perverted, but was, henceforth, never to die. The spirit of intense nationality, fed by zeal for their religion as the true faith,—confided to them exclusively as the favourites of Heaven,—had been gradually kindled, and yearned, with an irrepressible earnestness, for a return to their own country, that they might be free to fulfil its requirements. Men of the purest and warmest zeal for the honour and the historic rights of their race had never been wanting during the captivity, as the natural leaders of their brethren, and now took advantage of the character and circumstances of Cyrus to obtain from him a favourable decree for the

² Ewald's
Geschichte, iv.
54.

restoration of Jerusalem, and the free return to it of their people. In the year 536 before Christ, such as were most zealous for their religion, and most devoted to their country and race, were thus enabled once more to settle in the land of their fathers, under the protection of the Persian empire, of which they continued subjects for two hundred years, till Alexander the Great, in B.C. 333, overthrew the Persian power.

The new community, which was to found the Jewish nation for a second time, was by no means numerous, for we still know with certainty that the whole number of these Pilgrim Fathers, who gathered together amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, and the other cities which were open to them, did not amount to more than 42,360 men, with 7,337 servants of both sexes.³ Ezra 2. 64. The dangers and difficulties before those who might return had winnowed the wheat from the chaff: the faint-hearted and indifferent had lingered behind, and only the zealots and puritans of the captivity had followed Zerubbabel, the leader of the new Exodus.⁴ ^b

⁴ Derenbourg.
Ezra, 20.

The rock on which Jewish nationality had foundered in former times had been too frank an intercourse with other nations; too great a readiness to adopt their customs, and even their heathenism; too slight a regard to the distinctively Jewish code of social and political law; and, with these, too wide a corruption of morals. The very existence of the nation had been imperilled, and, now, the one fixed thought, of leader and people alike, was to make it sure for the future.

Their manners, and their whole system of civil and religious laws, offered a ready and effectual means to aid them in this supreme object. It was only necessary to secure an intensely conservative spirit which should exclude all change, and Israel would henceforth have an abiding vitality as a separate people. Nor was this difficult, for the ancient framework of their social polity largely provided for it. The spirit of Judaism, as embodied in its sacred law, directly commanded, or indirectly implied, all that was needed. Intercourse with other nations, as far as possible, must be prevented; the introduction of foreign culture shut out; the youth of the

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³ Jost, *Judenthum*, i. 94.

nation trained on a fixed model; and, finally, no gap must be left by which new opinions might possibly rise from within the people themselves.⁵ For this last end some studies must be entirely prohibited, and others rewarded with supreme honour and advantage. Finally, some caste or class must make it their special care to see that this great aim of national isolation be steadily carried out—a caste which should itself be secure of abiding unchangeableness, by clinging fanatically to all that was old and traditional, and shrinking from any contact with whatever was foreign or new.

⁶ A.D. 61—120.

⁷ *Histor.* v. 5.

⁸ *Sat.* xiv. 103.

The Mosaic laws had already inclined the Jew to a dislike to friendly intercourse with other nations, and this feeling grew to a fixed contempt and aversion towards the rest of mankind, after the return, as Judaism deepened into a haughty bitterness of soul, under the influence of national sufferings, and weakened spiritual life. Tacitus describes the Jews of his day⁶ as true to each other and ready with help, but filled with bitter hatred towards all other men; eating and marrying only among themselves; a people marked by sensual passions, but indulging them only within their own race. . . The first instruction to proselytes, says he, is to despise the gods, to abjure their country, and to cast off parents, children, or brothers.⁷ Juvenal paints them as refusing to point out the way to any but a Jew, or to lead any one, not circumcised, to a fountain he sought.⁸

⁹ *Gfrörer's Philo.* ii. 350.

¹⁰ *Talmud, Sanhedrin Bab.* 90.

¹¹ *Ant.* xx. 11. 2.

A nation which thus hated all other men would be little disposed to sit at the feet of any people as scholars. Prejudice, strengthened by express laws, shut out all foreign culture. A curse was denounced against any Jew who kept pigs, or taught his child Greek.⁹ No one could hope for eternal life who read the books of other nations.¹⁰ Josephus, with true Jewish pride, and smooth hypocrisy, tells us that his race looked down on those who had learned the language of foreign nations, such an accomplishment being common not only to free-born men, but to any slave who fancied it. He only is reckoned wise, he adds, among the Jews, who is skilled in the Law, and able to explain the sacred writings.¹¹ In the days of our Lord, when advancement could be obtained only by a knowledge of Greek and of Grecian culture,

pride and scruples often gave way before interest.¹² Still the nation, as a whole, held ignorance of everything not Jewish a sacred part of their religion.

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¹² See the continuation of the passage of Josephus above quoted

It was as little permitted that the hated Gentile should learn the Hebrew language or read the Law. St. Jerome expatiates on the trouble and cost he had at Jerusalem and Bethlehem to get a Jew to help him in his Hebrew studies. His teacher "feared the Jews, like a second Nicodemus."¹³ "He who teaches infidels the Law," said the Rabbis, "transgresses the express words of the command; for God made Jacob" (the Jews, not the heathen) "to know the Law."

¹³ *Epls. Opera*, Edit. Vallarsii, l. 524.

But though thus jealous of others, the greatest care was taken by the Jew to teach his own people the sacred books. Josephus boasts that "if any one asked one of his nation a question respecting their Law, he could answer it more readily than give his own name; for he learns every part of it from the first dawn of intelligence, till it is graven into his very soul."¹⁴ That every Jewish child should be taught to read, was held a religious duty; and every boy was required to learn the Law. There was no Jew who did not know thoroughly the duties and rites of his religion, and the great deeds of his fathers: the misfortune was, that they were kept utterly ignorant of any other history than their own.

¹⁴ c. Apion. li 19.

The exact knowledge of the contents of the Books of the Law was, thus, within the reach of all; but much more was needed than the mere learning by heart the five Books of Moses, to gain the repute of a finished legal knowledge. The almost endless comments of the Rabbis must be mastered, by years of slavish labour, before one was recognized as a really educated man. Hence the nation was divided into two great classes of learned and unlearned, between whom there lay a wide gulf. Puffed up with boundless pride at their attainments, the former frankly denounced their less scholarly countrymen as "cursed countrymen" or boors.^c

The first trace of a distinct caste of professional legalists, if I may call them so, is found in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, some eighty years after the return from Babylon. Jewish tradition speaks of these early Rabbis as the

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"men of the Great Synagogue,"^d and adds that they trod in the footsteps of the prophets—that is, that they were their virtual successors. From the first they had great influence in the State. To secure a far more strict observance of the Law than had been known before, they gradually formed what they called a hedge round it—that is, they added endless refinements and subtleties to every command, that by the observance of such external rites and precepts, the command itself should be the less in danger of being broken. To this "hedge" Judaism owes the rigid fidelity of its people ever since; for rites and forms at all times find a much stricter obedience from the masses than the commands of a spiritual religion.

In spite of all precautions, however, the new State had already the seeds of religious division in its midst, in a number of doctrines, hitherto more or less unknown, which had been brought back in the return from the captivity. These were adopted by the orthodox party, who were the great majority, but rejected by a few, in whom may be traced the germ of the sect afterwards known as the Sadducees. The orthodox leaders, on the other hand, were the beginning of the party afterwards known as the Pharisees.^e It was they who put the "hedge" round the Law; the Sadducees insisted on standing by the simple letter of the laws of Moses alone. The one were the High-Churchmen of their nation, the others the Rationalists, with a cold creed which denied the existence of angels, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, and rejected Rabbinical tradition. The mass of the nation followed the Pharisees: the Sadducees were always a very small party.

The Pharisees, as the leaders of the great bulk of the people, soon merged more strictly religious aims in the political one of moulding the State into a spurious independent theocracy, under the rule of their party. The Law, as expounded by them, with their thousand additions, was to rule supreme, in civil as well as religious life; in the affairs of the nation, as well as those of the individual.

The stormy times of the later Maccabæan kings gave the Pharisees an opportunity of playing a great part in the

nation. The priests had previously given the new State a head in the person of the high priest,¹⁵ Simon, brother of Judas Maccabæus. But his grandsons quarrelled, and the future history of the house became little more than a record of cruelties, disputes for the throne, civil wars, and persecutions. The orthodox party, led by the Pharisees, stoutly resisted the growing corruption, which ended by the Romans assuming supreme authority in Judea, with Herod as the vassal king. Asked to be arbiters, they ended as conquerors. The supremacy of the Pharisees, who had done much to assist the popular cause, was now secure. They had organized themselves as a great power in the State, and maintained this position till the fall of the nation. Under Herod and the Romans, they were the soul of the great national party, which only sullenly submitted to Herod and his family, or to the Roman power, as, alike, foreign oppressors, whom they could not shake off, foes accursed of God, as usurpers of His heritage. To them may be traced the restless turbulence of the nation, which neither terror nor flattery could appease—a turbulence which made Judea, to Herod and the Roman emperors, what Ireland at one time was to England, and Poland to Russia—the seat of chronic revolt, which knew no considerations of odds against success, and seemed to take counsel of despair.

At the time of our Lord the Pharisees were at the height of their power. Josephus tells us that they numbered above 6,000 men in Judea, in the days of Herod the Great; that the women, as especially given to religious enthusiasm, were on their side, and that they even had power enough, at times to defy the king.¹⁶ He describes them by name as a party among the Jews who prided themselves greatly on their knowledge of the Law, and made men believe they were holier than their neighbours, and especially in favour with God, and relates how they plotted with some of the ladies of Herod's family^d to put Herod to death. They thwarted and opposed the king, he says, on every hand, refusing to own his authority or that of Rome, or to swear allegiance either to him or the Emperor, when all the nation was called on to do so, and, with the exception of them,

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B.C. 140.

¹⁶ Ant. xvii. 2. 4.

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consented. They even claimed the gift of prophecy, through the inspiration of God, asserting that He had decreed that Herod should die, and that the kingdom would pass to those who had shown them favour. The Sadducees had shrunk to a party few in number, though high in position, and had become so unpopular that when appointed to any office, they accepted it sorely against their will, and were forced to carry out the views of their rivals—the Pharisees—for fear of the

¹⁷ *Joa. Ant. xviii.*
1. 4. popular fury.¹⁷

The political schemes of this great party were not confined to Judea. Its members were numerous in every part of the Roman empire, and were all closely bound to each other. Without a formal organization or a recognized head, they were yet, in effect, a disciplined army, by implicit and universal assent to the same opinions. The same spirit and aim inspired all alike: teacher and follower, over the world, were but mutual echoes. They were, in effect, the democratic party of their nation,¹⁸ the true representatives of the people, with the Maccabæan creed that "God has given to all alike the kingdom, priesthood, and holiness."¹⁹ They considered themselves the guardians of the Law and of the ancestral customs, and trusted implicitly that He who selected their nation to be His peculiar people would protect them and their country from all dangers, believing that, as long as they were faithful to God, no earthly power would in the end be permitted to rule over them. They repudiated the time-serving policy of the Herodian Sadducees, who maintained that a man's destiny was in his own hands, and that human policy ought to dictate political action. Their noble motto was that "everything depends upon God but a man's piety."²⁰ The misfortune was that, to a large extent, they divorced religion from morality, laying stress on the exact performance of outward rites, rather than on the duties of the heart and life, so that it was possible, as has been said of the Indian Brahmins, for the worst men among them to be, in their sense, the most religious.

The one thought of this great party, in every land, was nothing less than the founding of a grand hierarchy, perhaps under the Messiah,²¹ in which the Jews should reign over the

¹⁸ Geiger,
Urschrift.
pp. 102 ff.

¹⁹ 2 Maccab.
2. 17.

²⁰ Ginsburg, *Art.*
"Pharisees"
in Kittó's
Cyclopedia.

²¹ Schrader's
Paulus,
(*Leben*) ii. 23.

whole world, and Jerusalem become the metropolis of the earth. They did not confine themselves to the spread of superstition and fanaticism amongst their own race, but sought proselytes in every country, especially among the rich and among women. Even in Rome, sunk as it was, like all the Gentile world of that age, in the dreariness of worn-out religions, they made many female converts among the great, even in the palace of the Cæsars. Their kindness to their poor, their loving family life, their pure morals, compared to the abominations of the times, their view of death as a sleep, their hope of resting with the just, and rising with them to immortal happiness, had great charms in such an age.²² The Great Synagogue of Ezra's day, according to their traditions, had left them a solemn charge—"to make many scholars;"²³ and they compassed sea and land, in furtherance of this command, to make one proselyte, though their worthless dependence, in too many cases, on mere outward religiousness, often made him, when won, "twofold more the child of hell than themselves."²⁴ The vast numbers thus gained to Judaism are shown in the multitudes from all countries present at the Passover immediately after our Lord's death,²⁵ and from many passages in heathen writers.

²² Roman, St. Paul, 106.

²³ Just understandable this of multiplying schools of the Rabbis, I. 96.

²⁴ Matt. 23. 13.

²⁵ Acts 2. 9.

The Pharisees, or, as I may call them, the Rabbis,^e had thrown the hereditary priestly body of the nation quite into the shade in the days of Christ. A priest gained his position by birth; a Rabbi owed his to himself. The Temple service, and the vast sums of money received from Jews in all parts of the world, as a yearly tax in support of their religion, gave the priests great influence, and opened, to the higher grades, the control of the highest ecclesiastical offices in the nation, which still survived. But the influence of the Pharisees was so overwhelming that even the highest priests were glad to respect their opinions, to secure public favour. "A priest," says the Mishna, "has precedence of a Levite,"^h a Levite of other Israelites, a common Israelite of a bastard, a bastard of one of the Nethinim,ⁱ a Nethin of a foreign proselyte, a foreign proselyte of a freed slave. This is the law when these persons are equal in other respects; but if a bastard be a Rabbi (a scholar of the wise), and the

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high priest not a Rabbi (and, therefore, one of "the ignorant country people" who are "cursed" for not knowing the Pharisaic traditions, and requirements), such a bastard takes a higher place than such a high priest.^k The multitudinous rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law, with the vast additions of the Pharisaic "hedge," and the corrupting influence of power and general flattery, had the worst effects on the Pharisees as a body. They gave themselves up largely to formalism, outward religiousness, self-complacency, immeasurable spiritual pride, love of praise, superstition,²⁶ and deceit, till at last, after the destruction of the Temple,²⁷ they themselves laid the name of Pharisee aside, from its having become the symbol of mingled fanaticism and hypocrisy.²⁸ How thoroughly does this vindicate the language often used respecting them in the Gospels!

Yet it must not be thought that there were no good men in their number. Though the Talmud names six classes of them, which it denounces, it has a seventh—the Pharisee from Love, who obeys God because he loves Him with all his heart. But the six classes,²⁹ doubtless, marked the characteristics of too large a proportion. Among the many figures whom our Lord passed in the streets of Jerusalem, and elsewhere, he must often have met those to whom the by-name was given of Shechemite Pharisees—who kept the Law only for interest, as Shechem submitted to circumcision simply to obtain Dinah; or the Tumbling Pharisee who, to appear humble before men, always hung down his head, and shuffled with his feet on the ground, so that he constantly stumbled; or the Bleeding Pharisee who, to keep himself from seeing a woman, walked with his eyes shut, and, so, often bled his head against posts; or the Mortar Pharisee, with a cap like a mortar over his eyes, to shut out all that might shock his pure nature; or the What-more-can-I-do Pharisee, who claimed to have kept the whole Law, and wished to know something new, that he might do it also; or the Pharisee from Fear, who kept the Law only for fear of the judgment to come. But He would also see Pharisees such as Hillel, the greatest of the Rabbis, the second Ezra, who was, perhaps, still alive when Christ was born—who taught his

²⁶ Jost, Jüd. Gesch. iv. 76. Lightfoot, on Matt. 3. 7.

²⁷ A.D. 70.

²⁸ Gfrörer's Jahrhundert des Heils. i. 140.

²⁹ Buxtorf, Lex. Heb. Chal. Tal. p. 1852. Godwyn's Aaron and Moses, p. 45.

school of a thousand pupils such precepts³⁰ as "to be gentle, and show all meekness to all men," "when reviled not to revile again," "Love peace and pursue it, be kindly affectionate to all men, and thus commend the law of God," or "Whatsoever thou wouldst not that a man should do to thee, do not thou to him,"—or like just Simeon, who was a Pharisee, or Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, or Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul, or like Paul himself, for all these were Pharisees, and must have been types of many more.³¹

The Pharisees had, however, as a whole, outlived their true usefulness in the days of Christ, and had become largely a hollow pretence and hypocrisy, as the monks and friars of Luther's day, or earlier, had outlived the earnest sincerity and real worth of the days of their founders. They had done good service in former times, in keeping alive the faith of their nation in the Messiah, the Kingdom of Heaven, the immortality of the soul, and the judgment to come, but they were now fast sinking into the deep corruption which, in a generation after Christ's death, made them drop the very name of their party.³²

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Hillel died
A. D. 12,
according to
Pressel.
Rabbinismus.
Herzog. xii.
471.

³¹ See Langen's
Judenthum in
Palästina,
189.

³² Phariseism
died with
Gamaliel, the
teacher of St.
Paul. Jost, i.
283.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RABBI AT THE TIME OF CHRIST, AND THEIR IDEAS
RESPECTING THE MESSIAH.

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IF the most important figures in the society of Christ's day were the Pharisees, it was because they were the Rabbis or teachers of the Law. As such they received superstitious honour, which was, indeed, the great motive, with many, to court the title, or join the party.

The Rabbis were classed with Moses, the patriarchs, and the prophets, and claimed equal reverence. Jacob and Joseph were both said to have been Rabbis. The Targum of Jonathan substitutes Rabbis, or Seribes, for the word "prophets," where it occurs. Josephus speaks of the prophets of Saul's day as Rabbis. In the Jerusalem Targum all the patriarchs are learned Rabbis: Isaac learned in the school of Seth; Jacob attended the school of Eber; and, hence, no wonder that Rabbis are a delight to God like the incense burned before Him! They were to be dearer to Israel than father or mother, because parents avail only in this world, but the Rabbi for ever. They were set above kings, for is it not written, "Through me kings reign?" Their entrance into a house brought a blessing; to live or to eat with them was the highest good fortune. To dine with a Rabbi was as if to enjoy the splendour of heavenly majesty, for it is written, "Then came Aaron and all the elders in Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."¹

To learn a single verse, or even a single letter, from a Rabbi could be repaid only by the profoundest respect, for did not tradition say that David learned only two words from Ahithophel, and yet, simply for this, David made him his teacher, counsellor, and friend, as it is written, "Thou art a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance?"²

¹ Eisenmenger's
Judenthum
Entdecktes, 2
vols. 4to.
Königsberg,
1711. Vol. I.
337.

² Eisenmenger,
I. 337.

The table of the Rabbi was nobler than that of kings; and his crown more glorious than theirs. CHAP. VI.

The Rabbis went even farther than this in exalting their order. The Mischna declares that it is a greater crime to speak anything to their discredit than to speak against the words of the Law.³ The words of the Rabbis are to be held as worth more than the words of the prophets; for the prophet is like a king's legate who is to be owned on showing his master's signet, but the Rabbis need no such witness, since it is written of them, "Thou shalt do according to the sentence which they shall shew thee;"⁴ whereas it is said of the prophets, "If he giveth thee a sign or a wonder."⁵ Miracles are related which happened to confirm the sayings of Rabbis. One cried out, when his opinion was disputed, "May this tree prove that I am right!" and forthwith the tree was torn up by the roots, and hurled a hundred ells off. But his opponents declared that a tree could prove nothing. "May this stream, then, witness for me!" cried Eliezer, and at once it flowed the opposite way. Still, his opponents urged that water could prove nothing. "Now," said Eliezer, "if truth be on my side, may the walls of the school confirm it!" He had scarcely spoken when the walls began to bow inwards. The Rabbi Joshua threatened them: "What is it to you if the sons of the wise dispute? you shall not fall;" and, to honour Rabbi Joshua, the walls did not fall wholly together; but neither did they go back to their places, that the honour of Rabbi Eliezer might not suffer, but remain slanting to this day. At last Eliezer called for the decision of heaven: "If I am right, let heaven witness." Then came a voice from heaven,⁶ and said, "Why dispute ye with Rabbi Eliezer? he is always right!"⁷

³ Eisenmenger, l. 330.

⁴ Deut. 17. 10.

⁵ Deut. 13. 1

⁶ The daughter of the voice (the *Bath Kol*).

⁷ Bava Meia, 59, b.

Inordinate pride, one might think, could hardly go farther than this, but the bigoted vanity of the Rabbis Christ had daily to meet was capable even of blasphemy in its claims. The Talmud tells us that there are schools of the heavenly Rabbis above, as well as those of the earthly Rabbis here, and relates that there once rose in the great Rabbis' school of heaven a dispute respecting the law of the leper. The

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Almighty, who is the Chief Rabbi of the skies, pronounced a certain case, detailed in the text, as clean. But all the angels thought differently—for the angels are the scholars in this great academy. Then said they, "Who shall decide in this matter between us?" It was agreed on both sides—God and the angels—to summon Ramban, the son of Nachman, since he was wont to say of himself, "No one is equal to me in questions respecting leprosy." Thereupon the Angel of Death was sent to him, and caused him to die, and brought his soul up to heaven, where Ramban, when brought before the heavenly academy, confirmed the opinion of God, which gave God no little delight. Then heavenly voices, which sounded down even to the earth, exalted the name of Ramban greatly, and miracles were wrought at his grave.⁸

⁸ Pava Meria, 86, a; quoted by Eisenmenger, i. 13, Gfrörer, i. 148.

Such a story illustrates better than any words the audacious claims and blasphemous spiritual pride with which our Lord had to contend, and which He often rebukes in the Pharisees of His day. Even the Talmud itself, in other parts, is forced to reprove it. The only palliation of it lies in the fact that the Law itself was written in a language which the people had long ceased to speak, so that it was left to the Rabbis to explain and apply it. The heads and leaders of the nation, they kept it in their leading-strings. It had come into their hands thus, and they were determined to keep it in the same state. Heresy, which would be fatal to the blind unanimity which was their political strength, could only be excluded by rigidly denouncing the least departure from their precepts. The Law and the Prophets must, therefore, be understood only in the sense of their traditions. The reading of the Scriptures was hence discouraged,⁹ lest it should win their hearts, and they should cease to reverence the words of the Rabbis. One hour was to be spent on the Scriptures in the schools: two on the traditions. The study of the Talmud^a alone won honour from God as from man. That vast mass of traditions, which now fills ten folio volumes, was, in reality, the Bible of the Rabbis and of their scholars.

⁹ Berachot, Babyl. 28, b; quoted by Gfrörer, i. 150.

Yet, in form, the Law received boundless honour. Every

saying of the Rabbis had to be based on some words of it, which were, however, explained in their own way. The spirit of the times, the wild fanaticism of the people, and their own bias, tended, alike, to make them set value only on ceremonies and worthless externalisms, to the utter neglect of the spirit of the sacred writings. Still, it was owned that the Law needed no confirmation, while the words of the Rabbis did.

So far as the Roman authority under which they lived left them free, the Jews willingly put all power in the hands of the Rabbis. They or their nominees filled every office, from the highest in the priesthood to the lowest in the community. They were the casuists, the teachers, the priests, the judges, the magistrates, and the physicians of the nation. But their authority went still further, for, by the Rabbinical laws, nearly everything in daily life needed their counsel and aid.¹⁰ No one could be born, circumcised, brought up, educated, betrothed, married, or buried—no one could celebrate the Sabbath or other feasts, or begin a business, or make a contract, or kill a beast for food, or even bake bread, without the advice or presence of a Rabbi. The words of Christ respecting binding and loosing,¹¹ were a Rabbinical proverb: they bound and they loosed as they thought fit. What they loosed was permitted—what they bound was forbidden. They were the brain, the eyes, the ears, the nerves, the muscles of the people, who were mere children apart from them.¹²

This amazing power, which has lasted for two thousand years, owed its vitality to the fact that no Rabbi could take money for any official duty. They might enslave the minds of the people, but they never abused their despotism to make gain of them. The great Rabbi Hillel says, "He who makes gain of the words of the Law, his life will be taken from the world."¹³ No teacher, preacher, judge, or other Rabbinical official, could receive money for his services. In practice this grand law was somewhat modified, but not to any great extent. A Rabbi might receive a moderate sum for his duties, not as payment, but only to make good the loss of time which he might have used for his profit. Even now

Hauvraht.
N. T. Zeit-
gesch. I. 89.

¹¹ Matt. 18, 19.
Jos. Bell. Jud.
I. 5. 2.

¹² These are
Gfrörer's
words,
Jahrhundert
des Heils. I.
135.

¹³ Schiller,
Lehrbuch.
443.

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it is a Jewish proverb that a fat Rabbi is little worth, and such a feeling must have checked those who, if they could, would have turned their position to pecuniary advantage.

How, then, did the Rabbis live? A child destined for this dignity began his training at five years of age,¹⁴ and gradually shrank, in most cases, into a mere pedant, with no desire in life beyond the few wants needed to enable him to continue his endless study. It was, moreover, required that every Rabbi should learn a trade by which to support himself. "He who does not teach his son a trade," says Rabbi Jehuda, "is much the same as if he taught him to be a thief."

In accordance with this rule, the greatest Rabbis maintained themselves by trades.¹⁵ The most famous of them all, Rabbi Hillel, senior, supported himself by the labour of his hands. One Rabbi was a needle-maker, another a smith, another a shoemaker, and another, like St. Paul, who also was a Rabbi, was a tent-cover weaver. Rabbis who taught in schools received small presents from the children.

But there were ways by which even Rabbis could get wealth. To marry the daughter of one was to advance one's self in heaven; to get a Rabbi for son-in-law, and provide for him, was to secure a blessing. They could thus marry into the richest families, and they often did it. They could, besides, become partners in prosperous commercial houses.¹⁶

¹⁴ Schiller, 444.
Gfrörer, i. 162.

The office of a Rabbi was open to all, and this of itself secured the favour of the nation to the order, just as the same democratic feeling strengthened the Romish Church in the middle ages. The humblest Jewish boy could be a master of the Law, as the humblest Christian, in after-times, could in the same way be a monk or priest; and the learned son of a labourer might, in both cases, look down with a kind of contempt on the proudest noble.

Such, then, were the Rabbis in the days of our Lord. They were Pharisees as to their party, and Rabbis in their relations to the Law. That one who came, not indeed to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to free them from the perversions of Rabbinical theology, should have been

met by the bitterest hatred and a cruel death, was only an illustration of the sad truth, to which every age has borne witness, that ecclesiastical bodies who have the power to persecute, identify even the abuses of their system with the defence of religion, and are capable of any crime in their blind intolerance.

The central and dominant characteristic of the teaching of the Rabbis was the certain advent of a great national Deliverer—the Messiah, or Anointed of God, or in the Greek translation of the title, the Christ. In no other nation than the Jews, has such a conception ever taken such root, or shown such vitality. From the times of their great national troubles, under their later kings, the words of Moses, David, and the prophets had, alike, been cited as divine promises of a mighty Prince, who should “restore the kingdom to Israel.” The Captivity only deepened the faith in His duly appearing, by increasing the need of it. Their fathers had clamoured, in far-distant times of distraction and trouble, for a King, who should be their Messiah, the viceroy of God, anointed by prophets. They had had kings, but had found only a partial good from them. As ages passed, the fascination of the grand Messianic hope grew ever more hallowed, and became the deepest passion in the hearts of all, burning and glowing henceforth, unquenchably, more and more, and irrevocably determining the whole future of the nation.

For a time, Cyrus appeared to realize the promised Deliverer, or at least to be the chosen instrument to prepare the way for Him. Zerubbabel, in his turn, became the centre of Messianic hopes. Simon Maccabæus was made high-priest-king only “until a faithful prophet—the Messiah—should arise.” As the glory of their brief independence passed away, and the Roman succeeded the hated Syrian as ruler and oppressor, the hope in the Star which was to come out of Jacob grew brighter, the darker the night. Deep gloom filled every heart, but it was pierced by the beam of this heavenly confidence. Having no present, Israel threw itself on the future. Literature, education, politics, began and ended with the great thought of the Messiah. When

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would He come? What manner of kingdom would He raise? The national mind had become so inflammable, long before Christ's day, by constant brooding on this one theme, that any bold spirit, rising in revolt against the Roman power, could find an army of fierce disciples who trusted that it should be he who would redeem Israel.

¹⁷ Rev. 19. 10.

"That the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy,"¹⁷ was only the Christian utterance of a universal Jewish belief respecting the Christ. "All the prophets," says R. Chaja, "have prophesied only of the blessedness of the days of the Messiah." But it was to Daniel especially, with his seeming exactness of dates, that the chief regard was paid. It was generally believed that "the times" of that prophet pointed to the twentieth year of Herod the Great, and, when that was past, not to mention other dates, the year 67 of our reckoning was thought the period, and then the year 135; the war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem rising from the one calculation, and the tremendous insurrection under Hadrian from the other.

With a few, the conception of the Messiah's kingdom was pure and lofty. The hearts of such as Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, Anna, Simeon, and John the Baptist, realized, more or less, the need of a redemption of the nation from its spiritual corruption, as the first necessity. This grander conception had been slowly forming in the minds of the more religious. Before the days of the Maccabees, the conception of the Messiah had been that of a "Son of David,"¹⁸ who should restore the splendour of the Jewish throne; and this, indeed, continued always the general belief. But neither in the Book of Daniel nor in the later religious writings of the Jews before Christ, is the Messiah thus named, nor is there any stress laid on his origin or birthplace. Daniel, and all who wrote after him, paint the Expected One as a heavenly being. He was the Messenger, the Elect of God, appointed from eternity, to appear in due time, and redeem His people. The world was committed to Him as its Judge: all heathen kings and lords were destined to sink in the dust before Him, and the idols to perish utterly, that the holy people, the chosen of God, under Him, might reign

¹⁸ Derenbourg,
Esai, 21.

for ever. He was the Son of Man, but, though thus man, had been hidden from eternity, in the all-glorious splendour of heaven, and, indeed, was no other than the Son of God, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty of His Father. He was the Archetypal Man—the ideal of pure and heavenly Manhood, in contrast to the fallen Adam. Two centuries before our era, He was spoken of as “the Word of God,” or as “the Word,” and as “Wisdom,” and as, in this way, the Incarnation of the Godhead.¹⁹

¹⁹ See the Book of Enoch, *passim*.

Such were, in effect, the conceptions gradually matured of the Messiah—the Immortal and Eternal King, clothed with divine power, and yet a man—which had been drawn from the earliest, as well as the latest, sacred or religious writings of the nation. But very few realized that a heavenly King must imply a holy kingdom; that His true reign must be in the purified souls of men. Few realized that the true preparation for His coming was not vain-glorious pride, but humiliation for sin.

The prevailing idea of the Rabbis and the people alike, in Christ's day, was, that the Messiah would be simply a great prince, who should found a kingdom of matchless splendour. Nor was the idea of His heavenly origin at all universal: almost all fancied He would be only a human hero, who should lead them to victory.

It was agreed among the Rabbis that His birthplace must be Bethlehem, and that he must rise from the tribe of Judah.²⁰ It was believed that He would not know that He was the Messiah till Elias came, accompanied by other prophets, and anointed Him. Till then He would be hidden from the people, living unknown among them. The better Rabbis taught that the sins of the nation had kept Him from appearing, and that “if the Jews repented for one day, He would come.”²¹ He was first to appear in Galilee; for, as the ten tribes had first suffered, they should first be visited. He was to free Israel by force of arms, and subdue the world under it. “How beautiful,” says the Jerusalem Targum,^b “is the King Messiah, who springs from the house of Judah! He girds His loins, and descends, and orders the battle against His enemies, and slays their kings and their

²⁰ Targum
Jerusal. on
Gen. 49. 11.
Jonathau ben
Uzziel on
Zech. 10. 3. 4;
Isaiah 11. 1;
Micah 5. 2.

²¹ Tanaitic,
Jerusal. Sect.
Maimonides,
Eisenmenger,
ii. 747.

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chief captains; there is no one so mighty as to stand before Him. He makes the mountains red with the blood of His slaughtered foes; His robes, dyed in their blood, are like the skins of the purple grapes." "The beasts of the field will feed for twelve months on the flesh of the slain, and the birds of the air will feed on them for seven years."^{22c} "The Lord," says the Targum, "will revenge us on the bands of Gog. At that hour will the power of the nations be broken; they will be like a ship whose tackling is torn away, and whose mast is sprung, so that the sail can no longer be set on it. Then will Israel divide the treasures of the nations among them—a great store of booty and riches, so that, if there be the lame and blind among them, even they will have their share." The heathen will then turn to the Lord, and walk in His light.

The universal kingdom thus founded was to be an earthly paradise for the Jew.²³ In that day, say the Rabbis, there will be a handful of corn on the top of the mountains,²⁴ and the stalks will be like palm-trees or pillars. Nor will it be any trouble to reap it, for God will send a wind from His chambers, which will blow down the white flour from the ears.²⁵ One corn of wheat will be as large as the two kidneys of the hugest ox. All the trees will bear continually. A single grape will load a waggon or a ship, and when it is brought to the house they will draw wine from it as from a cask.²⁶

A great king must have a great capital, and hence Jerusalem, the capital of the Messiah's kingdom, will be very glorious. In the days to come, say the Rabbis, God will bring together Sinai, Tabor, and Carmel, and set Jerusalem upon them.²⁷ It will be so great that it will cover as much ground as a horse can run over from the early morning till its shadow is below it at noon.²⁸ It will reach to the gates of Damascus.²⁹ Some of them even tell us that its houses will be built three miles in height.³⁰ Its gates will be of precious stones and pearls, thirty ells long and as broad, hollowed out.³¹ The country round will be full of pearls and precious stones, so that Jews from all parts may come and take of them as they like.³²

²³ The texts quoted below are those on which the Rabbis found the different opinions quoted.

²⁴ Ps. 72. 16.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Dent. 32. 14.

²⁷ Isaiah 2. 2.

²⁸ Zech. 14. 20.

²⁹ Zech. 9. 1.

³⁰ Zech. 14. 10.

³¹ Isaiah 54. 12.

³² Eisenmenger, ii. 839, 841, 842, 844, 845.

In this splendid city the Messiah is to reign over a people who shall all be prophets.⁸³ A fruitful stream will break forth from the Temple and water the land,⁸⁴ its banks shaded by trees laden with the richest fruits. No sickness or defect will be known. There will be no such thing as a lame man, or any blind or leprous; the dumb will speak and the deaf hear.⁸⁵ It will be a triumphal millennium of national pride, glory, and enjoyment.^d

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⁸³ Joel 3. 1.⁸⁴ Ezek. 47. 12.⁸⁵ Isaiah 35. 5, 6.
Exod. 19. 8;
20. 18; 19. 17.

It was to a people drunk with the vision of such outward felicity and political greatness, under a world-conquering Messiah, that Jesus Christ came, with His utterly opposite doctrines of the aim and nature of the Messiah and His kingdom. Only here and there was there a soul with any higher or purer thoughts than such gross, material, and narrow dreams.

CHAPTER VII.

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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¹ Col. 1. 26.

THE time had at last come, when “the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations”¹—the high purpose of God in the two thousand years’ history of Israel—was to be revealed. The true relations of man to his Maker and Heavenly King had been, throughout, the grand truth to be taught to mankind, in all future ages, from the education and example of the Jewish race, and this truth was now to be revealed directly by God Himself, all lower agencies and means having proved inadequate.

The people of Israel had been set apart by God, while yet only a family, as specially His own. Brought at last, after centuries, through the discipline of the household, the bondage of Egypt, and the life of the wilderness, to a settled home, as a nation, in Canaan, they were still more distinctly proclaimed by Him as “His people,”² “the portion of Jehovah”—the “lot of His inheritance.”³ The Lord their God was their only King,⁴ and they were declared to be a “people holy to Him,” chosen as peculiarly His, “above all other nations.”⁵ In them, as a nation, if they faithfully observed the “covenant” which they had made with Him, was to be exhibited the spectacle of a visible kingdom of God amongst men—its obligations on the side of man, its high privileges on that of Heaven.

As centuries passed, however, it was clear that Israel failed to realize the ideal of a “people of Jehovah,” with Him as its direct and supreme Ruler. The anarchy of the days of the Judges—a period not unlike our own early history—showed too clearly that the nation, as such, was far from illustrating the true relations of man to God.

² Ex. 15. 16.¹ Sam. 2. 24.² Sam. 1. 12;

6. 21.

² Kings 9. 6.³ Deut. 32. 9.⁴ 1 Sam. 12. 12.⁵ Deut. 7. 6; 14.

2, 21; 26. 19.

The Kingdom of God on earth, in the simplest form of His direct rule, with no human intervention, having proved too lofty and spiritual a conception, the second step in its development was introduced, by the appointment of a supreme magistrate as His representative and viceroy, He remaining the actual Sovereign. The king of Israel stood, thus, before the people, simply as the deputy of its invisible King, and was as much His servant, bound in all things to carry out only His will, as any of his subjects. Yet his office, as the vicegerent of God, had an awful dignity. He was "the Lord's Anointed"—his Messiah⁶—consecrated to the dignity⁶ by the holy oil, which had, till then, been used only for priests. 1 Sam. 16. 6.

But the ideal sought was as far from being attained as ever. The history of Israel was very soon only that of other kingdoms round it. Instead of being holy to Jehovah, it turned from Him to serve other gods, and grew corrupt in morals as well as creed. The order of prophets strove to restore the sinking State, and recall the nation to its faith; and good kings from time to time listened to them, and sought to carry out their counsels. But the people themselves were degenerate, and many of the kings found it easy to lead them into still greater sin and apostasy. The prophets—at once the mouthpieces of God and the tribunes of the people—nobly resisted, but only to become martyrs to their fidelity. The inevitable result came, in the end, in the ruin of the State, and the exile in Assyria and Babylon.

The third step was no less a failure. On the return from captivity, a zeal for Jehovah as the only King of Israel became the deep and abiding passion of all Jews. Henceforward, it was determined that what we might call the "Church" should act as His vicegerent. By turns, priests, priest-kings, and other ecclesiastical or religious leaders, led the nation; but only as temporary substitutes for a great expected King^a—the Messiah, before whose glory even that of David or Solomon, their most famous monarchs, would be as nothing. But they were as insensible as ever to the highest characteristics of a true Ruler of the "people of

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God," ruler or subject, alike, looking only to outward power and splendour, and political ambition, and forgetful of the grand fact that the kingdom of God must, first, of necessity, be the reign of holiness and truth, in both. Religion became a thing of outward observances, with which the heart and life had no necessary connection. The Messianic hopes of the centuries immediately before Christ degenerated into a standing conspiracy of the nation against their actual rulers, and a vain confidence that God would raise up some deliverer, who would "restore the kingdom to Israel" in a merely political sense.

Thus the true conception of the kingdom of God had been well-nigh lost. A few of the Rabbis, indeed, with a finer spiritual sense, taught that the condition of the coming of the Messiah must be sincere repentance for their sins, on the part of the nation, and a return to a purer state.⁷ But such counsels had little weight with the community. Blindly self-righteous, and yet wedded to evil, everything tended to a speedy extinction of Judaism by its inveterate corruption.

It was at this time that the first direct steps were taken by God towards the advent of the true Messiah, who should finally erect, once for all, His, the true, divine, kingdom, on earth, all the dreams of which had hitherto been such disastrous failures. He would thus save Judaism from itself, by perpetuating that which was permanent in it under His holy and spiritual reign. Discarding all that was merely temporary and accidental, and bringing into lasting prominence whatever of everlasting truth the older dispensation contained, He would found the only true kingdom of God possible on earth; one in which the perfect holiness of the Anointed Head should stimulate a like holiness in all, and, indeed, demand it. The Messianic hope was to be realized in a grander and loftier sense than man had dreamed, but the very grandeur and loftiness of the realization would attest its divine authority and source.⁸

The priests among the Jews had been divided, since the time of David, that is, for about a thousand years, into twenty-four courses,⁹ known also as "houses" and "families."^b Of

⁷ Gfrörer's *Jahrhundert des Heils*, ii. 224.
Eisenmenger's *Jud. Entdecktes* ii. 670, 671, 673.

⁸ See on this whole subject the finely philosophical chapters of Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. v. 125—170.

⁹ 1 Chron. 24. 1-13.

the original courses, however, only four,¹⁰ each numbering about a thousand members, had returned from Babylon, after the captivity; but out of these the old twenty-four courses were reconstituted, with the same names as before,^c that the original organization might be perpetuated as far as possible. The priesthood of the second Temple, however, never took the same rank as that of the first. The diminished glory of the sanctuary in which it ministered, compared with that of Solomon, alone, made this inevitable, for the second Temple had no longer the sacred ark, with its mercy seat and the overshadowing cherubim, nor the holy fire,¹¹ CHAP. VII.
10 Ezra 2. 36-39.
11 Lev. 9. 24. kindled at first from heaven, nor the mysterious Shechina, or Glory of God, in the Holy of Holies, nor the tables of stone written by the finger of God, nor the ancient Book of the Law, handed down from the great lawgiver, Moses. The spirit of prophecy was no longer granted; the Urim and Thummim no longer shone out mysterious oracles from the breast of the high priest, and the holy anointing oil, that had been handed down, as the Rabbis taught, from the days of Aaron, had been lost. There could thus be no consecration of the high priest, or his humbler brethren, by that symbol which above all others had been most sacred—the priestly anointing. The priests were now set apart to their office only by solemnly clothing them with their official robes, though the subordinate acts of sacrifice and offering were no doubt continued. The rise of the Synagogue, and the supreme importance attached to the study of the Law, tended also to throw the office of the priest into the background.¹² 12 Jost, i. 134. In the centuries after the Return, the Rabbi became the foremost figure in Jewish history. Yet the priest was a necessary appendage to the Temple, and even the traditions of the past lent his office dignity.

The services at the Temple in Jerusalem, where alone sacrifices could be offered, were entrusted to the care of each course in rotation,¹³ for a week of six days and two Sabbaths, and, hence, the members of each, whose ministrations might be required, had to go up to Jerusalem twice a-year.

As the office was hereditary, the number of the priesthood had become very great in the days of our Lord, so that,

¹³ 2 Kings 11. 9.
2 Chron. 23. 8.

CHAP. VII. according to the Talmud, in addition to those who lived in the country, and came up to take their turn in the Temple services, there were no fewer than 24,000 settled in Jerusalem, and half that number in Jericho. This, however, is no doubt an exaggeration. Josephus is more likely correct

¹⁴ c. Apion. ii. 8. in estimating the whole number at somewhat over 20,000.¹⁴

But even this was an enormous proportion of clergy to the population of a country like Judea, as the name was then applied,—a district of about 100 miles in length, and sixty in breadth,¹⁵ or as nearly as possible of the same number of square miles as Yorkshire. They must have been a more familiar sight in the streets of Jerusalem, and of the towns and villages, than the seemingly countless ecclesiastics in the towns and cities of Spain or Italy at this time.¹

The social position, as well as official standing, of such a large order necessarily varied greatly. First in consideration, after the high priest, came his acting deputy, or assistant—the *Sagan*—and those who had filled that office, and the heads or presidents of the twenty-four courses—collectively, the “high priests,” or “chief priests,”¹⁶ of Josephus and the New Testament; and next, the large body of officiating priests, the counterpart of our working clergy. But there were, besides, large numbers, like the lower priests of Russia or Italy, uneducated, who were the object of contempt, from their ignorance of the Law, in the Rabbinical sense. The countless sacrifices and offerings, with the multiplied forms to be observed in connection with them, which were settled by the strictest rules, required a knowledge at once minute and extensive, which could only be attained by assiduous and long-continued labour. Hence, it is no wonder that there were many priests who knew little beyond the rites in which they had to take part. The priesthood was thus divided into “the learned”^e—or those who knew and observed the countless laws of ceremonial cleanness, and the endless ritual enforced—and “common priests.”¹⁷ There were others, doubtless in large numbers, whom some physical defect, or other cause, disqualified from public ministrations, though they retained a right to their share of the offerings.^{18 f}

¹⁶ ἀρχιερεῖς.

¹⁷ Jost, *Judenthum*, i. 156.

¹⁸ Jost, *Judenthum*, i. 156.

The great mass of the order must have been poor in the days of Christ, which were certainly in no way higher in tone than those of Malachi, when blind, and torn, and lame, and sick, beasts were offered for sacrifice, so that the priest as well as the altar suffered; and "the whole nation" withheld their tithes and offerings.¹⁹ The higher ranks of the priesthood—rich and haughty—contributed to the degradation of their poorer brethren, whom they despised, oppressed, and plundered. Nor was the general character of the priesthood unaffected by the corruption of the times; as a class, they were blind guides of the blind. Not a few, however, in so numerous a body, must have retained more or less religious sensibility, for we find that many even of the members of the Jerusalem Council²⁰ were so alive to the corruption of the hierarchy at large, that they believed on Christ, its great antagonist, and a large number of priests, shortly after His crucifixion, openly joined his disciples.²¹ But the evil was deep-rooted, and widely spread, and the corruption and demoralization of the order, especially in its higher ranks, grew more and more complete. The high society of Jerusalem was mainly comprised in a circle of governing priestly families, and their example tainted the whole priesthood.

The pride, the violence, irreligion, and luxury of this ecclesiastical aristocracy already, at the beginning of our era, pointed to the excesses they ere long reached. After the banishment of Archelaus, in the early childhood of our Lord, the government became an aristocracy—the high priests virtually ruling the nation—under the Romans. Under Herod and his son, they had been mere puppets, elevated to their dignity, for their proved subserviency to their royal masters.²¹ Under Agrippa II.,^h ladies bought the high priesthood for their husbands for so much money. Martha, daughter of Boëthus, one of these simoniaes, when she went to see her husband, spread carpets from her door to the gate of the Temple. The high priests themselves were ashamed of their most sacred functions. The having to preside over the sacrifices was thought by some so repulsive and degrading, that they wore silk gloves when officiating, to keep their

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¹⁹ Mal. i. 8, 14; 3. 9.²⁰ Meyer's Kommentar. John 12. 42. Acts 6. 7.²¹ Ant. xx. 10. 1.

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hands from touching the victims. Given to gluttony—the special vice of their Roman masters—they also, like them, abandoned themselves to luxury, and oppressed the poor, to obtain the means for indulgence. Thoroughly heathen in feeling, they courted the favour of the Romans, who repaid them by rich places for their sons, and they openly robbed and oppressed the poor priests supported by the people, going the length of violence in doing so.²² Josephus tells us that they even sent their servants to the threshing-floors, and took away by force the tithes that belonged to the priests, beating those who resisted, and that thus not a few

²² Roman.
I. Antechrist, 18.

²³ Ant. xx. 8. 8; poorer priests died for want.²³
v. 2.

Yet the office of the priest, in itself, was the highest in Jewish society, and the whole order formed a national aristocracy,¹ however poor and degraded many of its members might be. Every priest was the lineal descendant of a priestly ancestry running back to Aaron, and as the wives of the order were generally chosen from within its families, this lofty pedigree in many cases marked both parents.

The law fixed no certain age at which the young priest should enter on his office, though the Rabbis maintain that he needed to be at least twenty, since David had appointed that age for the Levites.²⁴ As in corrupt ages of the Church, however, this wholesome rule was not always observed, for Josephus²⁵ tells us that Herod made Aristobulus high priest when he was seventeen, and we read of common priests whose beards were only beginning to grow.²⁶

²⁴ 1 Chron.
23. 24.

²⁵ Ant. xv. 3. 3.

²⁶ Mishna
Joma l. 7;
quoted by
Winer.

The special consecration of the young priest began while he was yet only a lad. As soon as the down appeared on his cheek he had to appear before the council of the Temple, that his genealogy might be inspected.²⁷ If it proved faulty, he left the Temple clad in black, and had to seek another calling: if it satisfied the council, a further ordeal awaited him. There were 140 bodily defects,^k any one of which would incapacitate him from sacred duties, and he was now carefully inspected to discover if he were free from them. If he had no blemish of any kind, the white tunic of a priest was given him, and he began his official life

²⁷ c. Apion. l. 7.
Jost, i. 154.

in its humbler duties, as a training for higher responsibilities in after years.²⁸

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²⁹ Lightfoot's
Temple
Service;
quoted in
Diet. of
Bible: *Art.*
"Priest."

Ordination, or rather the formal consecration, followed, when the priest attained the legal age. For this, much more was necessary, in theory, than freedom from bodily blemish. The candidate must be of blameless character, though, in such an age, this, no doubt, was little considered.

The ceremony, as originally prescribed, was imposing. The neophyte was first washed before the sanctuary, as a typical cleansing, and then clothed in his robe. His head was next anointed with holy oil,²⁹ and then his priestly turban was put on him. A young ox was now slain as a sin-offering, the priest putting his hands upon its head; then a ram followed, as a whole burnt offering, and after that, a second ram as an offering of consecration, and this was the crowning feature in the rite. Some of the warm blood of the victim was put on the right ear, the right thumb, and the right great toe of the candidate, to show his complete consecration to the service of Jehovah. He was then sprinkled with the blood flowing from the altar, and with the holy oil, as if to convey to him their purifying virtues, and transform him into another man. This sprinkling was the sign of completed consecration; he was now a priest. The pieces of the ram for the altar, with the meat-offering that accompanied them, were put into his hands, to show that he could, henceforth, himself prepare what was needed for the altar services. Having laid them on the altar, other ceremonies followed. The pieces of the sacrifice usually given to the priest were consumed as a special sin-offering, and with their burning on the altar the installation into office ended. The first day, however, did not close the ceremonies. The same sacrifices offered on this day were required to be repeated on each of the seven days following, that the solemnity of the act might be felt by all. It had been thus in the early and glorious days of the priesthood, but how many of these ceremonies were observed under the second Temple is not known.¹

²⁹ Lev. 4. 3, 16;
6. 20.
Ex. 29. 1—37;
28. 41;
40. 13—15.
Lev. 21. 10.

The official dress of a priest, like that of the priests of ancient Egypt, was of white linen. On his head he wore a kind of turban in his ministrations, reverence demanding

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that he should not enter the presence of Jehovah uncovered, and for the same reason his feet were left bare, the ground on which he stood, in the near vision of the Almighty, being holy.³⁰ The full official dress was worn only in the Temple, and was kept there by a special guardian, when the ministrations ended for the time.³¹ In private life a simpler dress was worn,³² but whether in his service at the Temple or at his house, he was still a priest, even to the eye. The richly ornamented dress of the high priest—the “golden vestment,” as it was called by the Rabbis³³—was, of course, much more costly than that of his brethren, and passed down from one high priest to another. It marks the character of the times that, under the Romans, it was kept in their hands, and only given out to the high priest, for use, when needed.^{34 m}

The duties of the priests were many and various. It was their awful and peculiar honour to “come near the Lord.”³⁵ None but they could minister before Him, in the Holy Place where He manifested His presence: none others could “come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary or the altar.” It was death for any one not a priest to usurp these sacred prerogatives. They offered the morning and evening incense; trimmed the lamps of the golden candlestick, and filled them with oil; set out the shewbread weekly; kept up the fire on the great altar in front of the Temple; removed the ashes of the sacrifices; took part in the slaying and cutting up of victims, and especially in the sprinkling of their blood; and laid the offerings of all kinds on the altar. They also announced the new moons, which were sacredⁿ days, like the Sabbaths, by the blowing of trumpets. But this was a small part of their duties. They had to examine all cases of ceremonial uncleanness, especially leprosy, clearing those who were pure, and pronouncing others unclean;³⁶ to estimate, for commutation, the value of the countless offerings vowed to the Temple,³⁷ and to watch the interior of the Temple by night.³⁸ They were required, moreover, to instruct the people in the niceties of the Law,³⁹ and to give decisions on many points⁴⁰ reserved, among us, to magistrates. The priests, in fact, were, within certain limits, the judges

³⁰ Exod. 3. 5.³¹ *Mishna Schekal*, v. 1.³² *Bell. Jud.* v. 6. 7.³³ *Godwyn's*, Aaron and Moses, 15. *Jost*, i. 150.³⁴ *Jos. Ant.* xviii. 4. 3; xx. 1. 1.³⁵ *Ex.* 19. 22. *Num.* 16. 5; 18. 3.³⁶ *Matt.* 8. 4. *Mark* 1. 44. *Luke* 5. 14.³⁷ *Lev. c.* 27.³⁸ *Mishna Middoth*, i. 1; quoted by *Winer*.³⁹ *Mal.* 2. 7.⁴⁰ *Deut.* 17. 8 ff.

and magistrates of the land,⁴¹ though the Sanhedrim, which was the supreme court in later Jewish history, was composed of chief priests, laymen, and scribes, or Rabbis, in apparently equal numbers.⁴²

It was necessary that an officiating priest should be in every point ceremonially "clean" during his period of duty, for a priest who was not "clean" could not enter the Temple.⁴³ A wise law prohibited his tasting wine or strong drink during the term of his service. The demonstrations of grief common to the nation were unlawful in him; he must not rend his garments, or cut himself, or shave his beard or head, whatever befell him or his.⁴⁴ Contact with the dead was to be carefully shunned as a defilement.⁴⁵

The same ideal purity, as of one holy to the Lord, marked the laws of the priest's marriage, for he could only marry a virgin, or a widow who had not been divorced, and she must be a pure Israelite, lawfully born.⁴⁶ The daughters of priests were held in special honour, and marriage of priests with them was in high favour. A priest, says Josephus, must marry a wife of his own nation, without having any regard to money, or other dignities; but he is to make a scrutiny, and take his wife's genealogy from the ancient records, and procure many witnesses to it,⁴⁷ just as his own had been carefully tested before his consecration. An order thus guarded by countless special laws must have been as sacred in the eyes of the multitude as the almost similarly exclusive Brahmins of India. Josephus could make no boast of which he felt so proud as that he belonged to such a sacerdotal nobility.⁴⁸

Thirteen towns, mostly near Jerusalem, and thus affording easy access to it, when their duties called them to the Temple, were assigned to the priests.⁴⁹ During their term of service they lived in rooms in the Temple buildings, but they came there alone, leaving their households behind them.

For the support of the order, provision had been made from the earliest times, by assigning them part of the various tithes paid by the people;⁵⁰ fees for the redemption of the first-born of man or beast, and in commutation of vows, and what may be called the perquisites of their office—the shew-

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⁴¹ *Jon. c. Ap'lon. II. 22.*⁴² *Dr. Ginsberg. Art. "Sanhedrim," in Kittu's Cyclo. Schürer's Lehrbuch, 410. Schneckenburger's Vorlesungen, 129. Hausarth's Zeitgeschichte, 69. Jos. Bell. Jud. v. 5. 7.*⁴³ *Lev. 10. 6; 21. 5.*⁴⁴ *Lev. 21. 1.*⁴⁵ *Ezra 10. 19. Lev. 21. 7.*⁴⁶ *c. Ap'lon 1. 7.*⁴⁷ *Vit. 1.*⁴⁸ *Josh. 21. 1—42. Luke 10. 31.*⁴⁹ *Lev. 2. 14; ch. 27. Num. 18. 14—19, 26—28; 31. 25—47. Deut. 14. 28; 26. 12.*

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⁵¹ Lev. 7. 31;
33; 2. 3. 10;
7. 10; 10. 13;
14; 24. 9, &c.
Matt. 12. 4.

⁵² Ezra 7. 24.
Ant. xii. 3. 3.

⁵³ Luke 1. 6.

⁵⁴ Gen. 30. 1.

Gen. 30. 2, 3.
Job 24. 21.
⁵⁵ 1 Sam. 1. 11.

⁵⁷ Gen. 20. 13.
Hos. 2. 14.
Jer. 29. 32;
35. 19.

⁵⁸ Matt. 22. 23.

bread, heave-offerings, parts of the sacrifices, the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and other things of the same kind.⁵¹ Officiating priests were thus secured in moderate comfort, if they received a fair proportion of their dues, and the whole order had, besides, the great advantage of freedom from any tax,⁵² and from military service.

Among the members of this sacred caste ministering in the Temple, in the autumn of the sixth year^r before that with which the Christian era, as commonly reckoned, commences, was one who had come up, apparently, from Hebron.⁶ He was now an elderly man, and had left behind him, at home, a childless wife—Elisabeth by name^t—like himself, advanced in years. The two were in the fullest sense “Israelites indeed:” their family records had established their common descent from Aaron, and their lives proved their lofty realization of the national faith, for “they were, both, righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances^u of the Lord blameless.”⁵³

But, notwithstanding all the satisfaction and inward peace of innocent and godly lives, in spite of the natural pride they, doubtless, felt in the consideration that must have been shown them, as born of a priestly ancestry, stretching back through fifteen hundred years, and though they must have had round them the comforts of a modest competency, there was a secret grief in the heart of both. Elisabeth had no child, and what this meant to a Hebrew wife it is hard for us to fancy. Rachel’s words, “Give me children, or else I die,”⁵⁴ were the burden of every childless woman’s heart in Israel. The birth of a child was the removal of a reproach.⁵⁵ Hannah’s prayer⁵⁶ for a son was that of all Jewish wives in the same position. To have no child was regarded as a heavy punishment from the hand of God.⁵⁷ How bitter the thought that his name should perish was for a Jew to bear, is seen in the law which required that a childless widow should be, forthwith, married by a dead husband’s brother, that children might be raised up to preserve the memory of the childless man, by being accounted his.⁵⁸ Nor was it enough that one brother of a number acted thus: in the imaginary instance given by the Sadducees to

our Lord, seven brothers,⁵⁹ in succession, took a dead brother's wife, for this object. The birth of a child was therefore a special blessing,⁶⁰ as a security that the name of his father "should not be cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place," and that it should not be "put out of Israel."⁶¹ Ancient nations, generally, seem to have had this feeling,⁶² and it is still so strong among Orientals, that after the birth of a first-born son, a father and a mother are no longer known by their own names, but as the father and mother of the child.^{*} There was, besides, a higher thought of possible relations, however distant, to the great expected Messiah, by the birth of children; but Zacharias and Elisabeth had reason enough to sorrow at their childless home, even on the humbler ground of natural sentiments. They had grieved over their misfortune, and had made it the burden of many prayers, but years passed, and they had both grown elderly, and yet no child had been vouchsafed them.

The autumn service of the course of Abia had taken Zacharias to Jerusalem, and his week of Temple duty was passing. As a ministering priest he had a chamber in the cloisters that ran along the sides of the outer Temple court. His office took him day by day, in his white official robes, to the fourth and inmost space, immediately beside the sanctuary itself, a part into which none could enter but priests wearing their sacred garments. This court rose above three other spaces, each, in succession, lower⁶³—the court of the men, that of the women, and that of foreigners who had become Jews⁶⁴—each, separated from the other by marble walls or balustrades, and approached only by great gates, famous throughout the world for their magnificence. Over all, in the central space, stood the sanctuary, springing from a level fifteen steps higher than the court of the Israelites, next, below it, and thus visible from all parts, as the crown and glory of the whole terraced structure. It was built of blocks of fine white marble, each about 37 feet^y in length, 12 in height, and 18 in breadth,⁶⁵ the courses which formed the foundations, measuring, in some cases, the still huger size of 70 feet in length, 9 in

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⁵⁹ Matt. 23. 23.
Deut. 25. 5, 6.
Ruth 4. 10.⁶⁰ Ps. 127. 3.
1 Sam. 1. 20.⁶¹ Deut. 25. 6.
Ruth 4. 10.⁶² Herod. l. 136.
Strabo,
xv. 504.⁶³ Jos. Bell.
Jud. v. 5. 2.⁶⁴ Jos. c.
Apion. ii. 8.⁶⁵ Jos. Ant.
xv. 11. 3.

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⁶⁶ Bell. Jud.
v. 5, 6.⁶⁷ Mr. James
Fergusson in
Dict. of Bible.
Art. "Temple."
Merz. in
Herzog, xv.
514 ff.

width, and 8 in height.⁶⁶ The whole area enclosed within the Temple bounds formed a square of 600 or 900 feet,^z and over the highest level of this rose the gilded walls of the sanctuary, a building, perhaps, about 150 feet long by 90 broad,⁶⁷ with two wings or shoulders of 30 feet each, on a line with the façade, the whole surmounted by a roof glittering with gilded spikes, to prevent pollution from above by unclean birds alighting on it.^{aa}

⁶⁸ The Recovery
of Jerusalem.
9.⁶⁹ Jos. Ant. xv.
11. 3.

When it is remembered that the natural surface of the hill on which these amazing structures were built was altogether too contracted and steep to supply the level space needed, the grandeur of the architecture as a whole will be even more apparent. The plateau of the successive courts was only secured by building up a wall from the valley beneath, to the height required, and this, on the south side, required a solid mass of masonry about 600 feet in length, and almost equal in height to the tallest of our church spires, while, on the top of an erection so unequalled, rose the magnificent Royal Porch, a building longer and higher than York Cathedral.⁶⁸ No wonder Josephus calls such a wall "the most prodigious work ever heard of," nor that its surpassing magnificence, in these years, when its dazzling whiteness shone fresh from the mason's hands, should have gone abroad to all countries.⁶⁹

⁷⁰ Bell. Jud. v.
8, 6.⁷¹ Mishna
Joma, v. 2.

The sanctuary itself was divided into two unequal parts—the Holy and the Holy of Holies.^{bb} Before the porch stood the great altar for burnt offerings, with rows of rings,—to which the beasts for sacrifice were tied,—sunk in the pavement, near,—while a line of cedar beams, resting on eight low pillars, gave the priests the means of hanging up the slaughtered victims, to dress them for the altar. The Holy of Holies, the inmost division of the sanctuary, was left an awful solitude throughout the year, except on the great Day of Atonement, on which the high priest entered it alone. In the Temple standing in Christ's day it was entirely empty,⁷⁰ unless, indeed, the tradition of the Mishna⁷¹ be correct, that a stone stood in it, instead of the long-lost Ark of the Covenant, as a spot on which the high priest could rest his censer. Great gates,^{cc} plated with gold, shut in this awful chamber,

and a thick veil of Babylonian tapestry, in which blue and scarlet and purple were woven into a fabric of matchless beauty and enormous value—the veil that was afterwards rent in twain at the time of the crucifixion⁷²—hung before it, dividing it from the Holy Place, and shutting out all light from its mysterious depths.⁷¹

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⁷² Matt. 27. 51.

The entrance to the Holy Place was by two doors, of vast height and breadth, covered with plates of gold,⁷³ as was the whole front on each side of them, over a breadth of thirty feet, and a height of fully a hundred and thirty.⁷⁴ The upper part, over the gates, which remained always open, was covered by an ornamentation of great golden vines,⁷⁵ from which hung clusters of grapes the length of a man's stature. No wonder Josephus adds that such a front wanted nothing that could give an idea of splendour, since the plates of gold, of great weight, as he adds, reflected the rays of the morning sun with a dazzling brightness, from which the eyes turned away overpowered.⁷⁶ When the gates of the Holy Place were opened, all was seen as far as the inner veil, and all glittered with a surface of beaten gold.

⁷³ Jos. Bell. Jud. v. 5. 5.⁷⁴ Jos. Bell. Jud. v. 5. 4.⁷⁵ Jos. Bell. Jud. v. 5. 8; c. Apion. ii. 8.

In the Holy Place stood only three things: the golden candlestick with its seven lamps, in allusion to the seven planets;⁷⁶ the table of shewbread; and, between them, the altar of incense. In the entrance, which was merely the open fore-half of the sanctuary, and, like the rest of the front, was covered with plates of gold, stood two tables, one of marble, the other of gold, on which the priests, at their entering or coming out of the Holy Place, laid the old shewbread and the new.⁷⁷ Before the entrance, in the court of the priests, stood the great altar of burnt offering, of unhewn stone, which no tool had touched, and the brazen laver,⁷⁸ in which the priests washed their hands and feet before beginning their ministrations.

⁷⁶ Ant. iii. 6. 7.⁷⁷ Bell. Jud. v. 5. 6.⁷⁸ Ex. 30. 18.

“In the morning,” says Josephus,⁷⁹ “at the opening of the inner temple,” that is, of the court of the priests, “those who are to officiate, receive the sacrifices, as they do again at noon. It is not lawful to carry any vessel into the holy house. When the days are over in which a course of priests officiates, other priests succeed in the performance of the

⁷⁹ c. Apion. ii. 8.

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sacrifices, and assemble together at mid-day and receive the keys of the Temple, and the vessels." Among the various priestly duties none was of such esteem as the offering of incense. The heat of eastern and southern countries, by its unpleasant physical effects, doubtless first led to the practice of burning odorous substances, though luxury and mere indulgence soon adopted it. Ultimately, not only chambers, clothes,⁸⁰ and furniture were thus perfumed, but the beards and whole persons of guests, in great houses, at their coming and leaving.⁸¹ Burning censers were waved before princes, and altars, on which incense was burned, were raised before them in the streets, when they entered towns or cities.⁸² Thus esteemed a mark of the highest honour, the custom was early transferred to religious worship, in the belief that the deity delighted in the odours thus offered. Hence it became a part of the recognized worship of Jehovah,⁸³ the Mosaic law requiring incense to be burnt on the altar with many offerings.⁸⁴ A daily incense offering morning and evening, on a special altar, in the Holy Place, at the times of trimming and kindling the sacred lamps,⁸⁵ was also ordained, and another yearly, in the Holy of Holies, by the high priest, on the great Day of Atonement.⁸⁶

The daily incense offering required the ministration of two priests,⁸⁷ one of whom bore the incense in a special vessel; the other, glowing embers in a golden fire-pan, from the altar of burnt sacrifice before the entrance of the Holy Place,⁸⁷ and these he spread on an altar within. The first priest then sprinkled the incense on the burning coals, an office held so honourable⁸⁸ that no one was allowed to perform it twice,⁸⁹ since it brought the offering priest nearer the Divine Presence in the Holy of Holies than any other priestly act, and carried with it the richest blessing from on high, which all ought to have a chance of thus obtaining. Like the rest of the sacred functions, it was determined daily by lot.⁹⁰

During the burning of the incense, each morning and night, the worshippers in the different courts remained in silent prayer, their faces towards the holy spot where the symbol of their devotions was ascending in fragrant clouds

⁸⁰ Song of Solomon 3. 6.

⁸¹ Harmer's Observations ii. 83. Rosenmüller, Morgenl. iv. 157, 195.

⁸² Curt. v. 1, 20.

⁸³ Deut. 33. 10.

⁸⁴ Lev. 2. 1 ff.; 6. 15.

⁸⁵ Ex. 40. 27.

⁸⁶ Lev. 16. 12.

⁸⁷ See Isaiah 6. 6.

⁸⁸ Jos. Ant. xiii. 10. 3.

towards heaven: their fondest hope being that their prayer might rise up,⁸⁹ odorous and well-pleasing like it, towards Jehovah. While the priests entered, morning and evening, into the Holy Place, with its seven lamps burning night and day for ever, the memento of the awful presence in the pillar of fire that had guarded them of old,ⁱⁱ and its table of "continual bread"^{kk} of the presence—a male lamb, with the due fruit and drink-offering connected with such a sacrifice, was ready to be offered on the great altar of burnt offering outside.⁹⁰ The atoning sacrifice, and the clouds of incense, the outward symbol of the prayers of the people, were thus indissolubly associated, and so holy were they in all eyes, that the hours sacred to them were known as those of the morning and the evening sacrifice.⁹¹ They served, still further, to set a time, throughout the Jewish world, for the morning and evening prayers of all Israel, and thus, when the priest stood by the incense altar, and the flame of the burnt offering, outside, ascended, the prayers offered in the Temple courts were repeated all over the land, and even in every region, however distant, to which a godly Jew had wandered.

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Pr. 141. 2.

⁸⁹ Two Lambs
were offered
on Sabbath,
Numb. 28.
9, 10.

⁹¹ 1 Kings 18.
29, 36.

On the day when our narrative opens, the lot for the daily incense offering had fallen on Zacharias. In his white sacerdotal robes, with covered head and naked feet, at the tinkling of the bell which announced that the morning or evening sacrifice was about to be laid on the great altar, he entered the Holy Place, that the clouds of the incense, which symbolized Israel's prayers, might herald the way for the smoke of the victim presently to be burned in their stead.ⁱⁱ In a place so sacred, separated only by a veil from the Holy of Holies, the awful presence chamber of the Almighty—a place where God had already shown that He was near, by human words to the officiating priest^{mmm}—at a moment so solemn, when it had fallen to him to enjoy an awful honour which most of his brethren could not expect to obtain, and which could never be repeated, he must have been well-nigh overpowered with emotion. At the tinkling of the bell all the priests and Levites took their stations through the Temple courts, and he and his helper began their ministrations.

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And now the coals are laid on the altar, the helping priest retires, and Zacharias is left alone with the mysterious, ever-burning, lamps, and the glow of the altar which was believed to have been kindled, at first, from the pillar of fire in the desert, and to have been kept unquenched, by miracle, since then.⁹¹ He pours the incense on the flames, and its fragrance rises in clouds, which are the symbol of the prayers of Israel, now rising over all the earth. As the intercessor for his people, for the time, he, too, joins his supplications.

We need not question what the burden of that prayer must have been, with one, who, like him, "waited for the Consolation of Israel," and "looked for Redemption."⁹² It was, doubtless, that the sins of the nation, his own sins, and the sins of his household,⁹³ might be forgiven; that Jehovah would accept the atonement of the lamb presently to burn on the great altar in their stead; and that the long-expected Hope of Israel, the Messiah foretold by prophets, might soon appear.

While he prays, there stands a mysterious Presence before him, on the right side of the altar, the side of good omen, as the angels, afterwards, appeared at the right side, in the Holy Sepulchre,⁹⁴ and as Christ was seen, by the martyr Stephen, standing on the Right Hand of God.⁹⁵ No wonder he was alarmed at such a sight, in such a place. Fear of the supernatural is instinctive. In the history of his own nation, which Zacharias, like every Jew, knew so well, Jacob had held it a wonder that he had, as he believed, seen God face to face, and that his life was preserved;⁹⁶ Jehovah Himself had hidden Moses in a cleft of the rock, that he might see the divine glory only after it had passed by, "For no man," He had said, "shall see me and live."⁹⁷ The stout-hearted Gideon had trembled at the sight of an angel;⁹⁸ Manoah had expected to die after a similar vision;⁹⁹ and when Daniel saw the very angel¹⁰⁰ now before Zacharias "there remained no strength in him."

But Gabriel had come on a mission befitting the world from which he had been sent. The hour had arrived when the prayer which Zacharias, and those like him, had so long raised, should be heard. The Messiah was about to be

⁹² Luke 2. 25, 38.⁹³ Lev. 14. 17.⁹⁴ Mark 16. 5.⁹⁵ Acts 7. 55.⁹⁶ Gen. 32. 30.⁹⁷ Ex. 33. 20.⁹⁸ Judges 6. 22.⁹⁹ Judges 13. 22.¹⁰⁰ Dan. 8. 16;
9. 21; 10. 8.

revealed, and the faithful priest who had so longed for His appearing would be honoured by a relationship to Him. He had for many a year desired a son : not only would his wish be granted, at last, but the son to be born would be the prophet, long announced, to go before the Expected One, to prepare His way.¹⁰¹ He needs not fear : he who speaks is ¹⁰¹ Luke 1. 76. Gabriel, the archangel, who stands in the presence of God, and as one who thus always beholds the face of the Great Father in heaven, he has a tender love to His children on earth. Had Zacharias thought how the skies rejoice at a sinner's repenting;¹⁰² how the angels are always near us when we ¹⁰² Luke 15. 10. pray;¹⁰³ how they bear our prayers into the presence of God;¹⁰⁴ ¹⁰³ 1 Cor. 11. 10. and how, at last, they guide the souls of the just to everlasting joy;¹⁰⁵ he would have rejoiced even while he trembled. ¹⁰⁴ Rev. 8. 3. ¹⁰⁵ Luke 16. 22.

But the heart is slow to receive the access of any sudden joy, and to lay aside disappointment. The thought rises in the heart of Zacharias that the glad tidings of the birth of the Messiah may well be true; but, as to the son promised his wife, stricken in years as she now is, can it be possible? A sudden dumbness, imposed at the angel's word, at once rebukes his doubt, and confirms his faith.

Meanwhile, the multitude without wondered at the delay in his re-appearance, to bless and dismiss them. The priest's coming out of the sanctuary was the signal for the lamb being laid on the altar, and was a moment of passing interest in Jewish worship. A passage in that noble relic of pre-Christian Jewish literature, Ecclesiasticus,¹⁰⁶ respecting ¹⁰⁶ Chap. 50. the great patriot high priest, Simon the Just,¹⁰⁰ brings a ^{ε-8; 11. 14-22.} similar scene, though on a far grander scale, on the great Day of Atonement, vividly before us. The crowds now around marked some other than a common day,¹⁰⁷ and we need only tone down the picture to suit it to the present case; for Zacharias, as a faithful priest, engaged on such a service, was, for the time, an object of almost sacred reverence.

"How glorious was he," says the Son of Sirach, "before the multitude¹⁰⁸ of the people, in his coming forth from within the veil!"¹⁰⁹ He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon when its days are full; as the sun

shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as the rainbow that glitters on the bright clouds, and as the flower of roses in the spring of the year;^{ss} as lilies by the rivers of waters, and as the branches of the frankincense tree in the time of summer. . . .

"When he put on the robes of state, and was arrayed in all his ornaments, when he went up to the holy altar, he adorned the forecourt of the Sanctuary. But when he received the pieces of the sacrifice from the hands of the priests, and stood at the side of the altar, a crown of brethren round him, then was he like the young cedar on Lebanon, and they were round him like palm-trees, and all the sons of Aaron were in their splendid robes, and the gifts for the Lord in their hands, from the whole congregation of Israel. And, when he had finished the service at the altars, that he might do honour to the offering of the Most High, Almighty, he stretched forth his hand over the sacrifice, and poured out the blood of grapes; he poured it out at the foot of the altar, as a sweet-smelling savour unto the Most High, the King of all. Then shouted the sons of Aaron; with the silver trumpets of wondrous workmanship did they sound, and made a great noise to be heard, for a remembrance before the Most High." Then all the people, together, hasted, and fell down to the earth, upon their faces, to worship God, the Lord Almighty, the Most High. The singers also sang praises with their voices; with great variety of sounds was there made sweet melody. And the people besought the Lord, the Most High, by prayer before Him that is merciful, till the glorious exalting^{uu} of the Lord was ended, and His worship was finished.

"Then he came down, and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing of the Lord with his lips, and to glorify His name. And they bowed themselves down to worship the second time, that they might receive a blessing from the Most High."^{xx}

Fear lest any calamity might have befallen Zacharias added to the rising excitement. He might have been ceremonially unclean, and the divine anger at the Holy Place being thus polluted, might have struck him down. The

offering priest never remained longer than was necessary in so august a Presence.¹⁰⁷ His appearance, at last, however, explained all. They could receive no blessing that day, and Zacharias could no longer minister in his course, for he was speechless;¹⁰⁸ all he could do was to tell them by signs what had happened. Had they known it, his silence for the time was but the prelude to the lasting silence of the Law, of which he was a minister, now that Christ was about to come.^{yy}

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¹⁰⁷ Lightfoot, *Horn Heb.* iii. 23.

¹⁰⁸ A dumb priest could not minister. *Lightfoot*, *Horn Heb.* iii. 23.

Having now no more to detain him at Jerusalem, Zacharias returned home, we presume, to Hebron.¹⁰⁹ His journey, if it was in October, as seems likely, would lead him through the cheerful scenes of the grape harvest—a great event, even yet, in the Hebron district. Had it been in April, at the spring service, the stony hills, and deep red or yellow soil of the valleys through which he had to pass, would have been ablaze with bright colours; shrubs, grass, gay weeds, and wild-flowers, over all the uplands, and thickets, of varied blossom, sprinkled with sheets of white briar roses, in the hollows; the beautiful cyclamen peeping from under the gnarled roots of great trees, and from amidst the roadside stones. Towns of stone houses, of which the ruins still remain, rose, flat-roofed, from the hill-sides, or from their tops, in sight of each other, all the way. Fields with stone walls, now in the autumn, lay idle after the harvest, or were being re-sown; but the vineyards, which spread far and wide, over valley and sloping height, resounded with voices, for the houses were well-nigh forsaken to gather the ripe grapes. Somewhere in Hebron, in its cradle of hills, three thousand feet above the neighbouring Mediterranean, lay the home of Zacharias, and there, some time in the next year, in accordance with the promise of the angel, Elisabeth bore a son—the future Baptist; and Zacharias received back his speech, on the glad day of the child getting its name^{zz}—the eighth after its birth,—the day of its admission into the congregation of Israel by circumcision.

¹⁰⁹ Ewald. *Kefin Othon. Lex.* Rabbim. 324.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY.

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WHILE Zacharias and Elisabeth were rejoicing at their promised blessing, in their quiet home in the south, there lived in the village of Nazareth or Nazara, over a hundred miles to the north of them, a Jew of the name of Joseph, and a simple maiden named Mary, who was betrothed to him as his future wife. Though humble enough in position—for he was by trade a carpenter—Joseph was, in reality, of the noblest blood of his race, for he could claim descent from the ancient kings of his nation, and was the legal heir to the throne of David and Solomon.

It needs not surprise us that the representative of such an illustrious ancestry should be found in a station so obscure. In the book of Judges,¹ we find a grandson of Moses reduced to engage himself as family priest, in Mount Ephraim, for a yearly wage of “ten shekels, a suit of apparel, and his victuals.^a” At the present day, the green turban which marks descent from Mahomet is often worn in the East by the very poor, and even by beggars. In our own history, the glory of the once illustrious Plantagenets so completely waned, that the direct representative of Margaret Plantagenet, daughter and heiress of George Duke of Clarence, followed the trade of a cobbler in Newport, Shropshire, in 1637. Among the lineal descendants of Edmund of Woodstock, sixth son of Edward I., and entitled to quarter the royal arms, were a village butcher, and a keeper of a turnpike gate, and among the descendants of Thomas Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, fifth son of Edward III., was included the late sexton of a London church.² The vicissitudes of the Jewish nation for century after century; its deportation to Babylon, and long

¹ Ch. 18. 30;
17. 10.

² Burke's
Anecdotes of
The Peerage.

suspension of national life; its succession of high-priestly rulers, after the return; its transition to the Asmonean line, and, finally, the reign of the Idumean house of Herod, with all the storm and turmoil which marked so many changes, had left, to use the figure of Isaiah,³ only a root in a dry ground, an humble citizen of Nazareth, as the heir of its ancient royalty.^b

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In the same city lived a family, which, like that of Joseph, seems to have been long settled there. The names of the parents we do not know, but they had three daughters,^c one of whom, Mary, was betrothed to Joseph. The relation thus created was familiar to our own ancestors as late as the time of Shakespere,⁴ and was equivalent to a civil contract of marriage, to be duly followed by the religious rite. Among the Jews of Mary's day, it was even more of an actual engagement. The betrothal was formally made, with rejoicings, in the house of the bride, under a tent or slight canopy raised for the purpose.⁵ It was called the "making sacred,"^d as the bride, thenceforth, was sacred to her husband, in the strictest sense. To make it legal, the bridegroom gave his betrothed a piece of money,^e or the worth of it, before witnesses, with the words, "Lo, thou art betrothed unto me," or by a formal writing, in which similar words, and the maiden's name, were given, and this, in the same way, was handed to her before witnesses. Betrothals were commonly arranged by the fathers, or in case of their being dead, by the mothers, or guardians, and the consent of any brothers the maiden might have, was required.⁶ In the earlier ages, verbal agreements, sometimes confirmed by oath,⁷ before witnesses, were most in use, but after the Return, written forms became the rule.

⁴ William Shakespere: A Biography. By Charles Knight, p. 214.

⁵ Alluded to in Ps. 19. 4, 5.

⁶ Gen. 24. 50; 34. 11.
⁷ Mal. 2. 14.

Though betrothal was virtually marriage, and could only be broken off by a formal "bill of divorcement," the betrothed did not at once go to her husband's house. To give her time for preparation, and to soften the pain of parting from her friends, or, perhaps, in part, to let them get a longer benefit of her household services, an interval elapsed before the final ceremony; it might be so many weeks, or months, or even a whole year.^f

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It was now the sixth month from the appearance of Gabriel to Zacharias, and Mary's time of betrothal was passing quickly away in her family home at Nazareth. The future Herald had been pointed out, and now the advent of the Messiah Himself was to be announced, as silently, and with as little notice from men, for Christ, like the sun, rose in noiseless stillness.

A heart like that of Mary, full of religious thoughtfulness and emotion, must have been doubly earnest in the daily devotions which no Jew or Jewess neglected.⁸ Like all her people, the time of the morning offering, the hour of noon, and the time of the evening sacrifice,⁹ would find her in her private chamber in lowly prayer. At some such moment, the great event took place of which the narrative of St. Luke⁹ informs us.

In the sixth month, we are told, after the visit to Zacharias, Gabriel^h was sent from God to Mary, and having entered her chamber, where the presence of a man must have been startling at any time, but then especially,—stood before her with the usual salutation, to which he added the mysterious words, that she was highly favoured, and that the Lord was with her.ⁱ Naturally troubled by such an interruption and such words, she shows a characteristic of her calm, self-collected nature in being able to think and reason, as if undisturbed, what the salutation might mean. Whatever fear she has, speedily passes, before the soothing words of her visitor. He bids her lay aside her alarm; he has come to tell her that she has found favour, above all other women, with God, by being chosen as the future mother of the long-expected Messiah, who was to have the name of JESUS.^k "The Holy Ghost," he says, "shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore thy son shall be called the Son of God; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."¹⁰ It would have been no more than human weakness, if doubts had risen at such an announcement, but these he sets to rest, if they were springing, by telling her that a miracle, no less wonderful than that

⁸ Isaiah 1. 15.
Dan. 6. 11.
Ps. 55. 17.
Acts 2. 15:
3. 1; 10. 9;
10. 30.
Dan. 9. 21.

⁹ Ch. 1. 26.

¹⁰ Luke 1. 32.
33, 35.

which would happen with herself, had already been wrought upon her relative^m Elisabeth. Mary's answer is the ideal of dignified humility, and meek and reverend innocence:—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And presently she was alone.

Had the narrative of the miraculous conception occurred in the literature of a heathen nation, it would justly have raised doubts. But in the sober verses of the Gospels, written by Jews, it takes a far different character. The idea was altogether foreign to the Jewish mind. The Hebrew doctrine of the Unity of God, and of the infinite elevation of the Divine Being above man, the profound regard of the Jews for the married state, and their abhorrence of unwedded life, make it impossible to imagine how such a thought could ever have risen among them.¹¹ The improbability of its

¹¹ Neander's
Life of Christ,
14. Milman's
Christianity,
64.

being invented by a Jew is heightened by the fact, that, though lofty thoughts of the nature of the Messiah were not wanting in some Israelites, the almost universal belief was that He was to be simply a man, who would receive miraculous endowments, on his formal consecration as Messiah.

What best to do in a position so mysterious may well have troubled Mary's heart. The angel had told her that her relative Elisabeth, as well as herself, had been favoured of God in connection with the expected Messiah, and it is a natural trait, in one whose strength of mind, and calm decision of character, had shown itself even in her Visitation, that she now determined to go to her kinswoman and confer with her, though the distance between them was over a hundred miles.

What were the thoughts of Mary in her solitary journey—for solitary she must have been, with such a secret in her heart, even if she travelled with a company? She likely went on foot, for it was the custom of her people, and, moreover, she was poor. The intimation made to her was one which she could hardly grasp in its full significance. Her Son was to sit upon the throne of His father David, and reign over the house of Jacob, founding a kingdom which should endure for ever. But this was only what she had expected, as a Jewess, for, like all her nation, she thought of the Messiah

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as a Jewish king, who should restore the long-lost glories of her race, and make Israel triumphant over all the heathen. She had been told, as well, however, that her child, from its birth, should be called the Son of the Highest, and the Son of God. The human mind is slow to grasp great truths, and needs to grow into a comprehension of their meaning: it cannot receive them in their fulness till it has been educated, step by step, to understand them. Long years after this she only partially realized the import of such words. In her Son's youth she was perplexed to know what was meant by His answer,¹² when He stayed behind in the Temple, and years after that she failed, once again, to realize her true relations to Him.¹³ Nor does she seem to have risen to the full sublimity of her position, and of His, while He lived,¹⁴ though the deathless love of a mother for her child brought her to the foot of the Cross.¹⁵ But in such slowness to believe,¹⁶ and such abidingly imperfect conceptions, she was only on a footing with those who enjoyed habitual intercourse with Him, hearing His words, and seeing His miracles, day by day; for even the disciples remained, to the end, Jewish peasants, in their ideas respecting Him, thinking that He was only a political deliverer of the nation.¹⁷ Preoccupation of the mind by fixed opinions, leads to a wrong reading of any evidence. We unconsciously distort facts, or invent them, to support our favourite theories, and see everything through their medium,¹⁸ like the musician, who held that God worked six days, and rested on the seventh, because there are seven notes in music; or as in the instance fancied by Helvetius, where a loving couple had no doubt that two objects, visible on the disc of the moon, were two lovers bending towards each other, while a clergyman had as little, that they were the two steeples of a cathedral. Our conclusions are determined largely by our predispositions, and our prejudices, or prejudgments, in great measure monopolize our faculties. We are not so much ignorant as perverted. We see truth through a prism. We are so entirely the creatures of education, of the opinions of our neighbours and of our family, and of the thousand influences of life, that the only way we can hope to see truth in its own white and unbroken light is, as Christ

¹² Luke 2. 50.¹³ John 2. 4.¹⁴ Mark 3. 21.
John 7. 5.¹⁵ John 19. 25.¹⁶ Luke 24. 25.¹⁷ Luke 24. 21.¹⁸ Sir W. Hamilton's *Philosophy*, i. 75. ff

tells us, by our becoming little children. With Mary and the disciples this came in the end, but not till then. The influence expressed in Seneca's apophthegm—*Sordet cognita veritas*—blinded their eyes, in part, while our Lord was still with them; but He rose to His divine grandeur as He left them. In the Acts and the Epistles the disciples breathe a far loftier spirituality, in their conception of the work and Person of Christ, than in the Gospels, and Mary, beyond question, was not behind men with whose lot she from that time cast in her own.ⁿ

Her meeting with Elisabeth was naturally marked by the deep emotion of both, and we owe to it the earliest and grandest of our hymns, the *Magnificat*. Greeted by Elisabeth as the future mother of her Lord, Mary breaks out, with the poetical fervour of Eastern nature, in a strain of exalted feeling. The rhythmical expression into which she falls was only what might have been expected from one imbued, as all Jewish minds were, with the style and imagery of the Old Testament. Like Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, or Judith, she utters a song of joy:—

My soul doth magnify the Lord,¹⁹
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my
Saviour;²⁰

¹⁹ Ps. 31. 3.

For He hath regarded the low estate of His
handmaiden;

²⁰ 1 Sam. 2. 1.
Ps. 35. 9.

For, behold, from henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed.²¹

²¹ Gen. 30. 13.

For He that is mighty hath done to me great
things:²²

²² Ps. 71. 19; 126.
2. 3.

And Holy is His name.²³

²³ Ps. 111. 9.

And His mercy is on them that fear Him, from
generation to generation.²⁴

²⁴ Ps. 103. 17.

He hath shewed strength with His arm;²⁵

²⁵ Ps. 98. 1; 89.
10; 118. 13, 16.

He hath scattered the proud in the imagi-
nation of their hearts.²⁶

²⁶ Exod. 15. 16.
1 Sam. 2. 4.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats;
And exalted them of low degree.²⁷

²⁷ 1 Sam. 2. 8.
Ps. 113. 7.

He hath filled the hungry with good things;²⁸
And the rich He hath sent empty away.

²⁸ 1 Sam. 2. 5.

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²⁹ Is. 41. 8.³⁰ Ps. 30. 4; 97.
12.³¹ Mic. 7. 23.He hath holpen His servant Israel ²⁹In remembrance of *His* mercy; ³⁰As He spake to our fathers, ³¹

To Abraham and to His seed, for ever.

The whole hymn is a mosaic of Old Testament imagery and language, and shows a mind so coloured by the sacred writings of her people that her whole utterance becomes, spontaneously, as by a second nature, an echo of that of prophets and saints. It is such as we might have expected from the lips of some ideal Puritan maiden, in those days in our own history, when men were so deeply read in the oracles of God, that their ordinary conversation fell into Scriptural phrases and allusions, and their whole life was coloured by the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. ³² Mary, like them, must have lived in a constant realization of the presence, and special providence, of One, with whose gracious communications to her people she had thus filled her whole thoughts. A Jewish puritanism, of the loftiest and most spiritual type, must have been the very atmosphere in which she moved, and in which her child was hereafter to be trained.

³² Macaulay,
Description of
the Puritans:
Milton, 23.

The high intellectual emotion and eloquence of the *Magnificat* reveal a nature of no common mould, as its intense religious fervour shows spiritual characteristics of the noblest type. But the strain throughout is strictly limited to what we might have expected in a Jewish maiden. It is intensely national when it is not personal. She rejoices in God, and magnifies His name, for having honoured her so greatly, notwithstanding her low estate. He has done great things for her, which will make all generations pronounce her blessed. He has thus favoured her because she feared Him, for His mercy is on such, from generation to generation. As of old, when He shewed strength with His arm, and scattered the proud, and put down the mighty from their thrones, to deliver or exalt His weak and lowly people, so, now, He has exalted her, and disappointed the hopes of the great ones; He has filled her, who was like the hungry, with good things, and has sent away the rich empty, who expected His favours.

Through her He has holpen Israel, in remembrance of His promise to her fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed, for ever, that He would be their God.³³ Her son was to be the Anointed who should redeem Israel out of all its troubles.³⁴ CHAP. VIII.
= Gen. 17. 7.
34 o 34 Ps. 25. 22.

As a descendant of David, she doubtless thinks of Herod, sitting, as an Edomite intruder, on the throne rightfully due to her own race, yet, as an Israelite in the best sense, the redemption of her people goes beyond the merely patriotic and political, to the restoration of that primitive loyalty to the God of their fathers which she cherished in her own breast, but the spirit of which her people had well-nigh lost, amidst all their steadfastness in the outer forms.

It is easy to understand how willingly Mary lingered in Hebron, and that she was loath to return to Nazareth sooner than was necessary. Elisabeth knew her great secret and her innocence, but at Nazareth she would be among her neighbours, who might not credit her assurances; and she must some day, as late as possible, break the matter to her betrothed. It is no wonder to find that three months passed, before she could venture to turn her face homeward once more.

Her position on her return, indeed, exposed her to a trial, great above all others to a virtuous woman. Conscious of perfect purity, she is suspected of the reverse by him to whom her troth is plighted; but He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb relieved her from her troubles by making known to Joseph the mysterious truth. As a just man—which was a current expression of the time for a strict observer of the Law³⁵—and yet unwilling to expose her to public shame, he had made up his mind to divorce her formally, by a written “bill,” duly attested by witnesses,³⁶ but being divinely instructed that his fears were groundless, he freed her from all future trouble by taking her home as his wife.

³³ Macknight's Har. of Gospel, *in loc*

³⁶ Deut. 24. 1. Talmud, Tract. Gittin.

Legend, as might have been expected, was early busy with the story of Mary and Joseph.

We are told that Joseph, though a carpenter, was made a priest in the Temple, because of his knowledge of the Law, and his fame for holiness.³⁷ Mary was his second wife, and

³⁷ Hist. Joseph. cap. 2.

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found herself, on her coming home, in a circle of four sons and two daughters, left by her predecessor—the family known in the Gospels as the brethren and sisters of our Lord. Mary, as has been said, was the daughter of Joachim and Anna.³⁸ On her father's side, she came from Nazareth; on her mother's, from Bethlehem. Joachim was a simple, God-fearing man, a shepherd, of the tribe of Judah, and married Anna when he was twenty years of age. Twenty years passed, however, without their having a child, and both Joachim and Anna grieved sorely at their loneliness. At the Temple, Joachim found himself ordered away from among those who had children, and his offerings refused, and Anna, also, had to bear reproach from the women of her people.

Then "Anna wept sore, and prayed to God. And when the great day of the Lord came, Judith, her maid, said to her, How long will thy soul mourn? It becomes thee not to be sad, for the great day of the Lord has come. Take thy head-dress, which the needlewoman gave me; it is not allowed me to put it on thee, because I am thy maid, and thou comest of kings."³⁹ Then was Anna much troubled, and laid aside her mourning, and adorned her head, and put on her bridal robes, and went into the garden about the ninth hour.⁴⁰ There she saw a laurel-tree, and sat down beneath it, and prayed thus to God:—"God of my fathers, bless me and hear my cry, as Thou heardest Sarah, and blessedst her by giving her a son, Isaac." While, now, she was looking up to heaven, she saw the nest of a sparrow in the laurel-tree, and she sighed and said, "Woe is me, woe is me, who have no child! Why was I born that I should have become accursed before the children of Israel, and despised, and scorned, and driven away from the temple of the Lord my God? Woe is me, to what can I liken myself? Not to the birds of the heavens, for they have young; not to the senseless beasts, for they are fruitful before Thee, O Lord; not to the creatures of the waters, for they have young; not to the earth, for it brings forth fruits in their seasons, and blesses Thee, O Lord." ^P

Then an angel came and told her she should have a child.

³⁸ Ev. de Nat.
Mar. c. 1. 2;
Hist. de Nat.
Mar. c. 1. 2.
Protev. c. 1.

³⁹ Protev. c. 2.
3. 4.

⁴⁰ The time of
the evening
sacrifice.

And Anna said, "As the Lord God liveth, be it male or female that I bear, I vow it to the Lord, and it shall serve Him all the days of its life." And Anna bore a daughter, and called it Mary, as the angel had commanded. CHAP. VIII.

When six months had passed, Anna put Mary on the ground, and found that she could totter a few steps.⁴¹ Then she said, "As the Lord liveth, thou shalt never put thy foot on the earth again till I have led thee into the Temple of the Lord. At the end of the first year, Joachim made a great feast, and called to it the priests and scribes, and the elders, and many friends. And he brought the maiden to the priests, and they blessed her, and said, "God of our fathers, bless this child, and give her a name which shall be known through all generations. And all the people said, Amen." ^a Proter. c. 1. 7.

We are then told that Mary was taken to the Temple when she was three years old, having lived till then in a sanctuary made for her in her father's house. And while Joachim and Anna were at the foot of the fifteen steps that led up to the Temple courts, and were changing their soiled travelling raiment for clean and fitting dress, as the custom was, Mary climbed the steps alone, and never looked back, but kept her face towards the altar. And she was left in the Temple, that she might grow up with the other virgins.

From this time till she was twelve years old, it is said, she lived in the Temple,^a her graces keeping pace with her years. From the morning till the third hour, she remained in prayer, and from that till the ninth she was busied with spinning.^r Then she betook herself once more to prayer, till an angel each day came with food for her. Her betrothal to Joseph is related in great detail, but we forbear to quote it.

Tradition, to which we owe these beautiful legends, has delighted to speak of the Virgin's appearance and character. She was more given to prayer, we read, than any round her, brighter in the knowledge of God's law, and perfectly humble; she delighted to sing the Psalms of David with a melodious voice, and all loved her for her kindness and modesty.

It is impossible to trust to the descriptions of Mary's

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person, but it is interesting to know how remote generations imagined her. She was in all things serious and earnest, says one old tradition,⁴² spoke little, and only what was to the purpose; she was very gentle, and showed respect and honour to all. She was of middle height, though some say she was rather above it. She spoke to all with a prudent frankness, soberly, without confusion, and always pleasantly. She had a fair complexion, blonde hair, and bright hazel eyes. Her eyebrows were arched and dark, her nose well proportioned, her lips ruddy and full of kindness when she spoke. Her face was long rather than round, and her hands and fingers were finely shaped. She had no pride, but was simple, and wholly free from deceit. Without effeminacy, she was far from forwardness. In her clothes, which she herself made, she was content with the natural colours.

⁴² Niceph. lib. ii.
23.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

IT might have been expected that Mary's child would have been born in the city¹ of Nazareth, where Joseph and Mary lived, but circumstances over which they had no control made a distant village the birthplace.

The Jewish nation had paid tribute to Rome, through their rulers, since the days of Pompey;^a and the methodical Augustus, who now reigned, and had to restore order and soundness to the finances of the empire, after the confusion and exhaustion of the civil wars, took good care that this obligation should neither be forgotten nor evaded. He was accustomed to require a census to be taken periodically in every province of his vast dominions, that he might know the number of soldiers he could levy in each, and the amount of taxes due to the treasury. So exact was he, that he wrote out with his own hand a summary of statistics of the whole empire, including the citizens and allies in arms, in all the kingdoms and provinces, with their tributes and taxes.^b Three separate surveys of the empire for such fiscal and military ends are recorded as ordered—in the 726th, 746th, and 767th² years of the city of Rome, respectively: the first, long before the birth of Christ; the third, in our Lord's youth; but the second, very near the time when He must have been born.

In an empire embracing the then known world, such a census could hardly have been made simultaneously, or in any short or fixed time; more probably it was the work of years, in successive provinces or kingdoms.³ Sooner or later, however, even the dominions of vassal kings like Herod had to furnish the statistics demanded by their master.^c He

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¹ Matt. 2.23.

^a Caspari's
Chronologisch-
Geographische
Einteilung, &c.
32.

² Grotii Annot.
in loc. Köhler,
Herzog, xiii.
466.

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had received his kingdom on the footing of a subject,⁴ and grew more entirely dependent on Augustus as years passed,⁵ asking his sanction at every turn for steps he proposed to take. He would, thus, be only too ready to meet his wish, by obtaining the statistics he sought, as may be judged from the fact that in one of the last years of his life, just before Christ's birth, he made the whole Jewish nation take a solemn oath of allegiance to the Emperor as well as to himself.^{6d}

⁶ Jos. Ant. iii. 16.
10, 11.

It is quite probable that the mode of taking the required statistics was left very much to Herod, at once to show respect to him before his people, and from the known opposition of the Jews to anything like a general numeration,⁶ even apart from the taxation to which it was designed to lead. At the time to which the narrative refers, a simple registration seems to have been made, on the old Hebrew plan of enrolling by families in their ancestral districts,⁷ of course for future use; and thus it passed over quietly.¹ The very different results, when it was followed by a general taxation, some years later, will hereafter be seen.⁸

⁷ Ewald's Geschichte, v. 206.

The proclamation having been made through the land, Joseph had no choice but to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, the place in which his family descent, from the house and lineage of David,^h required him to be inscribed. It must, apparently, have been near the close of the year 749 of Rome, or at the opening of 750; but winter in Palestine is not necessarily severe, for the flowers spring up after the November rains, and flocks are often driven out to the pastures,⁸ as St. Luke tells us was the case at the time of Christ's birth.ⁱ Unwilling to leave her behind in a home so new to her, Joseph took Mary with him: the two journeying most likely, as tradition has painted—Joseph afoot, with Mary on an ass at his side. There were by-paths interlacing and crossing, all over the country, and they may have chosen some of these, but if they kept to the travelled road, which it is most likely they did, both for safety and company, we can follow their progress even now.

⁸ Rauwolf, quoted by Oosterzee,

Passing down the little valley of Nazareth, they would find themselves crossing the rich plain of Esdracelon, not then, as

now, half tilled and well-nigh unpeopled, but covered with cities and villages, full of teeming life and human activities. Galilee, according to Josephus, contained in those days, two hundred and four cities and villages, the smallest of which numbered above fifteen thousand inhabitants.⁹ It is calculated, indeed,¹⁰ that it had a population of about fifteen hundred to the square mile, which is a third more than the number in Lancashire, crowded as it is with large and densely peopled towns.^k Speaking of the district just north of Galilee, Captain Burton tells us that, to one standing on a peak of Lebanon, overlooking it, "the land must, in many places, have appeared to be one continuous town;"¹¹ and in the highlands of Syria, still north of this, in the region of Hamah, there are the ruins of three hundred and sixty-five towns, so that Mr. Drake had good ground for thinking the Arabs right in saying, "that a man might formerly have travelled for a year in this district, and never have slept twice in the same village."

⁹ Jos. Vit. 45; Bell. Jud. iii. 3. 2.

¹⁰ Merrill's *Galilee in the Time of Christ*, in *Bib. Sacra*, Jan., 1874.

¹¹ Burton and Drake's *Unexplored Syria*, i. 74; ii. 160.

Leaving, on the left, the rounded height of Tabor, and the villages of Nain and Endor, up among the hills, the road stretched directly south to Jezreel, once Ahab's capital, on a gentle swell of the rich plain of Esdraelon. On their way they would pass through a landscape of busy cities and towns, varied by orchards, vineyards, gardens, and fields, for every available spot was cultivated, to the very tops of the hills.¹² The mountains of Gilboa, where Saul perished, lay a little east of Jezreel as they went on, and then came Engannim, with its spring, on the edge of the hill-country of Samaria. Dothan, with its rich pastures, where Joseph had found his brethren so many ages before, would soon be seen on their right; and, before long, their winding road, rising and falling among continuous hills, would bring them to Samaria itself, then just rebuilt by Herod, with such magnificence, that he had given it the name of Sebaste, the Greek equivalent of Augusta, in honour of his imperial master. Sychar or Shechem, with its lovely neighbourhood, would be their resting-place on the second day, for it is nearly midway between Judea and Galilee; and though the distance between the two was often reckoned

¹² Jos. Bell. Jud. iii. 3. 2.

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as only a three days' journey, it was not uncommon to lengthen it to four. As the chief town of the Samaritans, Sychar would hardly offer hospitality to travellers with their faces towards the hated Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary, as was the custom with Jews passing through, would, therefore, avoid the town, and pass the night in what shelter they could find at Jacob's springs,—or Jacob's well, as our version has it,—not far off, eating provisions they had brought with them, to avoid tasting food defiled by the touch of a Samaritan,¹ and drinking only the water from the springs. The beauty of the valley, with its swelling heights of Ebal and Gerizim, separated only by a few hundred paces, and its rich upland glens, opening on each side beyond—the crown and water-shed of Central Palestine—would have little interest to them, for it was Samaritan ground. They would breathe freely only when they had passed the heights of Akkrabbim, the border ridge between Samaria and Judea, and had once more set foot on the holy soil of Israel.

Once in Judea, its bleak and bare hills were hallowed, at each opening of the landscape, by the sight of spots sacred to every Jew. Shiloh would greet them first, where Hannah came to pray before the Lord;¹³ then Gilgal, where her son sat to judge Israel.¹⁴ Their way would next pass through the valley of Baca, of which the Psalmist had sung, "Passing through the valley of tears, they make it rich in springs; and the latter rain covers it with blessings."¹⁵ The road winds on from this, through the district town Gophna, past the venerable Bethel, with all its memories, and past Ramah,^m in Benjamin, where Jeremiah had pictured Rachel weeping for her children, slain or carried off by the Babylonian conqueror. Over against it rose Gibeon, high on its hill, where Solomon worshipped; and an hour later they would pass Mizpeh, on its lonely height, where Samuel raised his memorial stone Ebenezer. And then, at last, after having passed from one holy place to another, their feet would stand within the gates of Jerusalem.

Bethlehem, the end of their journey, lay about six miles south of Jerusalem, on the east of the main road to Hebron.

¹³ 1 Sam. 1. 3.¹⁴ 1 Sam. 10. 8; 7. 16.¹⁵ Ps. 84, correct transl.

It covered the upper slope, and part of the top, of a narrow ridge of grey Jura limestone, of about a mile in length—one of the countless heights, seamed by narrow valleys, which make up the hill country of Judea. Its narrow, steep streets lay no less than 2,538 Paris feet¹⁶ above the Mediterranean, and looked out over a sea of hills, bare and rocky,—one of them, about three miles to the east, the peak of the Frank mountain, Jebel Fureidis, now bare, but then covered with the new fortifications of Herodium, in the circuit of which the hated tyrant Herod was soon to find his tomb. On the east, the mountains of Moab rose against the horizon like a purple wall, the barren and desolate uplands of the wilderness of Judea lying between, and stretching far to the south. The ridge of Bethlehem itself is still covered, on its northern side, as all the hills around must have been in Mary's day, with bold, sweeping lines of terraces, which descend, like gigantic steps, to the lower valleys, and bear tier on tier of fig-trees, olives, pomegranates, and vines; the vines overhanging the terrace banks, and relieving the eye from the dazzling glare of the white limestone rocks and soil. The ridge, as a whole, breaks down, abruptly, into deep valleys, on the north, south, and east, passing into gorges, which descend, in the distance, to the Dead Sea on the east, and to the coast lowlands on the west. In a little plain close under the town, to the eastward, are some vineyards and barley-fields, in which Ruth came to glean in the early days of Israel, beside a gentle brook which still murmurs through them.

It was to Bethlehem that Joseph and Mary were coming, the town of Ruth and Boaz, and the early home of their own great forefather David. As they approached it from Jerusalem, they would pass, at the last mile, a spot sacred to Jewish memory, where the light of Jacob's life went out, when his first love, Rachel, died, and was buried, as her tomb still shows, "in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem."¹⁷

The ascent to the town, over the dusty glare of the grey limestone hills, was the last of the journey, and it is well if Mary did not find it, in parts, as other travellers have found it, before and since, so slippery as to make it seem safer to

¹⁶ A Paris foot is 12.796 English inches.

¹⁷ Gen. 35. 19.

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alight and go up on foot. A quarter of a mile to the north of the town-gate she would pass the well, from which, as she had heard from infancy, her ancestor David had so longed to drink.¹⁸ Presently, passing through the low gate, she and Joseph were in the mountain town or village of Bethlehem.¹⁹

¹⁸ 1 Chron. 11.
17.

Travelling in the East has always been very different from Western ideas. As in all thinly-settled countries, private hospitality, in early times, supplied the want of inns, but it was the peculiarity of the East that this friendly custom continued through a long series of ages. On the great roads through barren or uninhabited parts, the need of shelter led, very early, to the erection of rude and simple buildings, of varying size, known as khans, which offered the wayfarer the protection of walls and a roof, and water, but little more. The smaller structures consisted of sometimes only a single empty room, on the floor of which the traveller might spread his carpet for sleep; the larger ones, always built in a hollow square, enclosing a court for the beasts, with water in it for them and their masters. From immemorial antiquity it has been a favourite mode of benevolence to raise such places of shelter, as we see so far back as the times of David, when Chinnam built a great khan²⁰ near Bethlehem, on the caravan road to Egypt.

But while it has long been thus, in special circumstances, the Eastern sense of the sacredness of hospitality, which was felt deeply by the Jews, made inns, in one sense, or even khans, where travellers provided for themselves, unnecessary in any peopled place. The simplicity of Eastern life, which has fewer wants than the Western mind can well realize, aided by universal hospitality, opened private houses everywhere to the traveller. The ancient Jew, like the modern Arab, held it a reflection on a community if a passing wayfarer was not made some one's guest.¹⁹ To bring water at once, to wash the traveller's feet, dusty with the Eastern sandals,²⁰ was an act of courtesy which it showed a churlish spirit to omit. Food and lodging, for himself and his beasts, if he had any, were provided, and he was regarded as under the sacred protection of his host.²¹ At

¹⁹ Judges 19. 15.
Job 31. 32.

²⁰ Luke 7. 44.
1 Tim. 5. 10.

²¹ Gen. 18. 2; 19.
1. 6; 24. 26.
Ex. 2. 20.
Judges 6. 18;
13. 15; 19. 20.
23. Josh. 2. 1.

the time of Christ this primitive simplicity still continued. The Rabbis constantly urge the religious merit of hospitality, promising Paradise as its reward, and ranking the kindly reception of strangers higher than to have been honoured by an appearance of the Shechinah^p itself. Its universal recognition as a natural duty, in His age, is often found even in the discourses of our Lord.²²

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We may feel sure, therefore, that it was not an "inn" where Joseph and Mary found shelter after their journey, though that word is used in our English version. In the only two other places in which it occurs, it refers to a friendly "guest-chamber"²³ in a private house.¹ At such a time, however, when strangers had arrived from every part, the household to which they looked for entertainment had already opened their guest-chamber to earlier comers, and the only accommodation that could be offered was a place, half kitchen and half stable, which was simply one of the countless natural hollows or caves in the hill-side, against which the house had been built, as is still seen frequently in Palestine.^r

²² Matt. 23. 35,
43; 10. 40.
Luke 14. 13;
7. 44.

²³ Mark 14. 14.
Luke 22. 11.

How long Joseph and Mary had been in Bethlehem before Jesus was born is impossible to say, for time is of no value to Orientals, and a stay of a few weeks more or less would be little regarded. St. Luke merely tells us that "while they were there" Mary gave birth to the Saviour. Milton, following the immemorial tradition of the Church, sings:

"It was the winter wild²⁴
While the heaven-born child,
All meanly wrapt, in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize;
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun."

²⁴ Hymn on the
Nativity.

But the poet's fancy alone creates the bleak wintriness of the time, for the outlying shepherds on the hills around were living witnesses of the reverse. Yet it seems most probable that the great event took place between December, 749, of Rome, and February, 750; and the only reason why there can be any hesitation in supposing December 25th to have been the very day is the natural doubt

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whether the date could have been handed down so exactly, and the fear lest the wish to associate the birth of the Redeemer with the return of the sun, which made Christmas be early spoken of as the "day of the triumphant sun," may have led to its having been chosen.^a

The simplicity of St. Luke's narrative is very striking. An event, compared with which all others in human history are insignificant, is recorded in a few words, without any attempt at exaggeration or embellishment. The Apocryphal Gospels, on the contrary, abound in miraculous details, for the most part trifling and childish. Some features in their narratives, however, are not wanting in naturalness or even sublimity, and, at the least, they have the merit of showing how the early Church painted for itself the scene of the Nativity. "It happened," say these old legends,²⁵ "as Mary and Joseph were going up towards Bethlehem, that the time came when Jesus should be born, and Mary said to Joseph, 'Take me down from my ass,' and he took her down from her ass, and said to her, 'Where shall I take thee, for there is no inn here?' Then he found a cave near the grave of Rachel, the wife of the Patriarch Jacob—the mother of Joseph and Benjamin; and light never entered the cave, but it was always filled with darkness. And the sun was then just going down. Into this he led her, and left his two sons beside her,¹ and went out toward Bethlehem to seek help. But when Mary entered the cave it was presently filled with light, and beams, as if of the sun, shone around; and thus it continued, day and night, while she remained in it.

"In this cave the child was born, and the angels were round Him at His birth, and worshipped the New-born, and said, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth and goodwill to men.' Meanwhile Joseph was wandering about, seeking help. And when he looked up to heaven, he saw that the pole of the heavens stood still, and the birds of the air stopped in the midst of their flight, and the sky was darkened. And looking on the earth he saw a dish full of food, prepared, and workmen, resting round it, with their hands in the dish to eat, and those who were stretching out their hands did not take any of the food, and those who were

²⁵ Protev. c. 17—
²⁰ Hist. de
 Nat. Mar. c.
¹³ Hist.
 Joseph. c. 7.

lifting their hands to their mouths did not do so, but the faces of all were turned upwards. And he saw sheep which were being driven along, and the sheep stood still, and the shepherd lifted his hand to strike them, but it remained up-lifted. And he came to a spring, and saw the goats with their mouths touching the water, but they did not drink, but were under a spell, for all things at that moment were turned from their course."^u

But if wonders such as these were wanting, the birth of the Saviour was not without attestations of His divine glory. If His birth was mean on earth below, it was celebrated with hallelujahs by the heavenly host in the air above.²⁶ The few fields in the valley below Bethlehem have, likely, been always too valuable to be used for pasture, but the slopes and heights of the hills around were then, as they had been in David's time, and are still, the resort of shepherds, with their numerous flocks, which supplied the requirements of the neighbouring Temple. The "Onomasticon," of Eusebius²⁷ ^x informs us that about "a thousand paces from Bethlehem stands a tower called Eder²⁸—that is, the tower of the shepherds^y—a name which foreshadowed the angelic appearance to the shepherds, at the birth of our Lord." Jewish tradition has preserved the record of a tower of this name, in this locality, where the flocks of sheep for the Temple sacrifices were pastured; and there still remain, at the given distance, eastwards from Bethlehem, the ruins of a church which Helena, the mother of Constantine, caused to be built on the spot believed to have been that at which the heavenly vision was seen.

²⁶ McLaurin's *Glorious in the Cross of Christ*.

²⁷ Quoted by Caspari, 56.

²⁸ *Eder*, a flock.

On the night of the birth of Christ, a group of shepherds lay out, with their flocks, on the hill-side, in the neighbourhood of this ancient watch-tower. Some of them were keeping their turn of watching while the others slept, for shepherds relieved each other by watches, as our sailors do, at fixed hours.^z St. Luke expressly tells us that they were "watching the watches of the night." To have received such surpassing honour from above, they must have been members, though poor and humble, of that true Israel which included Mary and Joseph, Zacharias and Elisabeth, Simeon and Anna—

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the representatives, in those dark days, of the saints of their nation in its brighter past. They must have been men looking out, in their simple way, towards the invisible and eternal, and seeking that kingdom of God for themselves which was one day, as they believed, to be revealed in their nation at large. Only that mind which has sympathy with external nature can receive in their true significance the impressions it is fitted to convey, and only the heart which has sympathy with spiritual things can recognize their full meaning. Poetic sensibility is required in the one case, and religious in the other. In each it is the condition of sincere emotion. The stillness over hill and valley, broken only by the bleating of the sheep; the unclouded brightness of the Syrian sky, with its innumerable stars; and the associations of these mountain pastures, dear to every Jew, as the scene of David's youth, were over and around them. And now, to quote the beautiful narrative of St. Luke, "lo, an^{aa} angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord^{bb} shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all the people.^{cc} For unto you is born, this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be the sign unto you: ye shall find a babe^{dd} wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host, praising God and saying—

'Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
Good-will toward men.'^{ee}

With this ever-memorable anthem—the first and last melody of heaven ever heard by mortal ears—the light faded from the hills, as the angels went away into heaven, and left earth once more in the shadow of night,^{ff} knowing and thinking nothing of that which so supremely interested distant worlds. Wondering at such a vision, and full of simple trust, the shepherds had only one thought—to see the babe and its mother for themselves. Climbing the hill, therefore, with eager haste, they hurried to Bethlehem, and

there found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger,²⁸ as had been told them. CHAP. IX.

No details are given: no heightening of the picture of this first act of reverence to the new-born Saviour. Nor are they needed. The lowliness of the visitors, the pure image of the Virgin Mother and her Child, are better left in their own simplicity. Infancy is for ever dignified by the manger of Bethlehem: womanhood is ennobled to its purest ideal in Mary: man, as such, receives abiding honour, in the earliest accepted homage to her Son being that of the simple poor.

A great teacher has pointed some striking lessons²⁹ on the way in which the whole incident was received, as St. Luke relates, by those immediately concerned. The shepherds spread abroad the story, with hearts full of grateful adoration; the hearers wonder at it, but Mary ponders in her heart all that had been told her. "There were more virgins in Israel, more even of the tribe of David, than she," says the great preacher; "but she was the Chosen of God. It was natural, and it is easy to understand, that when a second appearance of angels, like that which she had already herself experienced, was seen, she should ponder in her heart their words, which concerned her so nearly. But, if we ask ourselves—was this pondering the words in her heart already the true faith that carries the blessing,—the fruitful seed of a personal relation to the Saviour?—did Mary already believe, firmly and immovably, that the Saviour of the world should see the light of life through her?—the Gospels leave us too clearly to think the opposite. There was a time, long after this, when Christ was already a Teacher, when she wavered between Him and His brethren who did not believe in Him; when she went out with them to draw Him away from His course, and bring Him back to her narrower circle of home life, as one who was hardly in His right mind. Firm, unwavering trust, that knows no passing cloud, is a work of time with all who have an inner personal nearness to the Saviour; and it was so with Mary. She reached it only, like us all, through manifold doubts and struggles of heart, by that grace from above which roused her, ever, anew, and led her on from step to step."

²⁸ Schleiermacher's Predigten, II. 329.

CHAPTER X.

AT BETHLEHEM.

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THE first two months of the life of Christ, if not a longer time, were spent quietly in Bethlehem. That great event in a Hebrew household, His circumcision, marked the eighth day from His birth. To dedicate their children to the God of Israel in His appointed way, and thus at once give them "a portion in Israel," and set them apart from the nations by this sacred token, was a duty which no Jewish parent would for a moment dare to neglect. "On the eighth day," says the Book of Jubilees,^a "shalt thou circumcise thy boy, for on that day were Abraham and the people of his house circumcised. And no one may dare to change the day, nor go a day beyond the eight days,¹ for it is an everlasting law, established and graven on the tablets of heaven. And he who does it not belongs not to the children of the promise, but to the children of destruction. Sons of Belial are they who do it not." The infant Saviour was in all probability carried on the legal day to the Temple, as it was so near, for the performance of the rite,—for Joseph and Mary, like all other Jews, would think a religious act doubly sacred within the hallowed courts of Mount Zion. Custom, however, would allow its being done in the local synagogue, or in the humble house of prayer, in Bethlehem itself, or even in the house in which Mary and Joseph lodged.

The name Mary's child received had already been fixed at the Annunciation, and was formally given at the circumcision, in accordance with Jewish customs in reference to male infants.^b Its association with such a strictly Jewish rite made it the symbol of the child's formal admission into

¹ See John 7.
23, 28.

the congregation of Israel, of which he was henceforth a member. The infant Jesus was now an acknowledged Israelite.^o

Thirty-three days more had to elapse, in accordance with Jewish custom, before Mary could visit the Temple, or even go outside her dwelling, or touch anything made sacred by being consecrated to God. Including the circumcision week, the Jewish mother had to pass forty days of seclusion after the birth of a son,² and sixty-six after that of a daughter,³ before she could again take part in common life. After this long delay, she might appear in the Holy Place, to thank God for her preservation, and to receive from the priest the legal rite of purification.

When, at last, the day of her long-desired visit to the Temple came, Mary, with her child, had to present themselves in the Court of the Women as soon as the morning incense had been offered, and the nine blasts of the Temple trumpets had given the signal for morning prayer.^d The road from Bethlehem ran along the western side of the hill which overlooks Mount Zion from the south,—that on which Pompey, sixty years before, had pitched his camp—a defilement of the holy soil never since forgotten. Passing Herod's great amphitheatre,⁴ with its heathen ornaments,—a sight as revolting to a Jewess as was the remembrance of the bloody games celebrated in the circus within—Mary would go up the Valley of the Giants, and at the further end of it the full splendour of the city and Temple would be before her. The long sweep of the valley of Hinnom ran, bending westward, to the valley of the Kidron, with the royal gardens where the two valleys met, and mansions and palaces rising on the hills beyond. Over Ophel rose the dazzling whiteness of the Royal Porch of the Temple, a structure longer and higher than York Cathedral, built upon a solid mass of masonry, almost equal in height to the tallest of our church spires.⁵ Passing up the northern arm of Hinnom, her road skirted the pools of Gihon, shining, as she looked at them, in the morning light, and wound round to the Gennath Gate, under the shadow of the great towers beyond the palace of Herod, on the line of the oldest of the

² Lev. 12. 4.³ Lev. 12. 5.^d Bell. Jud. ii. 3. 2.⁵ Recovery of Jerusalem, 9.

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city walls. These fortresses had all been built by Herod to overawe Jerusalem, and had been named by him, the one, after his friend Hippius, the next, after his brother Phasaël, and the third, after his wife Mariamne, whom he had murdered, but could not forget. On the north-east, the colossal, eight-sided Psephinos, with its double crown of breastworks and battlements, looked down on the city, and all four glittered in the early light, and rose high into the clear blue of the sky. Mary was now within the walls of Jerusalem, and had to thread her way through the narrow streets of the lower town, and, after crossing the bridge over the valley, to Mount Moriah, would at last reach the eastern side of the Temple, where the Golden Gate, at the head of the long flight of steps that led to the valley of the Kidron, opened into the Court of the Women.

She would, doubtless, be early enough on her way to hear the three trumpet blasts which announced the opening of the outer gate, long before the call to prayer. The earlier she came, the less chance would there be of her meeting anything on the way that might defile her, and prevent her entering the Temple. Women on her errand commonly rode to the Temple on oxen, that the body of so huge a beast between them and the ground might prevent any chance of defilement from passing over a sepulchre on the road, and, doubtless, she rode either an ass or an ox, as was the custom.⁶

⁶ Lightfoot,
Hore
Hebraice, i. 77.

While the mothers who were coming that morning for purification gradually gathered, Mary would have to wait outside the lofty gate of the Court of the Israelites, known as that of Nicanor,⁶ because the head and hands of the Syrian general of that name, slain in battle by Judas Maccabæus, had been hung up on it in triumph.⁷ She had doubtless often heard, among the household stories of her childhood, how the haughty enemy of her people wagged his hand, each day, towards Judea and Jerusalem, with the words, "Oh! when will it be in my power to lay them waste?" and how the hand that had thus been lifted against the holy place in blasphemy, had been exposed on the gate before her in shame.¹ It was the greatest of all the Temple

⁷ Jost, *Jud.* i. 142.

gates: greater even than the outer gate east of it, known as the Beautiful, from its being covered with massy silver and gold, richly carved,⁸ or from its being made of Corinthian brass, elaborately chased,⁹ and of far higher value than even gold. It was known also as the Agrippa Gate, for over its eastern, or outer side, glittered a gigantic Roman eagle, underneath which Herod had inscribed the name of his friend Vipsanius Agrippa, the friend and son-in-law of Augustus. A flight of fifteen steps, in crescent shape, formed the approach to it, and marked the height of the Court of the Men, above that of the Women. The gate, itself, stood at the inner end of a massive structure, fifty cubits in depth, with porticoes at the eastern side, and chambers above it, under which Joseph doubtless waited with Mary, for husbands could enter the Court of the Women with their wives,⁹ though no woman could pass into the Court of the Men. They must have shuddered as they passed underneath the great golden eagle, for it was the hateful symbol of idolatry and Roman domination, for destroying which, in the riots before Herod's death, so many of the flower of Jerusalem were soon to die.

⁸ Jos. Bell. Jud. v. 5. 3.

⁹ Jos. Ant. xv. 11. 5.

After a time, the Nicanor Gate was opened, and the offerings of all the women who had come for purification, which was much the same as churching is with us, were taken from them, by the Levites, into the Court of the Priests, to be burned on the altar, after the morning sacrifice. Mary might have had either a lamb, or a pair of young pigeons, for the rite; but Joseph was poor, and she was contented with the cheaper offering of doves,¹⁰ very probably bought from the Temple officer, who kept flocks of doves, purchased with the funds of the Temple, and sold to those who were about to offer, at the market price.¹⁰ Or she may have got them in the outer court, which had been turned into a noisy bazaar, by great numbers of money-changers, sellers of doves, and even dealers in oxen, who sought the custom of the crowds frequenting the Temple, contrary to the very idea of such a place.¹¹ Meanwhile, the assembled mothers spent the interval before their offering was laid on the altar, in giving thanks to God for their

¹⁰ Jos. i. 152.

¹¹ Matt. 21. 12. John 2. 14. Delitzsch, Jüdisches Handwerker-leben z. Zeit. Jesu, 26.

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recovery. After a time, a priest came with some of the blood, and, having sprinkled them with it, pronounced them clean,ⁱ and thus the rite ended.

Her own "purification," however, was not the only object of this first visit to the Temple, after the birth of her Son. In the patriarchal times, the firstborn son of each family seems to have been the assistant of the Family Head in the priestly services of the household. Jewish tradition has

¹² Winer, R. W.
B. *Art.*
"Reinigung."

always supported this belief,¹² and the ancient commentators appeal to various passages in support of it.^k A great change was, however, introduced by Moses. Aaron and his sons were set apart, with the whole tribe of Levi, as the only priests, and thus the priestly services of the firstborn were no longer required. That they had originally been claimed, however, was still kept before the people by a law ere long announced at Sinai, that the eldest male, of both man and beast, was sacred to God. Of the lower creatures, some were to be offered on the altar; others, redeemed at a fixed price. The firstborn son was to be presented before God in the Temple, and consecrated to His service, a month after birth, but a money payment of not more than five shekels,^l and, in the case of a parent's poverty, of less, was accepted as a "redemption" of the rights this involved.¹³

¹³ Lev. 27. 6.
Num. 18. 15,
16; 3. 12.
Lev. 12. 4.
Ex. 13. 13;
24. 20.

Rabbinical law, in the time of Mary, had made a refinement on the original statute of Moses, no child being required to be "presented to the Lord" who was in any way maimed, or defective, or had any blemish, so as to be unfit for a priest¹⁴—a rule which throws an incidental light on Mary's child, such as might have been expected. He must have been, in all points, without physical blemish.

¹⁴ Lightfoot,
Hor. Heb. iii.
38. Herzog's
Real-Ency. iv.
145.

The details of the ceremony, as observed in the days of our Lord, have not come down to us, but may, doubtless, be illustrated by those still in force, for the "redemption of the firstborn" is still observed by strict Jews as the legacy of immemorial tradition. The Hebrew father invites ten friends and a Rabbi, who must be a Cohen,¹⁵ that is, one reputed to belong to the house of Aaron,—to his house, on the thirty-first day after the child's birth. The infant is then brought in by him and laid on the table before the

¹⁵ Cohen,
כֹּהֵן, is the
Hebrew word
for priest.

Rabbi, with a sum of money—which, in England, if the father be ordinarily well-to-do, generally amounts to about twelve shillings.^m He then formally tells the Rabbi that his wife, who is an Israelite, has borne, as her firstborn, a male child, which, therefore, he now gives to the Rabbi, as the representative of God.ⁿ “Which would you, then, rather do?” asks the Rabbi, “give up your firstborn, who is the first child of his mother, to Jehovah, or redeem him for five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is five gera?” The father, of course, answers that he wishes to redeem his child. “This is my firstborn,” says he; “here, take unto thee the five shekels due for his redemption.” As he hands the money to the Rabbi, he praises God for the day—“Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and commanded us to perform the redemption of a son. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast maintained us, and preserved us, to enjoy this season.” The Rabbi then takes the money, and after passing the coin round the child’s head, as a symbol of redemption, lays his other hand on its brow, with the words—“This [child] is instead of this [money], and this [money] instead of this [child]: may this child be brought to life, to the Law, and to the fear of heaven; and as he has been brought to be ransomed, so may he enter into the Law, and good deeds.” He then places both his hands on the child’s head, and prays—“God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh. The Lord bless and preserve thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Length of days, years, and peace, be gathered to thee; and God keep thee from all evil and save thy soul.” And now the rite is over.

In a nation which has boasted, for two thousand years, that it hands down its religious customs, from generation to generation, without a shadow of change, in word or form, a practice of to-day is, doubtless, in most respects, identical with its counterpart in the time of Mary. It was, we may assume, with some such prayers and solemn forms that Joseph and Mary, still standing before the Nicanor Gate, “presented” the infant Saviour “to the Lord,”^{16 o} after Mary ^{16 Luke 2. 22.}

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had been declared "clean" by the sprinkling of the blood of of the doves.

It was still morning, and crowds of men were entering the Court of the Israelites, by the Nicanor Gate, or passing out. The mothers and fathers who had firstborn sons to redeem were still before the gate, Mary and Joseph among them. And now an aged man, who could not come earlier to his morning devotions, approaches. We know only that his name was Simeon, a very common one, then, among the Jews, and that he was one in whom the reign of form and rite had not extinguished true spiritual conceptions. He was "a just man and devout," says St. Luke¹⁷—an expression, the force of which, in those days, is seen in the explanation of nearly the same character given to the great high priest Simon. "He was called 'Just' both for his piety towards God, and his charity towards his countrymen."¹⁸ Simeon must have been one who, though he followed the Law, did so from the love of it, and from the fear of God, and was careful of its spirit, while, no doubt, exact in the countless ritual observances then thought to constitute "righteousness;" one, like Nathanael, "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."¹⁹ Habitually drawing near God, the promise had been fulfilled to this aged saint that God would draw near to him:²⁰ for "the Holy Ghost was upon him." Too old to care for longer life, so far as earth alone was concerned, his heart yet beat warmly for his down-trodden nation, and for man at large, sunk in heathen darkness. He would fain wait among the living till the appearance of the "Consolation of Israel"—the familiar name by which his race, in their deep yearning for deliverance, had come to speak of the long-expected Messiah,^p as the sure restorer of its glory. He had a premonition, divinely sent, that he should have this joy, and had come this morning "by the spirit"^a into the Temple. How he knew it we cannot tell, but, as Mary stood presenting her child, he recognized in Him the "Messiah of God." The ceremony over, his full heart cannot restrain itself. Tottering towards the young mother, he takes her babe in his arms, and gives thanks to God in words of touching beauty—"Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant

¹⁷ Ch. 2. 25.¹⁸ Ant. xii. 2. 5.¹⁹ John 1. 47.²⁰ James 4. 8.

depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to lighten the heathen and the glory of Thy people Israel." Like a true Jew, he thinks of Israel as the centre of the Messianic glory, the light of which is to stream, afar, over the heathen world around, attracting them to it.

Turning to Joseph^r and Mary, the old man then says a few parting words, with prophetic insight of the future both of the child and its mother. "Your child," says he to her, "is destined for the fall of many in Israel, for many will reject Him; but also for the rising again of many, who will believe on Him and live. He is sent for a sign which shall be spoken against, and will meet with reproach and contradiction, which will reveal the thoughts of many hearts respecting Him"—a truth too sadly culminating at Calvary. Mary's own heart "would be pierced with a great sorrow."

At that instant, we are told, an aged woman, Anna by name, of the tribe of Asher, and therefore a Galilean, approached the gate. She was eighty-four years of age, and had thus lived through the long sad period of war, conquest, and oppression, which had intensified, in every Jewish heart, the yearning for national deliverance by the promised Messiah. She must have remembered the fatal war between the Asmonean brothers, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus,²¹ which had brought all the misery of her people ²¹ B.C. 7. in its train, and she had likely seen the legions of Pompey, when they encamped on the hills round Jerusalem.²² The ²² B.C. 63. rise of Herod²³ was a recollection of her middle life, and its ²³ B.C. 37. dreadful story of war, murder, and crime, must have sunk into her heart, as it had into the hearts of all her race.

Her long life had been spent in pious acts and services, for, after she had been seven years a wife, her husband had died, leaving her, doubtless, still very young, since Hebrew girls married at twelve or fourteen years of age. She had never married again, a fact mentioned by St. Luke, in accordance with the feeling of the day,²⁴ to her honour, but ²⁴ 1 Tim. 3. 2. had been, in the words of St. Paul,²⁵ "a widow indeed," ²⁵ 1 Tim. 5. 5. "trusting in God," and "continuing in supplications and

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²⁵ Luke 2. 37.

prayers night and day." She might, in truth, be said to have lived in the Temple,²⁶ and to have spent her life in fastings and prayers; having very likely come from Galilee to be near the holy place, and thus able to give herself up to religious exercises, on the spot, where, in the eyes of a Jew, they were most sacred.^s

Such a woman must have been well known in a place like Jerusalem. Catching the burden of Simeon's words as she passed, she too, like him, forthwith thanks God that the promise of the Messiah is now, at last, fulfilled. There could have been few, however, to whom the glad tidings of such a Saviour were welcome, for though the heart of the nation was burning with Messianic hopes of a political kind, we are told that Anna was able to tell them to all in Jerusalem who looked for a redemption of a higher type.^t

²⁷ Matt. 2. 22.²⁸ Ch. 2. 10.

Returning to Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary seem to have intended to settle in it permanently,²⁷ for even after their return from Egypt they would have gone to it again, but for their fear of Archelaus. St. Matthew²⁸ speaks of their living in a "house" when the Magi came, very soon after the Presentation, but the natural chamber in the hill-side, which was Mary's first shelter, would be as much a part of a house as any other. It has for ages been the custom to speak of the birthplace of Jesus as a cave, but the word raises very different ideas in our minds, from any that could have been felt, where such cool, dry recesses are, even still, ordinary parts of village or country houses of the humbler kind.

The "Cave of the Nativity" now shown in Bethlehem, is surrounded by such artificial distractions, that it is hard to realize the possibility of its being the actual scene of the most stupendous event in all history. A convent, like a mediæval castle for strength and solidity, and of great extent, crowns the hill, its huge buttresses resting on the shelving rocks far below. The village lies on the eastern and western summit-crests of the hill, at a height above the sea²⁹ only 300 feet lower than the top of Helvellyn, and as high as the loftiest hill-top in the Cheviot range. You may walk round it in a quarter of an hour, or along its whole length in half that time, or from side to side of it in a quarter.

²⁹ 2,538 Paris feet = 2,774 English feet. Arnold's Palæstina. The summit of Helvellyn is 3,055 feet above the sea-level: that of Cheviot Peak 2,638: and that of Broad Law, in Peebles, 2,741.

The villagers support themselves partly by field work, but mainly by carving rosaries, crucifixes, and models of the Holy Sepulchre, in wood, for sale. The Cave of the Nativity lies on the east hill, under a "Church of St. Mary," first built by the Emperor Constantine, but often renewed since. To this church there is joined, on the north, the Latin cloister of the Franciscans, with the Church of St. Catherine, which belongs to it, and, on the south, the Greek and the Armenian cloisters.

The "Church of the Nativity"—venerable at least for its great age—is built in the form of a cross. The choir, two steps higher than the long nave, includes the top and arms of the cross, and is divided from the nave by a partition. A low door, in the west, leads, through the porch, to the desolate and cheerless nave, with forty-four pillars, in seven rows, supporting the roof, the rough beams of which are uncovered, and look very bare and dreary. The Greeks and Armenians have charge of this part, the Latins being only allowed to pass through it to their cloister. The former have altars in the choir; that of the Greeks, which is consecrated to "the three kings," standing in the centre, and showing, in a niche under it, a star of white marble, marking the spot where the star of the wise men stood in the heavens over Bethlehem! The Cave of the Nativity is under the altar, and is reached, from both sides of the choir, by a flight of broad and beautiful marble steps, respectively fifteen and thirteen in number. The cave itself is about thirty-eight feet long, eleven broad, and nine high, and is paved with black and red-veined marble. The sides are partly lined with marble slabs, but some of these, on the north, have fallen off, and show the bare wall, while, elsewhere, curtains of silk or linen are hung up—the silk apparently only at festivals. From the roof hangs a row of silver lamps along the whole length of the cave. The site of the manger itself is on the east side of the grotto, in a rounded niche about eight feet high and four broad, in which an altar stands. The pavement of this recess is a few inches higher than that of the cave, and is formed of marble slabs on which there is a silver star, with sparkling rays, inlaid with precious stones.

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Along the edge runs an inscription which no one can read without emotion—"Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est."³⁰

³⁰ Here, Jesus Christ was born, of the Virgin Mary.

South from this spot, in a corner, is a small separate cave, three steps lower than the larger one, and in this stands the "Altar of the Manger;" but as the wooden manger which was exhibited in earlier times was taken to Rome in 1486, by Pope Sixtus V., very little interest attaches now, even on the ground of antiquity, to the crib of coloured marble shown in its place. A painting of the Adoration of the Shepherds covers the rock behind. Five silver lamps swing before this, and opposite is the "Altar of the Magi," with another painting. It throws additional distrust over all, except, perhaps, the central facts of the spot, that a door from the larger cave admits into a long, crooked, rough opening, like the gallery of a mine, in which are various altars, in recesses, natural, or formed by man. You are shown the "Chapel of St. Joseph;" then that of "The Innocents," under the altar of which a square latticed opening is said to lead to the cave in which the bones of the murdered Innocents were buried. From the Chapel of the Innocents you pass the altar of Eusebius of Cremona, who lies there; and in a cave at the west end of the gallery you are shown the tombs of the holy Paula and her daughter Eustochium, with that of their friend St. Jerome, whose cell—the scene of his wonderful version of the Scriptures—is pointed out, a little beyond.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAGI.

THE two centuries in which Judea was a province of the Persian Empire¹ were, perhaps, the happiest time in the history of the Jewish nation. Enjoying perfect religious liberty, for which alone they cared, they were loyal and contented. Nehemiah, the rebuilder of Jerusalem, was at the same time a Persian pacha, and the people at large only expressed their common fidelity to the power he represented, in allowing, with a liberality amazing in their case, a sculpture of Susa, the Persian metropolis, to be cut over one of the gates of the Temple.²

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¹ B. C. 540—332.² Winer, R. W. B. *Art.* "Susa."

The most striking characteristic of each nation furthered this mutual respect. In Persia the highest form of Aryan religion had been brought face to face with the highest form of Shemitic, and there were many points in which mutual sympathy and regard were inevitable. Both nations hated idolatry; indeed, the Persian was more zealous in this than the Jew had been, for there were not wanting, even in the exile, Jews who served idols.³ In Ormuzd and Ahriman, the personifications of Light and Darkness, or Good and Evil, the Persian, as it might seem, had only developed the Jewish doctrine of Jehovah and the Evil that struggled to counteract His beneficent rule. To the Persian, as to the Jew, his sacred books were the weapon against darkness, and the guide to blessedness. They prescribed commandments and supplied revelations. They taught a life after death, and future rewards and punishments; they disclosed the issue of the great struggle between Good and Evil, and what would happen at the end of the world. Times of great trial were to prove the faithful

³ Ezek. 14. 1 ff.

before the final day. Their blood would flow like water. At the end of every millennium, however, Ormuzd would send a prophet, with a new revelation, and thus a reformation would be effected for the time. The prophet next to appear would be born of a virgin, and, after destroying the works of Ahriman, would establish a happy kingdom for a thousand years. To aid him in this, the most famous men of all times would appear in life again. At the end of the millennium, the resurrection, it was taught, would take place, through fifty-seven years. Then would begin the burning-up of the world by fire: the mountains would sink, and the whole globe become like a sea of molten metals. Through this all men must pass, to be purified from the sins still cleaving to them; but while the holy would do it with ease, the wicked would suffer pain such as the same torments would have given them during life. After this purification, even the formerly wicked would be freed from evil. Ahriman and hell would be conquered and pass away; there would remain only the great communion of the blessed, who live with Ormuzd.

As regards this life, the Persians were taught that no man can remain neutral, but must take the side either of good or evil. To follow the former was not only right but natural, since Ormuzd is the Creator. Yet even he who chooses the right side does not always receive his reward, for evil is powerful, and hinders Ormuzd, in many ways, from favouring his servant here. The bad, by the help of Ahriman, may obtain prosperity, and even secure the blessings designed for the good, but in the world to come this would be no longer possible. As a man has lived on earth, so, they believed, would be his reward or suffering in the life beyond. He who has been good and pure, in thought, word, and deed, would be owned as a servant of Ormuzd, and received into the fellowship of the spirits in light, while he who had opposed Ormuzd here, would be driven down, in the life hereafter, to dwell with Ahriman and his followers, in thick darkness. The decision as to the side to which any one belongs would be given according to his works. On the third day after death, judgment, they were taught, will be held, and every soul

will have to pass over a bridge, where the ways to heaven and hell divide. Beside it sit the judges of the dead and weigh the deeds of each soul in great scales. If the good bear down the evil, the soul goes forward, over the bridge, to Paradise, where it is welcomed, and has its dwelling till the Last Judgment. But when a wicked soul presents itself, on the third day after death, to try to pass over the bridge, it seems too narrow and slight, the footsteps totter, and the soul falls into the dark abyss beneath. It is there received with laughter and mockery by fiends, and tortured with the bitterest agonies till the Day of Judgment.⁴

How far this early creed retained its hold among the Persians in the days of the Captivity, is not known, and there are no grounds for assuming that the Jews were indebted to it, to any great extent, for the development of their theology. The unity of Jehovah was in direct opposition to the dualism of the Persian system.^a The Jewish conception of Satan, like that of the resurrection, has its roots in the Old Testament, in which the development of both may be traced. The doctrine of the resurrection, indeed, seems hardly to have been among the old Persian popular beliefs, though found in one place in the Avesta. Jewish ideas respecting angels, good and bad, no doubt received an impulse from those of the Persians,^b but, as a whole, the relation between the two theologies was mainly that of independent similarity in some details.⁵

But while the Jew borrowed very little from Persian sources, the exile, partly under Persian rule, the two hundred years of Persian supremacy in Judea, and the lasting connection between the Jews of the East and their brethren in Palestine, must have created a deep interest, on both sides, in faiths which had so much in common.

The extent to which Parsism had spread in the East, in the days of Christ, cannot be known, but it had doubtless diffused itself, more or less, by the movements of men in these troublous times, over many regions.

On the other hand, the knowledge of Judaism was by no means confined to Palestine. The great bulk of the Jewish nation had never returned from Babylon, but remained, in

⁴ See, for a full account of Parsism, Spiegel—in Herzog. Encyc. xi. 115—127.

⁵ See Dillmann's Art. "Parsien," in Schenkel's Bible-Lexicon.

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distinct communities, spread over the surface of that empire. Their fidelity to their faith was proved by their having supported the colony at Jerusalem till it no longer needed their help.⁶ They looked to the Temple as their religious centre, contributed largely to its funds, and received their ecclesiastical instructions from its authorities. The Babylonian Jew prided himself on the purity of his descent. What the Hebrews of Judea boasted they were, compared to those of other countries, the Babylonian Hebrew claimed to be to the Judean—"like pure flour compared to dough." From Babylon, the Jew had spread through every region of the East, and wherever he went he became a zealous missionary of his faith. Various causes had led to the same wide dispersion in the West, with the same result. The number of proselytes gained, over the world, by this propaganda, was incredible. The West was as full of Jews as the East. Egypt, and other parts of Africa, had a vast Jewish population. To use the words of Josephus, the habitable globe was so full of Jews, that there was scarcely a corner of the Roman empire where they might not be found.⁷ The great synagogue at Alexandria was so large that, if we can believe the Talmud,⁸ the Hazan, or Reader, had to make use of a handkerchief, as a signal, when the congregation were to repeat their "Amen."

Incidental proofs of the success of Jewish proselytism are numerous. Cicero, and Horace, Juvenal, Tacitus,⁹ and

Seneca alike give vent to the irritation everywhere felt, at the numbers of Greeks and Romans, thus won over, to what they regarded as a hateful superstition. Exemption from military service granted to the Jews, trade privileges they specially enjoyed, marriage, and other inducements, swelled the list of proselytes in every part. "The Jewish faith," says Seneca,¹⁰ "is now received over every land: the conquered have given laws to the conqueror." "This race," says Dio Cassius,¹¹ "has been repeatedly checked by the Romans, yet it has increased amazingly, so that it has assumed the greatest boldness."

Josephus tells us¹² that in Antioch a great multitude of Greeks were constantly coming forward as proselytes. Still

⁶ Jost and Derenbourg, *passim*.

⁷ Ant. xiv. 7. 2. Bell. Jud. vii. 3. 3.

⁸ Succa 51. b, quoted in Delitzsch's Jüdisches Handwerkerleben.

⁹ Cic. pro Flacco, c. 28. Horat. Sat. i. 9. 69; 4. 142. Juven. xiv. 96. Tacit. Ann. ii. 85.

¹⁰ Seneca, de Superst.

¹¹ Dio Cassius, xxxvii. 17.

¹² Feil. Jud. vii. 3. 3.

further east, it was the same, for St. Luke¹³ records that proselytes thronged to the feasts at Jerusalem from provinces of the empire, north of the Mediterranean, such as Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, and from Rome itself; from its southern territories, such as Egypt, Arabia, Crete, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and from its eastern extremities, and even from lands beyond—Mesopotamians, Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,—dwellers in the vast regions reaching from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, on the north and south, and even further to the east. The influence of Judaism extended into all lands.

Among the Jewish ideas diffused far and near by this universal agency, none would find so easy and wide a circulation as that which, above all others, filled the mind and heart of every Jew in that age—the expected appearance of a great prince, of whom they spoke as the Messiah or “Anointed.” No indication of popular feeling can be more sure than that supplied by the literature of a period; and Jewish literature, from the date of Daniel to the age of Christ, was more and more completely Messianic. The Book of Enoch, the Jewish Sibylline books, the Psalter of Solomon, the Ascension of Moses, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and other writings of later Judaism, strove to sustain and rouse the nation, in those dark days, by prophetic anticipations of Messianic deliverance. Burning hope glows through them, like fire through clouds, revealing the feverish concentration of heart and thought of all Israel on this one grand expectation.

The restlessness of Judea was only another symptom of this universal tension of the popular mind. Patriotic hatred of foreign rule, and religious zeal against the introduction of heathen manners, kept the country in a continual ferment. This was heightened at every festival by assurances of the Rabbis, priests, and fanatical “prophets,” that Jehovah would not much longer endure the intrusion of the heathen into His own Land. This temper of the people forced Herod to erect five times as many fortresses in Judea as were required in Galilee;¹⁴ and yet, in spite of them,

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¹³ Acts 2. 9—12.¹⁴ Haverth. N. T. Zeitgeschichte, I. 42.

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the robbers and bandits of the Judean hills never ceased to make war against the existing government, in the name of Jehovah. Blind superstition reigned. The bigoted masses were continually deceived by pretended Messiahs, who led them, at one time,¹⁵ to the Mount of Olives, to see the walls of the now heathen Jerusalem fall down at the word of the prophet; at another,¹⁶ to the Jordan, to pass through, dry-shod, like their fathers; at a third, as if nothing could warn them, into the wilderness, to wait for the signs of the Son of Man predicted by Daniel.¹⁷ What must have been the contagious effect of such a state of things on the multitudes of Jews and proselytes from every country, who yearly visited Jerusalem? Josephus, perhaps with some exaggeration, tells us that, at many feasts, there were not less than three millions of pilgrims.¹⁸ How must they have spread over the whole earth the expectation of a great Jewish king who was to conquer the world! for this the Messiah was to accomplish. It is no wonder that Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius should record the fact, though the Jewish historian in mean flattery, and the others from the turn of affairs, applied it to Vespasian.^c

It is, therefore, only what might have been expected, when St. Matthew tells us that strangers from the East came, soon after His birth, to visit the infant Jesus. Any real or fancied occasion, which might lead to the belief that the prince, so universally looked for, had actually appeared, was well-nigh certain to call forth such an incident.

The simple notice given us throws no further light on these earliest pilgrims from the great Gentile world, than is afforded by the title Magi, and the intimation that they were led to undertake their journey to Bethlehem by some mysterious appearances in the heavens.

The worship of the heavenly bodies had been established for immemorial ages in the East, where the transparent atmosphere reveals the splendours of the universe, both by night and day, with a glory unknown to duller regions. In ages when science was yet unknown, and motion was everywhere assumed as the result of inherent life, it was almost inevitable to regard the sun as the lord of day,¹⁹ and the

¹⁵ Jos. Bell. Jud. II. 13. 5.

¹⁶ Jos. Ant. xx. 5. 1.

¹⁷ Jos. Bell. Jud. II. 13. 4. Matt. 24. 24, 26.

¹⁸ Jos. Bell. Jud. vi. 9. 3.

¹⁹ Baal—the sun-God—means “The Lord.” See Buxtorf, Lex. Heb. Chai. Thal. 334, for its various combinations.

moon and stars as ruling the night. From this it was only a single step to superstition. "Magic," as Professor Bastian observes,^d "is the physics of the children of nature." It is the first step towards induction, and misleads, only by assuming that accidental, or independent, coincidence, or succession, is necessarily cause and effect. Like children, men, in simple ages, jump to conclusions from isolated observations, nor is the power of slow and careful generalization, from a wide range of facts, attained, till very much later.

The phenomena of the daily and nightly heavens thus led very early, in the East, to a belief in astrology; the patient scientific faculty being yet wanting which would, hereafter, develop that illusive science into astronomy, as, in a later age, it raised alchemy into chemistry. The stars were supposed, then, as they have been till recent times, to exercise supreme influence over human life and the course of nature, and from this belief a vast system of imaginary results was elaborated. The special power of each star, alone or in conjunction with others, over health and sickness, prosperity or trouble, life or death, the affairs of nations, and the phenomena of nature, was supposed to have been discovered; and this power was believed to affect the future as well as the present. Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the generation before Christ, says of the astrologers of the East, "They think the noblest study is that of the five stars called planets, which they call interpreters. This name they give them, because other stars do not wander like them, but have a fixed course, while these have paths of their own, and predict things to be, thus interpreting to men the will of the gods. For they say that they portend some things by their rising, others by their setting, and still others by their colour, to those who study them diligently. For, at one time, they say they foretell the violence of storms; at another the excess of rains or of heat, the appearance of comets, eclipses of the sun or moon, earthquakes, and, indeed, every change in the sky, either fortunate or the reverse, not only to nations and districts, but to kings and common people."²⁰ The position of the stars at a child's birth

²⁰ Diod. Sic. II. 30.

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was held to determine its future fate or fortune, and, hence, to cast nativities, early became one of the most important functions of astrologers.^e

This science was very early cultivated among the races inhabiting the Mesopotamian plains. Like all higher knowledge in simple times, it was in the hands of a priestly caste, known as Magi, a word which seems of Aryan derivation.^f This order flourished among the Medes, Babylonians, and Persians, but it is chiefly famous in connection with Persia, and seems as if it had risen among the Aryan races, and had only mingled as a foreign element in the Semitic civilization of Babylon.^g

We first meet the title as that of one of the Chaldean officials sent by Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem—the Rabinmag,²¹ or head of the Magi; and in the Book of Daniel,²² we find the caste divided into five classes, as the astrologers and dream interpreters of Babylon. Their origin, however, identified them with the purer faith of Persia, much more than with a corrupt idolatry, and hence they especially flourished under the Persian rule. In later times the name lost its early prestige, from the growth of lower magical arts, practised as the order degenerated, so that, in the New Testament, it is applied, excepting in the case of those who came to visit the infant Saviour, only to two “sorcerers”—Simon Magus, and one Bar-Jesus.²³

Soon after the presentation of our Lord in the Temple, a strange report spread through Jerusalem. Members of the old priestly caste of Persia had “come from the East,” inquiring where they could find a new-born King of the Jews, whose star, they said, they had seen in the East.²⁴ It was quite in keeping with Jewish belief to find indications of great events in the appearances of the heavens, for their ancient Scriptures spoke of a star that should come out of Jacob,²⁵ and they had long referred the prophecy to their expected Messiah. It was, indeed, universally believed that extraordinary events, especially the birth and death of great men, were heralded by appearances of stars, and still more of comets, or by conjunctions of the heavenly bodies. Thus Suetonius tells us²⁶ that at the death of Cæsar “a hairy

²¹ מַגִּי רִבִּין Jer. 39, 8.

²² Dan. 2. 2; 4. 7.

²³ Acts 8. 9; 13. 6.

²⁴ See a fine Sermon of Schleiermacher on the Magi, Predigten iv. 455.

²⁵ Numb. 24. 17.

²⁶ Suet. Cæs. 88.

star shone continuously for seven days, rising about the eleventh hour," and Josephus relates²⁷ that for a whole year before the fall of Jerusalem a star, in the shape of a sword—doubtless a comet—hung over the doomed city.^h A hundred and thirty years after Christ's birth,²⁸ a false Messiah, in Hadrian's reign, assumed the title of Bar-Cochba²⁹—"the son of the star"—in allusion to the star to come out of Jacob. The Jews had already, long before Christ's day, dabbled in astrology, and the various forms of magic which became connected with it. They were skilled in mysterious combinations of letters and numbers, which they used as talismans and amulets, to heal the sick, to drive away evil spirits, and bring frightful curses when wished, and they even affirmed that some of their spells could draw the moon from heaven or open the abyss beneath the earth.³⁰ Such practices dated among them as far back as the time of Alexander the Great. They were much given to cast horoscopes from the numerical value of a name. Everywhere through the whole Roman empire, Jewish magicians, dream expounders, and sorcerers, were found.³¹ Josephus³² ascribes the banishment of the Jews from Rome to the acts of impostors of this kind. Nor did their superstition stop here. They were skilled in the mysteries of astrology itself. "The planets give wisdom and riches," says the Talmud, and it adds, in other passages,—“The life and portion of children hang not on righteousness, but on their star.” “The planet of the day has no virtue, but the planet of the hour (of nativity) has much. Those who are born under the sun are beautiful and noble-looking, frank and open; those born under Venus, rich and amatory; under Mercury, strong in memory and wise; under the moon, feeble and inconstant; under Jupiter, just; under Mars, fortunate.” “The calculation of the stars is the joy of the Rabbi,” says the Pirke Aboth. In another passage, indeed, a Rabbi tells an inquirer that “there is no planet that rules Israel,” but the explanation added shows a pride that only a Jew could express—“The sons of Israel are themselves stars.” Many Rabbis gave themselves to astrology.³³

Belief in the influence of the stars over life and death, and

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Joseph. Bell. Jud. vi. 5, 8.

A.D. 130, 131.

בן כוכב

Hauernath, Zeitschichte, i. 108.

Juv. Sat. vi. 543—548.

Ant. xviii. 3, 5. See also Gieseler's Kirch.-Geschichte, i. 57.

Buxtorf, Lex. Heb. Chal. et Thal. 1623. Gröner's Jahrhundert, ii. 416.

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in special portents at the birth of great men, survived, indeed, to recent times. Chaucer abounds in allusions to it. He attributes the great rain and the pestilence of 1348 and 1350 to an extraordinary conjunction of Saturn with other planets,³⁴ and in the *Man of Lawes Tale*³⁵ he says:—

³⁴ *L'envoy de Chaucer a Scogan. Chaucer's Poems, vol. viii. 145.*

³⁵ *Canterbury Tales. Chaucer's Poems, vol. ii. 13.*

“In sterrès many a wynter therbyfore,
Was write the deth of Ector and Achilles,
Of Pompè, Julius, er they were i-bore;
The stryf of Thebès, and of Ercules,
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deth.”^x

Still later, Shakespere tells us—

“When beggars die there are no comets seen;

³⁶ *Julius Cesar, Act II. sc. 2.*

The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes;”³⁶

and Bedford at Henry V.'s funeral is made to say—

“Comets, importing change of time and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death.”³⁷

³⁷ *Henry VI. Act i. sc. 1.*

The special phenomena that led the Magi to undertake their journey have been elsewhere stated.³⁸ That successive conjunctions of three planets in the sign of the Zodiac, Pisces, which was believed by the Jews to be that in which a similar conjunction happened before the birth of Moses, and in which another was to occur before the birth of the Messiah,¹ should have roused the attention of men to whom the motions of the planets were revelations from heaven, was only natural. Doubtless they had heard in their own country such a belief expressed by Jews, and traced to the prophecy of Balaam, one of their own caste, and from their own parts. When, in addition to such significant facts, at a time when all men were looking for a great Jewish prince, a comet appeared soon after, nothing could be more in keeping than that men, to whom such phenomena were the voice of God, should set out to pay homage to the new-born King who was to rule the world.

At the time when the Magi arrived, Herod, now an old man, was sinking into the last stages of disease, but was still as jealous and afraid of attempts against his throne as ever. Its steps were wet with the blood of his best-

³⁸ In note S to Chap. ix. at the end.

loved wife, his sons, his benefactor, and of the flower of the nation, murdered to make it secure. Like our own William the Conqueror, or Henry VIII., or like Alexander the Great, or Nero, or Tiberius, his character had grown darker in his later years, and now, in his old age, he sat alone in his new palace, amidst splendour of architecture greater if possible than that of the Temple, lonely, hated and hating, his subjects waiting impatiently, in veiled rebellion, for his death. In his own court, shortly before, a plot had been discovered which had filled all Jerusalem with commotion. The Pharisees, to the number of 6,000, had refused to take the oath of allegiance, and their leaders, whom the people believed gifted with the power of prophecy, had gone the length of asserting, that God had determined that Herod and his family should be speedily driven from the throne, to make way for the Messiah. To secure the fulfilment of this prediction, the influence of their firm supporter, the wife of Pheroras, his brother, was used, to carry the plot inside the palace, among the ladies of the court. Bagoas, the eunuch, as most easily approached, from his connection with the harem, was made their tool, and, with him, a youth named Carus, the loveliest person of his day, but loathsomely immoral. Bagoas was won over to believe that he would be the father of the coming Messiah,³⁹ but Herod found out the whole, and the conspiracy was quenched in blood. No wonder that, as St. Matthew tells us, "he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him," when the news spread of strangers having come on such an errand as that of the Magi. To Herod their arrival was a fresh cause of jealous terror: to Jerusalem a possible ground of hope.

³⁹ Ant. xvii. 2. 5.

Herod had often before shown the craft bred by habitual suspicion, and was too clever to take any rash steps now. Summoning the heads of the priesthood and the "scribes" to his palace, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

Jewish theology had already determined, correctly, that the Messiah was to be of the stock of Judah, which had from the first challenged the headship of the tribes, and had been supreme since Ephraim's captivity in Assyria.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ B.C. 721.

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It boasted of David, the ancestor and the prototype of the Messiah, and the words of Jacob that the "sceptre" should "not depart from it, until Shiloh come," or, as it may be translated, from the Greek version,^m "till he comes to whom the dominion belongs," had long been understood to refer to the Messiah. "How fair is the King Messiah," says the Targumⁿ on the passage,⁴¹ "who will rise from the house of Judah!" The words of Zechariah,⁴² "The Lord of Hosts hath visited the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle," are also applied by another Targum to the Messiah.⁴³ "A king will rise from the children of Jesse,"⁴⁴ says the same Targum elsewhere, "and the Messiah will spring from his children's children." Hence "the Son of David" was a constant name for this expected Prince.

As a descendant of David, Bethlehem, David's town, was naturally regarded as the place of his birth, and hence the passage in Micah, adduced by the priests and scribes,⁴⁵ is also quoted by the Targums.⁴⁶ "An Arab said to a Jew at his plough," says the Talmud,⁴⁷ "'Your Messiah is born!' 'What is his name?' asked the Jew. 'Menahem, the son of Hezekiah.' 'Where was he born?' asked the Jew again. 'In the king's castle at Bethlehem Judah,' answered the Arab."

Long before the birth of Christ, it had been felt that the time for the advent of the Messiah was fulfilled, and his non-appearance even led to the fanciful idea that he was already born, but kept himself hidden in some unknown part. "We know this man whence he is," said the Jews, long after, of Jesus, "but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is!"⁴⁸ "Thou, O anointed one of Israel," cries the Targum,⁴⁹ "Thou who art hidden on account of the sins of the people of Zion, Thine shall be the kingdom!"

The prophecy of Balaam⁵⁰ had led to the same belief among the Jews, as amongst the Eastern Magi—that a great star would appear in heaven when the Messiah came. "When the Messiah is to be revealed," says the book Sohar,⁵¹ "a star will rise in the east, shining in great brightness, and seven other stars round it will fight against it on every side." "A star will rise in the east which is the star of the

⁴¹ Targ. Jerus. Gen. 49. 10.

⁴² Zech. 10. 3.

⁴³ Jon. Ben Uzziel, in loc.

⁴⁴ Jon. Ben Uzziel, Isaiah 11. 1.

⁴⁵ Chap. 5. 2.

⁴⁶ Jon. Ben Uzziel in Mic. 5. 2.

⁴⁷ Berachot Jerus. 11. a.; quoted by Gfrörer.

⁴⁸ John 7. 27.

⁴⁹ Jon. Ben Uzziel on Mic. 4. 8.

⁵⁰ Num. 24. 17.

⁵¹ Sohar on Exod. p. 3.

Messiah, and will remain in the east fifteen days."⁵² The rising of Bar-Cochba, "the son of the star," was a terrible illustration of this belief.

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Pesitha
Sotaria on
Num. 24. 17.

To hear of Magi coming from the East—the country of Balaam, the reputed founder of the caste, announcing the appearance of the star of the Messiah, which they themselves expected, was, hence, fitted to rouse the Rabbinical world of Jerusalem to the highest excitement. They had already a wondrous estimate of the great soothsayer, for Philo, a contemporary of Christ, speaks of him as "famous for his gift of prophecy." "He was skilled," says he, "in every branch of the black art. He had learned the greatest names (names of angels and of God, to be used in magic), through his knowledge of the flight of birds, and did much that was wonderful by their means. He predicted rain in the hottest time of summer; heat and drought in the midst of winter; unfruitfulness when the fields were greenest; plenty in years of famine, and the overflowing or drying up of streams; the removal of pestilence; and a thousand other things, the foretelling of which got him boundless fame, which spread even to this."⁵³ The Rabbis believed, indeed, that Balaam himself was a Rabbi, who taught disciples the black art, and that the Magi, his successors, knew his prophecy of the star of the Messiah, through the tradition of his schools.⁵⁴

as Philo de Vita
Mosis, Bk. 1.

Having learned the expected birthplace of the Messiah, which he would himself have known, had he been a Jew and not an Idumean, Herod sent for the Magi and made every inquiry, under the pretext that he, also, wished to do homage to the young child. But very different thoughts were in his heart. A descendant of David was not likely to be spared by the man who had murdered the last of the Asmoneans.^p The hope of the world was not to perish thus, however, for the Magi having paid their visit to Bethlehem, and presented gifts to Him, as all Easterns do when they come before princes or the great, a dream, sent from above, led them to return to their own country without revisiting Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ Origen, Op. ii.
321 a.
See Gfrörer's
Jahrhundert,
ii. 360.

Balked in his purpose so far, Herod was not the man

to stop at half-measures. A few murders more were nothing. The most thorough precautions must be taken. A band of soldiers was therefore sent to Bethlehem with orders to kill every male child near the supposed age of the infant he dreaded. Josephus is silent about this slaughter, but this needs not surprise us, for what was a single deed of blood, in a mountain village, among the crimes of Herod? Nor is it alone in the omissions of the historian, for his whole history of the centuries after the Return omits far more than it tells.⁴

Joseph and Mary had left Bethlehem before this tragedy, and had fled to the friendly shelter of Egypt, at a warning divinely given. How long they remained there is not known. All Palestine was under Herod, so that he could have reached them in any part of it, but in Egypt the fugitives were safe. It was, moreover, almost another Judea, for the favour shown to their race by the Ptolemies had induced as many as a million of Jews to settle in the Nile valley, and of the five quarters of Alexandria, with 300,000 free citizens, Jews occupied more than two.⁵⁵ They had had a temple of their own at Leontopolis, in the Delta, for about 160 years, though they preferred to go up to that at Jerusalem; the Greek translation of the Bible, which had already widely taken the place of the Hebrew original, had been made in Egypt, and the Egyptian Rabbis, by their efforts to turn Judaism into a philosophic system which should win it the favour of the cultivated Romans and Greeks, had founded a new school of Jewish theology, which was, hereafter, to influence even Christianity.

It has been usual to suppose that Herod died in the spring of the year 750—that is, within a few months after the birth of Christ. But there seem to be some reasons for believing that he lived till 753.^r

⁴⁵ Keim's *Jesu v. Nazara*, i. 211.

⁵⁶ *Ant.* xvii. 6. 4. Josephus⁵⁶ says that he died shortly before the Passover, and that an eclipse of the moon happened not long before. In the year 750 such an eclipse happened on the 13th of March; but if he died at the end of that month, or in April, there must have been a crowding of events into the short interval, beyond what seems possible.

It appears, however, that there was an eclipse of the moon on the night of January the 10th, in the year 753, and it is urged⁵⁷ that this suits the facts much better, by giving three months instead of one for the incidents mentioned by Josephus, even if Christ were born three years later, and by leaving ample time for those related by Matthew and Luke. A passage has been found in a Calendar of the Feasts, in the Talmud⁵⁸ which seems to support this later date. "The 1st Shebet (or 24th of January) is a day of double good fortune as the day of the death of Herod and of Jannai," for it is joy before God when the wicked are taken from this world." If this be right, the eclipse happened on the 10th of January, Herod's death on the 24th, and there was ample time before April for the burial and all that followed, which must have required weeks.

If, then, Herod had yet nearly three years to live after the birth of Christ, Joseph and Mary must have stayed in Egypt that length of time. Nor would it be difficult for Joseph to find support, as the different classes of Jewish workmen in Egypt were associated in guilds,⁵⁹ which maintained those out of employment, much as trades' unions do, now. The goldsmiths, the silversmiths, the nail-makers and needle-makers, the coppersmiths, and the weavers, are specially mentioned as being banded together in such associations, which supported any stranger of their respective crafts till he found work. The workers in wood, in all probability, had such a union as well; and Joseph, moreover, though called a carpenter in the Gospels, may have been more, for the word does not necessarily mean a worker in wood only, but a waggon smith and other occupations as well.⁶⁰ In its Hebrew sense,⁶¹ it may mean, indeed, any kind of trade which uses cutting instruments, and is used indifferently of workers in metal, wood, or stone.⁶²

Egypt, though thus filled with a Jewish population, was, however, no land for Joseph and Mary, nor, above all, for the infant Jesus. Neither the Greek inhabitants of the towns and cities, nor the Egyptian peasantry, were very friendly to the strangers who, in hundreds of thousands, intruded into the Nile Valley. The old hatred between the

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⁵⁷ By Caspari, Chron. Geog. Einleitung, 26.

⁵⁸ Megillath-Taanith, xl.

⁵⁹ B. Succa 51 b; quoted by Deltzsch, Jud. Handwerkerleben, 38.

⁶⁰ Hofmann, Leben Jesu. 2. ⁶¹ חָרָשׁ (Haraash)

⁶² 1 Chron. 29. 3. Isaiah 40. 19; 44. 12. 2 Kings 22. 6. Isaiah 40. 20.

land of Mizraim and the sons of Israel seemed still, in some measure, to survive on both sides. The Jews hated the Egyptian priesthood, with its worthless secrets and its ridiculous symbols, and prided themselves, as the prophets had done of old, on their purer faith. They saw, in Egypt, the incarnation of the most corrupt heathenism. The command, "Thou shalt make no likeness or graven image," was nowhere mocked to such an extent as on the banks of the Nile. Even Philo makes the remark that the Egyptian religion is the most grovelling of all forms of idolatry, since it did not look to the heavens for objects of worship, but to the earth, and the slime of the Nile, with its creatures.⁶³ Josephus derides the system which worshipped crocodiles and apes, vipers and cats; and even the Roman Juvenal scoffed at a race who grew their divinities in their kitchen garden. The Apostle Paul evidently had Egyptian heathenism in his mind when he speaks of idolatry as running to the foul license of changing the image of the invisible God into the likeness of men, of birds, of four-footed beasts, and creeping things. On the other hand, the Jews suffered from the traditional hatred of their race by the Egyptians, in the repetition of scandals and shameful calumnies against them, which had survived since the Exodus. It was said that the children of Israel, whom Moses led out of Egypt, were lepers, whom Pharaoh had banished from the country; and Greeks and natives, catching at the bitter slander, strove which should turn it, and others equally contemptuous, with most effect, against their Jewish fellow-citizens, whom all equally disliked. The very fact that the Romans had granted special favours to the Jews, and that they were rivals in trade, was, indeed, itself sufficient to account for such an attitude of acrid raillery and depreciation. Things had at last come to open rupture, and the Jewish community of Alexandria looked forward only to ultimate expulsion and ruin.⁶⁴ It is no wonder, therefore, that Joseph and Mary sought to return as soon as possible to their own country.

The Apocryphal Gospels are full of extraordinary miracles wrought by the infant Jesus while in Egypt, and of legends

⁶³ Philo,
Mos. lib. 3.
Leg. ad
Cai. M. 569.

⁶⁴ Jos. c. Apton.
l. 26.

respecting him and Mary, but none of them are worth reproducing. Memphis is commonly given as the place where Joseph settled, and his stay is variously stated as having lasted three years, two, or only one.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Hofmann, 182.
Brunet.

The star and the Magi have naturally given rise to many legends. The country, the number, and the names of the illustrious visitors are as entirely passed over by the Apocrypha as by the Gospels, but later tradition abundantly atones for the omission. They were said to be the kings of Sheba and Seba, in Arabia, come to offer gifts to His light and to the brightness of His rising,⁶⁶ but Persia, Chaldea, Ethiopia, and India, have each had their advocates. It is equally undetermined in the legends, whether they were Jews or heathen, though most of the fathers favour the idea that they were the latter, and the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy⁶⁷ represents them as worshipping fire, and as referring to a prophecy of Zoroaster respecting the Messiah. Their three gifts led to the fancy that they themselves were only three in number, which was supposed to correspond to the three divisions of the earth as then known, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Sometimes, however, they are spoken of as twelve, to correspond with the Apostles, and their names given, with the special gift which each presented. Their kingdoms also are mentioned, and their very ages, which are made to represent youth, manhood, and grey hairs. Bede, indeed, is able to tell us that Melchior was an old man, with long white hair, and a sweeping beard, and that he gave the gold as to a king; that Caspar was a beardless youth, with a ruddy face, and that he presented the frankincense, as a gift worthy the God; while Balthasar was a swarthy strong-bearded man, and gave the myrrh for the burial. In the cathedral at Cologne, visitors may yet see the supposed skulls of the three, set in jewels, and exhibited in a great gilded shrine. They are said to have been discovered by Bishop Reinald of Cologne in the twelfth century.

⁶⁶ Isaiah 60. 1—6.

⁶⁷ Chaps. 7 and 8.

Imagination has been equally busy with the star. The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy⁶⁸ says it was an angel in the form of a star, and several of the Fathers were of the same opinion. Origen believed it to have been a comet. One

⁶⁸ Chaps. 7 and 8.

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tradition is beautiful. In the farthest East, it says, lived a people who had a book which bore the name of Seth, and in this was written the appearance of the star of the Messiah, and the offering of gifts to Him. This book was handed down from father to son, generation after generation. Twelve men were chosen who should watch for the star, and when one died, another was chosen in his place. These men, in the speech of the land, were called Magi. They went, each year, after the wheat-harvest, to the top of a mountain, which was called the Mountain of Victory. It had a cave in it, and was pleasant by its springs and trees. At last the star appeared, and in it the form of a little child, and over him the sign of the cross; and the star itself spoke to them, and told them to go to Judea. For two years, which was the time of their journey, the star moved before them, and they wanted neither food nor drink. Gregory of Tours⁶⁹ adds that the star sank, at last, into a spring at Bethlehem, where he himself had seen it, and where it still may be seen, but only by pure maidens.¹¹

⁶⁹ A bishop, born about A.D. 540.

⁷⁰ Guder in Herzog, ix. 174.

The Gospel of Matthew, which was written for the Jewish Christians of Palestine,⁷⁰ has for its primary aim the proof that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and as nothing would weigh so much in the minds of men trained in Jewish ideas, as evidences from their own Scriptures, it abounds with quotations from them to show how prophecy was fulfilled in our Saviour. There are five such quotations in the first two chapters, some of which would not perhaps have struck us, of themselves, as primarily bearing on the Messiah. In Christ's day, a system of allegorizing was in vogue with the Rabbis of the various Jewish schools, as it afterwards came to be in the Christian Church, and this, though familiar to those for whom the Gospel was first written, is not so much so to us. How far, in some cases, it is intended to be understood that the passages quoted, originally referred to the events to which they are applied, has been a subject of much controversy, for the sacred writers themselves evidently intend them to be understood, in some instances, as a divine fulfilment of prophecy, but, in others, only as an illustration and parallel. Perhaps the rule laid down by Tholuck⁷¹ is as

⁷¹ Herzog, xvii. 39.

nearly right as any. "Where parallels are adduced in the New Testament," says he, "from the Old, whether it be in words of the prophets, or in institutions or events, it is to be taken for granted, in general, that the intention was we should regard them as divinely designed.⁷² On the contrary, there are other cases, as for example, Matthew ii. 17, where the phrase 'that it might be fulfilled' is not used, but only 'then.' In these the sacred writer is to be regarded as following the custom of his day, by expressing his own thoughts in the words of Scripture."

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⁷² As in Matt. 1.
23; 2. 15; 4.
14; 8. 17, &c.

CHAPTER XII.

NAZARETH, AND THE EARLY DAYS OF JESUS.

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THE exceeding difficulty of telling the story of a life like that of Jesus Christ, a man and yet divine, one having all power given Him in heaven and in earth,¹ and yet like other men in all respects except sin,² is at once evident, on the least reflection. Indeed, it is not so much difficult as impossible, to tell it as such conditions demand, for human intellect can only comprehend the created, not the Creator. The Eternal still dwells in thick darkness; no eye hath seen or can see Him: His very attributes utterly transcend our comprehension. In Jesus Christ, as at once God and Man, we have opposite conceptions which we may humbly receive, but can neither harmonize, explain, nor adequately express. Man, as such, is not almighty, but frail as a flower; not omniscient, but, even at his highest wisdom, a child on the shore of the Infinite; not omnipresent, but fixed at any given moment to one minute spot. We cannot conceive what is implied in a nature of which almighty power, omniscience, and omnipresence are attributes; far less present them, adequately, in words, as united with human weakness and local limitation. The Man Christ Jesus may be realized. His acts and words may be related; His divine powers may be illustrated by their recorded exhibitions, and there may be the most sincere admission of His highest claims; but the narrative must still inevitably, as a whole, be that of the human side of His nature only.³

¹ Matt. 28. 18.
² Heb. 7. 26.
 1 Pet. 2. 22.
 John 8. 46.
 Heb. 4. 15.

³ See on the subject Schenkel's *Charakterbild Jesu*, 3; also, McLaurin's *Glorying in the Cross of Christ*, in *Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence*, II. 264.

It seems necessary to remind the reader of this at the point which we have reached, to prevent misconceptions. We yield to none in reverence to Jesus Christ as "God manifest in the flesh;" but the mystery of a nature which

could be thus described must ever remain beyond the power of adequate presentation in any narrative of His earthly life.

Having heard of Herod's death, Joseph determined to return to Palestine, with the intention of settling permanently at Bethlehem. On reaching Judea, however, and finding Archelaus had been appointed ethnarch,^a the dread of one who, of all the family, was believed to be the most like the hated tyrant, his father Herod,—the tumults and massacres in Jerusalem at his accession, and the chronic disturbance of the country, induced him to choose his former place of residence, in Galilee, instead.

In Nazareth, he was still under the rule of another of Herod's sons, Herod Antipas—a man of no higher principle than his brother, as his shameless life abundantly proved, but less likely to be goaded into violent acts towards his people, from receiving less irritation at their hands, than Archelaus had to bear, at those of the fiercely orthodox population of Judea. With the exception of the dead Antipater, moreover, Archelaus was the most tyrannical and self-willed of the sons of Herod, and he was not at all unlikely to follow up the suspicious cruelty of his father, which had led to the Bethlehem massacre, should any hint betray the return of the supposed rival to his dominions. Herod Antipas, on the other hand, was far less likely to trouble himself about any claimant of the throne of Judea, a province unconnected with his government.⁴ Thus, Nazareth became, once more, a year or two before the commencement of our present era, the habitation of the infant Jesus. Here He was to spend all His future life, except part of its last few years.

^a Reynolds, John the Baptist, 48.

Nazareth^b lies among the hills, which extend for about six miles between the plains of El Battauf on the north, and Esdraelon on the south. It is on the north side of the latter, and overlooks one of the numerous little folds or bays of the great plain, which are seen wherever the hills open. The village lies on the northern side^c of this green bay, and is reached by a narrow, steep, and rough, mountain path, over which the villagers have to bring their harvests laboriously from the plain beneath, on camels, mules, and donkeys.⁶ If the traveller ride up this path in March, when Palestine

^b See survey map in Recovery of Jerusalem, 337.

^c Pal. Fund Rep. Oct., 1874, 181. Mr. Drake calls it "execrable."

is at its best, he will be charmed by the bright green of the plains and the beauty of the flowers, everywhere lighting up the otherwise barren hills, which, at best, yield scanty pasture for sheep and goats. The red anemone and the pink phlox are the commonest; rock roses, white and yellow, are plentiful, with a few pink ones; the cytisus here and there covers the ground with golden flowers, and the pink convolvulus, marigold, wild geranium, and red tulip, are varied by several kinds of orchis—the asphodel, the wild garlic, mignonette, salvia, pimpernel, and white or pink cyclamen. As the path ascends, the little fertile valley beneath, running east and west, gradually opens to about a quarter of a mile in breadth, covered with fields and gardens, divided by cactus hedges, and running into the hills for about a mile.^c Near the village, beside the pathway, about an hour from Esdraelon, is a spring, from which the water pours from several taps in a slab of masonry, falling into a trough below, for camels, horses, asses, and cattle.

The distant view of the village itself, in spring, is beautiful. Its streets rise, in terraces, on the hill-slopes, towards the north-west. The hills, here and there broken into perpendicular faces, rise above it, in an amphitheatre round, to a height of about five hundred feet, and shut it in from the bleak winds of winter. The flat-roofed houses, built of the yellowish-white limestone of the neighbourhood, shine in the sun with a dazzling brightness, from among gardens, and fig-trees, olives, cypresses, and the white and scarlet blossoms of the orange and pomegranate. A mosque, with its graceful minaret, a large convent, from whose gardens rise tall cypresses, and a modest church, are the principal buildings. The streets are narrow, poor, and dirty, and the shops are mere recesses on each side of them, but the narrowness shuts out the heat of the sun, and the miniature shops are large enough for the local trade. Numbers of dogs which belong to the place, and have no owner, lie about, as in all Eastern towns. Small gardens, rich in green clumps of olive-trees and stately palms, break the monotonous yellow of the rocks and houses, while doves coo, and birds of many kinds twitter, in the branches, or flit across

the open. The bright colours of the roller, the hoopoe, the sunbird, or the bulbul, catch the eye as one or other darts swiftly past, and many birds familiar in England are seen or heard, if the traveller's stay be lengthened, for of the 322 birds found in Palestine, 172 are also British. The song of the lark floods a thousand acres of sky with melody; the restless titmouse, the willow-wren, the blackcap, the hedge-sparrow, the whitethroat, or the nightingale, flit or warble, on the hill-side, or in the cactus hedges, while the rich notes of the song-thrush or blackbird rise from the green clumps in the valley beneath. The wagtail runs over the pebbles of the brook as here at home; the common sparrow haunts the streets and house-tops; swallows and swifts skim the hill-sides and the grassy meadows; and, in winter, the robin redbreast abounds.⁷ Great butterflies flit over the hill-sides, amongst the flowers, while flocks of sheep and goats dot the slopes and the little plain below. Through this a brook ripples, the only one in the valley, and thither the women and maidens go to fetch water in tall jars, for household use. It is the one spring of the town, and, hence, must have been that which the mothers and daughters of Christ's day frequented. It rises under the choir of the present Greek church, and is led down the hill-side in a covered channel. An open space near the church is the threshing-floor of the village, where, after harvest, the yoked oxen draw the threshing-sledges slowly, round and round, over the grain, in the open air.⁸ No wonder that in spring Nazareth should have been thought a paradise, or that it should be spoken of as perhaps the only spot in Palestine where the mind feels relief from the unequalled desolation that reigns nearly everywhere else.⁹

Tristram's
Natural Hist.
of the Bible
168 ff.
Furrer, *Art.*
"Vogel," in
Schenkel's
Bibel Lexicon.

Furrer, *Nazareth*, in
Bibel
Lexicon.

⁹ Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, 18.

Later in the year, the hills around lose the charm of their spring flowers. They are then grey and barren,^d divided by dry gullies, with no colour to relieve their tame and commonplace outlines, the same on every side. But even then, the rich hues at sunset, with its tints reflected from the rocks, the long-drawn shadows of afternoon, and the contrasts of light and dark on a cloudy day, give frequent charms to a landscape in itself unattractive.

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Nazareth lies nearly twelve hundred feet above the sea, and some of the hills which cluster round, and shut it in, rise, as has been said, about five hundred feet higher. It is a mountain village, only to be reached from the plain by a tedious climb.

The Nazareth hills are of different kinds of white limestone. A thick bed of this rock—containing flints, and merging, above, into the marl which is still found at Nablus, and into a more thinly bedded soft limestone beneath—originally covered the whole country, from Samaria to Nazareth. This stone, though hard when exposed to the air, is so soft, where fresh, that it can be cut like chalk. Beneath it lies hard dolomitic limestone.¹⁰ The hills are the remains of these different rocks, after denudation through a long geological period, their strata being more or less disturbed by volcanic upheaval and contortion. Three centres of eruptive outbursts are visible in the neighbourhood of Esdraelon—one in the range of Gilboa, on the south-east; another at Little Hermon, between Gilboa and Tabor; and the third in the south-eastern part of the Carmel range, at Jebel Iskander—no fewer than twenty-nine outbursts of basalt, on the east, west, and north of the plain, marking their former activity. The limestone beds are everywhere more or less tilted up by this volcanic energy. The rich dark soil of Esdraelon has been formed from the wearing down of the basalt which now forms part of some of the neighbouring hills, and from strata of volcanic mud derived from it. The smaller plains of Palestine are of a more clayey soil, the hills round them being of limestone or basalt, presenting, at times, sudden and precipitous cliffs, and the original soft, chalky limestone remaining still on their tops.

The free air of their mountain home seems to have had its effect on the people of Nazareth. Its bright-eyed, happy children and comely women strike the traveller, and even their dress differs from that of other parts. Through Palestine generally, the frequent and excessive changes of climate expose the peasants, or fellahin, to rheumatism, coughs, and bronchitis; and, as a protection, the men in many parts wear a sheepskin coat, on warm days as well as cold. The

¹⁰ Lieut. C. Conder, R.E. Pal. Exp. Fund, Jan., 1873, p. 7.

women, however, make no change in their dress, which usually consists of nothing but a long blue garment tied in round the waist, a bonnet of red cloth, decorated with an edging or roll of silver coins, bordering the forehead and extending to the ears, reminding one of the crescent-shaped female head-dress worn by some of the Egyptian priestesses. Over this, a veil or shawl of coarse white cotton is thrown, which hangs down to the waist, serving to cover the mouth, while the bosom is left exposed, for Eastern and Western ideas of decorum differ in some things.¹¹

¹¹ Tyrwhitt
Drake in Pal-
Fund Rep.,
Oct., 1875,
175.

The people of the plain of Esdraelon are different. Their dark skins, bright eyes, white teeth, and wonderful taste in the combination of the brightest colours, draw the attention. Nothing more picturesque could be desired than the women, in their red veils and long pointed sleeves, carrying water; the dark camel-drivers, in black head-dresses, and striped brown and white abbas, riding on diminutive donkeys, before the train of clumsy, swinging, dull-coloured camels; the rich sheikh, in a purple jacket, scarlet boots, thin white cloak, and yellow head-dress; his grey mare, with a scarlet saddle, with long brown tassels at its peaks; alternating with the herds of black goats and diminutive red oxen.¹²

¹² Lieut. Conder,
R.E. Pal. Fund
Rep., Jan.,
1878, 9, 27.

The various costumes which seem peculiar to Nazareth are not less striking. The short abba or cloak of the men, and their gorgeous kefeyehs, or kerchiefs, folded triangularly, and thrown over the head, so as to fall over the neck and shoulders; the white veil, the silk dresses, the broad scarves, and many-coloured trousers, red, green, blue, and yellow, of the women, give a crowd a peculiarly picturesque appearance, and differ materially from the sordid dresses of the poorer southern villages. In a country where nothing changes, through age after age, the dress of to-day is very likely, in most respects, the same as it was two thousand years ago, though the prevailing colour of the Hebrew dress, at least in the better classes, was the natural white of the materials employed, which the fuller made even whiter.¹³

¹³ Mark 9, 3.
Winer, *Art.*
"Kleidung."

One characteristic of the hills round Nazareth existing already in Christ's day, and, indeed, much earlier, is a striking proof of the denseness of the population of Palestine

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in former times, and of its restless industry and energy. Many of them are honeycombed with countless excavations of various kinds. Cemeteries of over two hundred tombs, cut in the soft rock, some of them large tunnelled vaults, with separate hollows for twelve bodies;¹⁴ large numbers of cisterns, grape and olive presses, store or dwelling caves, wells and quarries, are everywhere abundant, as, indeed, they are over the whole country, but especially in the Shephelah or Philistine plain. The cisterns are from twenty to thirty feet deep, shaped like a church bell or inverted funnel, about two and a half feet across at the mouth, and fifteen to twenty-five at the bottom, the whole cut out of the solid limestone, showing that Palestine must always have been, for a good part of the year, a waterless country, needing to store up the rains of autumn and spring. It is not uncommon to find groups of from three to ten, or even more, of these fine excavations together. What must have been the density of the population, what its civilization and industry, to leave such remains in such numbers?

The Nazareth hills are, for the most part, neglected now, but were utilized in Christ's day as the hill-sides along the Rhine or the lime-slopes of Malta are at present, by terrace cultivation. Traces of these ancient terraces may still be seen. All the loose stones were gathered and built into rough walls along the sides of the hills, like so many steps, as at Bethlehem still. The tops of the strips thus gained, after being levelled, produced grapes and all kinds of fruit in great abundance. The supporting walls, having been long neglected, have fallen down, and well-nigh disappeared; the earth once behind them has been washed away by the heavy rains, and the slopes, except in spring, when the flowers are in their glory, show little but barren rock.¹⁵

¹⁴ Tyrwhitt
Drake in Pal.
Fund Report,
Oct., 1872, 177.
Lieut. Conder
do., do., Jan.,
1873, 24, 25.

The view from Nazareth itself is limited, as might be expected from its nestling in an amphitheatre of hills that shut in the little valley, except to the west, where it opens on Esdraelon. From the top of the hill at the back of the village, to the north, however, it is very different. Galilee lies spread out like a map at one's feet. The eye wanders over the plain of Esdraelon in its broad western sweep.

¹⁵ Recovery of
Jerus. 456.

Three hours to the east, it rests on the round outline of Tabor, with its woods of oaks and pistachios, and, beyond it, on the swelling mass of Jebel el Dahy, or Little Hermon, which closes in the plain, at about the same height as Tabor.¹⁶ Ranging southwards, the mountains of Gilboa, four or five hundred feet lower, shut in the lowlands; while far beyond them, across the hidden course of the Jordan, rise the mountains of Gilead. Looking to the south, across Esdraelon, the hills of Samaria are seen, through the openings of the wooded heights of the Carmel range, reaching northward to join it. Turning slowly towards the west, the whole length of the Carmel hills, running thirty miles north-west to the coast, seem, in the pure air of these parts, as if close at hand. About twenty miles off, almost directly west, rises the headland of Carmel; its top crowned with woods of oaks and fig-trees, its slopes varied with orchards, laurels, and olives, and its seaward face sinking abruptly into the Mediterranean waters. Nestling at the northern base of the hill, on the sea-shore, the white houses of Haifa arrest the eye. The blue waters, specked with sails, stretch far away, beyond, to the distant horizon. The whole Bay of Acre is seen, though Acre itself lies too low to be visible. The brown sandy shores, sweeping far to the north, are hidden only here and there, by intervening hills. Leaving the coast, and looking from north-west to north, the panorama shows a sea of hills—the highlands of Galilee,—broken by the fertile upland plain of Battauf, close at hand, with the ruins of the once famous Sepphoris, on a solitary hill at its southern edge, and beyond, on its northern slope, the cottages of Cana of Galilee. In the background, twenty miles away, tower the hills of Safed, 2,770 feet above the sea, rising above the ever-heightening summits of the highlands of Upper Galilee. But Safed itself is only midway in the landscape. Mountains rise beyond mountains, to the north, till they culminate more than sixty miles off, as the crow flies, in the highest peaks of Hermon, ten thousand feet above the sea-level. As the eye wanders round to the point from which it began its survey, hills beyond hills still meet the view, stretching away, with rounded tops, towards

¹⁶ 2,013 feet
above the
sea-level.
Kiepert's
Neue Hand-
Karte v.
Paläst. 1873.

the Sea of Galilee, and rising again, beyond it, to a greater height on its eastern shores.

In the town of Nazareth,¹ then doubtless much larger, Jesus spent most of His life. Amidst these hills, in these streets, He was brought up as a child; and "grew," as a boy, "in wisdom and stature." Here, for many years, He laboured as a man for His daily bread. This was the landscape on which He daily gazed, and it was along these mountain paths He walked. He must often have stood on the hill-top from which the whole country is seen, and the little bay of the great plain below the village, with its encircling heights, must have been familiar to Him in its least detail. If there be a spot to which a Christian pilgrim might rightly turn, as the most sacred in the history of his faith, it is Nazareth.

The influence of such a home on the character of its people must have been marked. Less lovely, perhaps, than the plain of Gennesareth, on the other side of the hills on the north-east, it was, yet, a place fitted, alike by the dreamy quiet of its environment of heights, the surpassing view from the hill above it, the beauty of earth and sky, and the soul-inspiring purity of its mountain air, to form true-hearted and generous children of nature, quick in intellect, bright in imagination, and noble in higher characteristics. Yet, with all its seclusion, the position of Nazareth checked any narrow onesidedness. The wonderful landscape from its hill-top made this impossible. The great, rich, Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, at once a town and a fortress, was scarcely three hours distant, Tiberias was only eight, and a crown of populous villages rose on all sides, around. The great high road—known even in the days of Isaiah as "the way of the sea"¹⁷—ran across the plain of El Battauf, just behind Nazareth, from Damascus to Ptolemais. Another caravan road, from Damascus to Judea and Egypt, crossed Esdraelon at the foot of the Nazareth hill, meeting a third, from the north, at Megiddo, on the other side of the plain. The Roman road from Syria, moreover, after passing through Berytus, Sidon, Tyre, and Ptolemais, on the coast, ran, by way of Sepphoris, through Nazareth, to

¹⁷ הַדֶּקֶל הַיָּם
(The highway
to the sea).
Isaiah 9. 1.

Samaria, Jerusalem, and the south. Nazareth was, thus, at the crossing place of the nations, where commerce or military changes gave daily familiarity with all the neighbouring races—the Syrian, the Phenician, the Arab, and the Roman; and where there was so much intercourse, there must have been greater liberality than in other parts of Jewish territory.

It has been usual to think of Nazareth as a rough and fierce place, with a doubtful character even for morals. The rejection of its greatest Son by his fellow-townsmen has been thought to show their rude coarseness; but Jesus offers a milder explanation—that a prophet has no honour in his own country. Yet, even in rejecting him, only a rough and coarse people would have acted so rudely. The exclamation of Nathanael seems to imply the doubtful morality of the town,¹⁸ perhaps from its position in the midst of constant heathen traffic on the great roads; and this appears to correspond with the other notices of it in the Gospels. If it were so, it would only heighten the wonder that such a shoot should grow from ground so dry!

¹⁸ John 1. 46.
See Meyer's
Komment.

Of the first thirty years of Christ's life we know nothing, except the one incident of His visit to Jerusalem, with Joseph and Mary, when a boy of twelve years old. It is not difficult, however, to imagine at least some of the influences which must have had their part in the development of that "wisdom" in which He "grew," as His childhood and boyhood passed away.

"It must be granted," says Ewald,¹⁹ "that in no ancient people has family life maintained itself so powerfully as in Israel, during the early days of the outward strength of the nation, or with so little weakening and deterioration as during the period of its gradual decline." In their patriarch Isaac and his wife Rebecca, they had an abiding ideal which it seemed the highest felicity to copy. Woman, among the Jews, was never so dependent and despised as among other Eastern races, for the Law proclaimed that she was bone of man's bone, and flesh of his flesh, and designed to be a help meet for him.²⁰ In the picture of Eve as the one wife of Adam polygamy was indirectly censured, and it was no less

¹⁹ Alterthümer,
251.

²⁰ Gen. 2. 20—
22.

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so in the command given in Eden, that "a man should leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and that they should be one flesh." Hence it was never in much favour among the Jews, and gradually gave place to the original law. Indeed, it was at any time rather a feature of royal or princely ostentation than a characteristic of ordinary life.

The Book of Proverbs throws great light on the position of woman in Israel, and, incidentally, on her place and occupations in the household. "A gracious woman," we are told, "retaineth honour;"²¹ "a wise woman buildeth her house,"²² that is, establishes her family; and "the price of a virtuous woman is set far above that of rubies."²³ Instead of being the playthings or slaves of man, women are taught that they may be his helpers and noblest friends. "The heart of the husband of the virtuous woman," says King Lemuel, "Doth safely trust in her, so that he shall not want for gain.

She will do him good and not harm all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh with diligent hands.

She is like the merchant ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household,

And the day's work to her maidens.

She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and maketh strong her arms.

She sees that her trading yields good profit: her lamp is kept burning by night.

She lays her hands on the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her children are clothed with scarlet wool.

²¹ Prov. 11. 16.²² Prov. 14. 1.²³ Prov. 31. 10.

She maketh herself robes : her clothing is silk and purple.
Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among
the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it ; and delivereth girdles
unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing ; and she smiles at
days to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom ; and in her tongue is
the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ordering of her household, and eateth
not the bread of idleness.

Her sons rise up and praise her ; her husband also, and he
extols her ;—

‘ Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest
them all.’

Gracefulness is deceitful, and beauty is a breath, but a
woman that fears Jehovah, she shall be praised.

Give her the honour that the fruit of her hands deserves ; her
works are the praise of all, in the gates.”^g

No literature of any age offers a finer ideal of the Wife and Mother than this Hebrew poem, written not less than two thousand five hundred years ago, when the history of Greece was still the era of fable, and Rome was little more than a rude fort on the top of the Palatine hill. That it is a separate poem, inserted in this collection of Proverbs, is seen from its construction, each verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in regular order,^h with the design, no doubt, of helping the memory to retain it. For hundreds of years before Mary’s day it had been on the lips of every Jewish maiden, for the words of the sacred books were familiar to the whole Jewish race, as no part of any other literature, so far as we know, has ever been to any people. The picture of loving fidelity, ceaseless industry, prudence, management, charity, thrift, wisdom, self-respect ; of noble reverence, rising from the husband on earth to God above, and of motherly virtues towards her children, must have kindled high aspirations in many a Jewish wife. It cannot be wrong to believe that, in her sphere, Mary realized this ideal, both in her activities and in her

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The relation of the Jewish husband to his wife was equally striking. If he were her Isaac, she was his Rebecca. "A good wife is a great gift of God," says the son of Sirach, "to him that fears God is she given."²⁴ "Joy to the man who has such a wife," says he again, "for the number of his days is doubled."²⁵ "Honour your wife that you may be rich in the joy of your home," says the Talmud.²⁶ "Is your wife little?" says another Jewish proverb, also quoted in the Talmud, "then bow down to her and speak"—that is, do nothing without her advice.²⁷ "In eating and drinking," says a Rabbi, "let a man keep within his means; in his own dress let him spend as his means allow; but let him honour his wife and children to the very edge of his power, for they are dependent on him, but he himself is dependent on God whose word made the world." The humour that marks the Jew in all ages made a butt of the man who, contrary to the better feeling of his people, ventured to take two wives. "Bald here, and bald there,"²⁸ says a Jewish proverb, in allusion to one who had two wives, one young and one old. The young one, said Jewish wit, pulled out the white hairs, and the old one the black, till his head was as smooth as an ivory ball!

The reverence of children towards their parents was carried to the sublime in Hebrew families. The child found the ideal of his obedience in Isaac's willingly yielding himself to death at his father's command.²⁹ Every Hebrew child heard, from its earliest years, how the finger of God Himself had written on the tables of stone, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;"³⁰ and this command they found repeated again and again in the sacred Law.³¹ Disobedience to a father or mother was made a public crime, which the community might punish with death.³² Unworthy children were laid under the most awful threatenings of divine displeasure.³³ The child read how Joseph, "when he met his father, fell on his neck and wept a good while," and "bowed himself to the earth before him,"³⁴ and how their great law-

²⁴ Ecclesiasticus 26. 1—4.

²⁵ Verses 2, 3.

²⁶ Dukes, Rabbinische Blumenlese, 124.

²⁷ Dukes, 225.

²⁸ Dukes, 232.

²⁹ See *Art.* "Eltern," in Herzog, and "Kind," in Winer's *R. W. B.*, also Ewald's *Alterthümer* 251.

³⁰ Ex. 20. 12.

³¹ Lev. 19. 3. Deut. 5. 16. Prov. 1. 8; 4. 1; 6. 20; 7. 1, &c. Mal. 1. 6.

³² Deut. 21. 18—21.

³³ Deut. 27. 16. Prov. 20. 20.

³⁴ Gen. 46. 29; 48. 12.

giver "did obeisance to his father-in-law and kissed him."³⁵ CHAP. XII
 He knew the curse that fell on the son of Noah who failed ³⁶ Ex. 18. 7.
 in respect to his father,³⁶ and read that the young were to ³⁶ Gen. 9. 25.
 "rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the
 old man."³⁷ The tender care of an aged parent was regarded ³⁷ Lev. 19. 32.
 by every Jew as a sacred duty. The son of Sirach only
 repeated the sentiment of all Scripture when he said, "Honour
 thy father with thy whole heart, and forget not the sorrows
 of thy mother. Remember that thou wast begotten of them ;
 and how canst thou recompense them the things that they
 have done for thee?"³⁸ That a father and a mother's blessing ³⁸ Ecclesiasticus
 was prized as sacred, and its being withheld regarded as the 7. 27, 28.
 saddest loss, shows how deeply such teaching had sunk into
 the Jewish mind.

Family life, resting thus on the holiest duty and reverence,
 has been nowhere, in any age, more beautiful than it was,
 and still is, among the Jews. In the parents, moreover, the
 passionate love of offspring, characteristic of the race, doubt-
 less hallowed these lofty sanctions. The children of a Jewish
 household were the centre round which its life and love
 moved. Full of affection and sensibility, the heart of a Jew
 was not content with loving only those of his own genera-
 tion, but yearned to extend itself to others who would
 inherit the future. A childless marriage was the bitterest
 trial. The Rabbis went even so far as to say that childless
 parents were to be lamented as one would lament the dead.³⁹ Hess, Rom. u.
 The purity of Jewish family life was proverbial even in an- Jerusalem, 40.
 tiquity.⁴⁰ The surpassing morality of the ancient Scriptures, Renan's St.
 and the illustrations of ideal virtue presented by such Paul, 106.
 mothers in Israel as Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Susanna,
 shed a holiness over household relationship in Israel that
 was unknown elsewhere. The Talmud hardly goes too
 far when it ascribes to the fidelity of the wives of the
 nation in Egypt, its first deliverance, and its national
 existence, and a modern Jew is, perhaps, justified in
 believing that the bond of family love among his people is
 stronger than in any other race.⁴¹ "From the inexhaustible" Hess, Rom. u.
 spring of Jewish family love," says he, "rise the saviours Jerusalem, 2.
 of the human race." "The Jewish women alone," says he

justly, elsewhere,⁴² have the sound principle to subordinate all other love to that of the mother." Alexander Weill puts into the mouth of the Jewish mother the words, "Dare any Jewish mother, worthy of the name, let the thought of 'love' in its ignoble sense, ever cross her mind? It seems to her no better than a vile apostasy. A Jewess dares love only God, her parents, her husband, and her children." Kompert ventures to repeat the audacious Jewish saying—"God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers." "The mother's love," he continues, "is the basis of all family life in Jewish romances; its passion, its mystery. The same type of the Jewish mother is found in all alike." It is true in all ages, as Douglas Jerrold put it, that she who rocks the cradle rules the world. The earliest years of a child are the most receptive. "It learns more in the first three or four than in all its after life," says Lord Brougham. The character of the mother, her care, her love, her looks, her soul, repeat themselves in the child while it is yet in her arms or at her knees.

It is not too much, then, to ascribe supreme influence to Mary, in the development of her wondrous child. Wordsworth's sonnet is only the adequate utterance of what must have been daily realized in the cottage at Nazareth:—

"Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncross'd
With the least shade or thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified;
Our tainted Nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean toss'd:
Brighter than Eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemish'd moon,
Before her wane begins on heav'n's blue coast;
Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
As to a visible Power, in whom did blend
All that was mix'd and reconciled in Thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene!"¹

That both parents of a Jewish child took an active part in its early education is shown by the instance of Susanna,^{43k} of whom we are told that "her parents also were righteous, and taught their daughter according to the law of Moses,"

⁴³ Susanna ver.
3.

and by that of Timothy, who, from a child,⁴⁴ had known the Holy Scriptures;” his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, having been, by implication, his teachers.⁴⁵ But it was on the father, especially, that the obligation lay, to teach his children, of both sexes, the sacred Law and the other Scriptures, the knowledge of which constituted almost exclusively the sum of Jewish education. Abraham had found divine favour on the express ground that he “would command his children and his household after him, and they should keep the way of Jehovah;”⁴⁶ and express injunctions required every father to teach the sacred history of his nation, with the great deeds and varying fortunes of his ancestors, and the words of the Law, “diligently” to his children, and to talk of them while sitting in the house, or walking by the way, when they retired to rest, and when they rose for the day.⁴⁷ It was, indeed, required by the Rabbis that a child should begin to learn the Law by heart, when five years old.⁴⁸ As soon as it could speak it had in the same way to learn the lessons and petitions of the morning service. At the frequently recurring household religious feasts, special rites, which should stir the child to ask their meaning, formed a regular part. The book of Proverbs abounds with proofs of the fidelity with which these commands were carried out by both fathers and mothers. In a virtuous home no opportunity was lost—at the table, at home or abroad, evening or morning—of instilling reverence for God’s law into the minds of the family, and of teaching them its express words throughout, till they knew them by heart. When we remember that the festivals made labour unlawful for two months in each year,⁴⁹ in the aggregate, it is evident that the leisure thus secured would give great facilities for domestic instruction.

Such had been, for ages, the rule in Israel, and it doubtless still prevailed in many households. Elementary schools, however, gradually came to be felt a necessity for orphan children, and, in the decline of manners, even for those of many living parents. Whether they had been generally established in the days of Christ’s childhood has, nevertheless, been questioned. “If any man,” says the Talmud,

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2 Tim. 3. 15.

2 Tim. 1. 5.

Gen. 18. 19.

Deut. 6. 7, 21;
11. 19; 4. 9,
10. Ps. 78.
5, 6. &c.

Schnecken-
burger, 105.

Ginsburg,
Cyclo. Bib.
Lit. i. 727.

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"deserves that his name should be handed down to posterity, it is Joshua, the son of Gamaliel.^m For, but for him the knowledge of the Law would have perished in Israel. In early times he who had a father was taught, but he who had not, did not learn the Law. For they were commanded in the words of the Law, 'you'—doubtless the fathers—'shall teach them.' At a later date it was ordered that schoolmasters should be appointed to teach the youth of Jerusalem, because it is written,⁵⁰ 'The law shall go forth from Zion.' But this plan did not remedy the evil, for only the child that had a father was sent to school, while he who had none was not sent. It was therefore provided that higher teachers should be appointed in every district,ⁿ and that the youth of sixteen or seventeen years of age should attend their schools. But this plan failed, because any scholar whom the master chastised presently ran off. Then, at last, Joshua, the son of Gamaliel, ordained that teachers should be appointed, as in every district, so in every town, to whom the boys from the sixth or seventh year of their age should be committed."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Isaiah 2. 3.

⁵¹ Baba Bathra Bab. 21; quoted by Gfrörer, i. 186.

⁵² Schürer, 468.

But such a law must have been only supplementary to already existing customs, and it cannot be doubted that boys' schools were already general in the time of Christ.⁵²

The enthusiasm of the Jews for education, which, in their sense of the word, was the learning to read "the Law," and the committing it to memory, was amazing. "A town in which there is no school must perish." "Jerusalem was destroyed because the education of the children was neglected,"^o says the Talmud.⁵³ Josephus tells us that "Moses commanded that the children be taught to read, and to walk in the ways of the Law, and to know the deeds of their fathers, that they might imitate them, and that they might neither transgress the Law, nor have the excuse of ignorance."⁵⁴ He repeatedly boasts of the universal zeal that prevailed for the education of the young. "We interest ourselves more about the education of our children than about anything else, and hold the observance of the laws, and the rules of piety they inculcate, as the weightiest business of our whole lives."⁵⁵

⁵³ Sabbath, exix. 6; quoted by Ginsburg.

⁵⁴ c. Apion. ii. 26.

⁵⁵ c. Apion. i. 12.

"If you ask a Jew any matter concerning the Law, he can more readily explain it than tell his own name. Since

we learn it from the first beginning of intelligence, it is, as it were, graven on our souls."⁵⁶ "Our legislator neither left practical enforcement to go on without verbal instruction, nor did he permit the hearing of the Law to proceed without its illustration in practice; but beginning his laws from the earliest infancy, with the appointment of every one's diet, he left no act of life, of the very smallest consequence, at the pleasure and disposal of the person himself."⁵⁷ This passage throws light on the kind of instruction imparted. Philo, a contemporary of Christ, bears similar testimony. "Since the Jews," says he, "look on their laws as revelations from God, and are taught them from their earliest childhood, they bear the image of the Law on their souls."⁵⁸ "They are taught," says he elsewhere, "so to speak, from their very swaddling clothes, by their parents, masters, and teachers, in the holy laws, and in the unwritten customs, and to believe in God, the one Father and Creator of the world."⁵⁹ Josephus boasts that at fourteen he had so thorough a knowledge of the Law, that the high priests and first men of the town sought his opinion.⁶⁰ There can, indeed, be no question that a boy was trained, from the tenderest years, with sedulous care, in a knowledge of the moral and ceremonial laws of Judaism, not only as written in Scripture, but as explained, in endless detail, by the "traditions" and rules of the Rabbis. At the age of thirteen⁶¹ he became a "son of the Law," and was bound to practise all its moral and ritual requirements.⁶²

The age at which children were to be sent to school is fixed in the Mishna. Raf said to Samuel, the son of Schilath, a teacher, "Do not take a boy to be taught before he is six years old, but from that year receive him, and train him as you do the ox, which, day by day, bears a heavier load." Even the number of scholars a teacher might take is rigidly fixed. "Rabba (or Raf) has said, a schoolmaster may receive to the number of twenty-five scholars. If there be fifty, there must be two schoolmasters; if only forty, there must be an assistant, who is to be paid, half by the congregation, half by the schoolmaster." The few children who were not sent to school, from whatever

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c. Apion. li. 19.

c. Apion. li. 19.

Legat. ad
Caum. sec.
31.

Legat. ad
Caum. sec.
16.

Vita 2.

Mishna Pirk.
Ab. iv. 20;
v. 21; vol. iv.
pp. 460, 482,
486, Suren-
hus.

Schiller (464)
says twelve
years, but this
may mean
when he has
completed
that age, and
is, conse-
quently, in his
thirteenth
year.

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cause, were called Am-ha-aretz, or boors—it being taken for granted that they must have lived in some rude district where schools were not easy of access.⁶³ Neither unmarried men nor women were allowed to be teachers.⁶⁴ The Hazan^p or “minister” of the nearest synagogue was, in general, the master, and the synagogue itself, in a great many cases, served as the school-house.

In school, the children, according to their age, sat on benches, or on the ground, as they still do in the East,⁶⁵ the master sitting on a raised seat. The younger children had, as text-books, some simple passage from the Bible, carefully written out—for, of course, there were no books, in our sense, then—and they seem to have repeated it in a sing-song cadence till they learned it by heart.⁶⁶ In Eastern schools, at this time, some of the lessons are written by each scholar, with chalk, on tablets of wood, like our slates in shape, and these are cleaned after each lesson.⁶⁷ Some centuries after Christ, the boys, having had portions of the “Law” as their class-book till they were ten years old, began at that age to read the Mischna, or Rabbinical comments, and at fifteen entered on the reading of the Gemara, or the collected comments on both the Law and the Mischna. In Christ’s day, advanced education was, no doubt, much the same, but it must have been given by oral instruction, for the sayings of the Rabbis were not as yet committed to writing.

The early years of Christ were, doubtless, spent in some such school, after He had passed from the first lessons of Mary, and the instructions of Joseph. Mysterious as it is to us, we must never forget that, as a child, He passed through the same stages as other children. The Apocryphal Gospels are full of miracles attributed to these opening years, describing the infant as already indefinitely beyond His age. There is no warrant for this in Scripture. Nothing was out of keeping in the life of our Lord. As Irenæus says, “He sanctified childhood by passing through it.” Neither His words nor acts, His childish pleasures nor His tears, were different from those of His age. Evil alone had no growth in Him: His soul gave back to the heavens all their sacred brightness. The ideal of humanity from His birth, He never lost the innocence

⁶³ Gröner l. 188.⁶⁴ Winer, R. W. B. Unter-richt. Dict. of the Bible, i. 493.⁶⁵ Lightfoot on Luke 2. 46.⁶⁶ Renan, Vie de Jésus, 18.⁶⁷ Smith’s Bible Dict. i. 493.

of childhood, but He was none the less completely like other children in all things else.⁶⁸ We are told that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit;"^a that "the favour of God was upon Him," and that "He kept on increasing" in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man;⁶⁹ and this can only mean that, with a sweet attractiveness of childish nature, He spoke, and understood, and thought, as simply as His playmates, in the fields, or on the hill-sides, of Nazareth. The earlier words are the same as are used of John the Baptist in his childhood,⁷⁰ and can bear only the same meaning. Both grew in the shade of a retired country life, in the sanctuary of home, apart from the great world, under the eyes of God, and with His grace upon them. It was only in later years that the mighty difference between them was seen, when the fresh leaves of childhood, much alike in all, passed into flower. There was no moment in Christ's life when the higher light began to reveal itself in His soul: life and "grace" dawned together, and grew in a common increase to the end.

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^a See Monod's
L'Enfance
de Jésus, 7.
Pressensac,
Jésus Christ,
&c., 206.

⁶⁹ Luke 2. 40,
52.

⁷⁰ Luke 1. 80.

CHAPTER XIII.

EARLY BOYHOOD.

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THE religious life of the home, the Church, and the community necessarily mould, more or less, the susceptible nature of children, and we may be certain that "the child Jesus" was no exception, in this respect, more than in others, to the general law. His opening being must have reflected all that was good around Him, as the flower reflects the colours of the light.

Rabbinism was then in its full glory. The strong hand of Herod the Great had suppressed all political agitation for more than a generation, with the result of turning the attention of the Rabbis supremely to religious questions, which alone were left for their discussion. The ten thousand¹ legal definitions and decisions, which are now comprised in Jewish religious jurisprudence, were for the most part elaborated in those years, and every devout Israelite made it the labour of his life to observe them faithfully, as far as possible. It must not, therefore, shock us, accustomed as we are to feel that religious acts lose their value when not free and spontaneous, to find minute prescriptions laid down and observed in Judea, for every detail of public and private life and worship. The whole existence of a Jew was religious, but it was a religiousness which, while the right spirit might not be wanting, was yet elaborately mechanical at every step.

The East is essentially different in its spirit from the West. Here, the idea of improvement and advancement leads to incessant changes; there, an intense conservatism retains the past with superstitious tenacity. Orientals cling, by nature, to the old, merely as such. Novelty of any kind is painful and annoying. They resist the least innovation. The

¹ Delitzsch, *Jud. Handwerkerleben*, §3.

customs of their fathers are law ; use and wont are sacred. They are graver and quieter than we. Noisy amusements have little attraction for them ; they seldom laugh or joke. The play of wit, dreamy thoughtfulness, attractive narrations and inventions, religious observances, and the display of religious festivals, are their sufficing delights. We must guard, therefore, against looking at Oriental life through Western eyes.

A devout Jew began his daily religious life with his first waking moments. "Every Israelite," says Maimonides, "should be penetrated at all times by reverence for his Almighty Creator. The central thought of the godly and devout man is—'I have set the Lord continually before me.'² As if he stood before a king of flesh and blood, he should never forget the requirements of right conduct and ceremonial purity."³ He was taught that his first thoughts, as

Ps. 16. 8.

soon as he waked, should be directed to the worship of God. Sleep was regarded as a kind of death, in which the soul leaves the body, to return to it on its awaking, and hence the first words of revived consciousness were an acknowledgment before "the living and everlasting King, of His having given back the soul for another day, in His great mercy and faithfulness."⁴ Thanks for new life thus granted followed in something like this form :—"My God, the soul which Thou hast given me is clean. Thou hast created it, formed it, and breathed it into me, and Thou wilt take it from me, and restore it me again. While this soul lives in me, I thank Thee, O Eternal One, my God, and the God of my fathers ! Lord of all works ! King of all souls ! Praised be Thou, O Eternal, Thou who putttest the souls again into dead bodies !"^{5a}

Quoted in
Cohen's His-
torisch-Krit.
Darstellung,
199.

Mill's Jews, 56.

^a Cohen, 199.

Having risen from bed, it was not allowed to move four steps before washing the hands and face, which the Rabbis taught was needed to cleanse one from the defilement of sleep, as the image of death.⁶ It was unlawful to touch the face, or any other part of the body, till this was done, nor could it be done except in the form prescribed. Lifting the ewer, after dressing, with the right hand, it must be passed into the left, and clear cold water, Rabbinically clean, must

Mill, 57.

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be poured thrice over the right hand, the fingers of which must be open, and must point to the ground. The left hand must then be washed in the same way, with water poured on it from the right, and then the face must be washed three times. The palms of the hands must then be joined, with the thumbs and fingers outstretched, and the words must be uttered—"Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, and praise the Lord!" Then followed the prayer, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God! King of the universe! Thou who hast sanctified us through Thy commandments, and hast required us to wash the hands. Blessed art Thou, O Eternal, our God, King of the universe! who hast formed man in wisdom, and hast made in him many vessels. If but one of these stood open, or was stopped, man could not live and remain before Thee. This is evident, and confessed before the throne of Thy majesty. Blessed art Thou, O Eternal One, maintainer of all flesh, who in Thy Creation doest wonders!"⁷

⁷ Co'sten, 200.

With some such forms and words, the morning began in Joseph's house in Nazareth. But this was only the preparation for morning prayers. It was not lawful to do any work, or to eat any food, till these had been repeated, either at home, or more properly, in the synagogue, where they formed the daily morning service. I shall describe them when I come to speak of the synagogue worship.

The religiousness of the first moments of the day was only in keeping with the whole life of a devout Jew like Joseph. I have mentioned the morning first because our day begins then, but that of the Jew began in the evening. From the beginning of each day—that is, from the appearance of the first star—to its close, and from the first day of the week till the Sabbath; from the beginning of each month to its feasts and half-feasts; from each New Year's Day to the next; and from one Sabbath year—that is, each seventh year—till another, the attention of every Jew was fixed uninterruptedly on the sacred usages which returned either daily, weekly, or at set times, and kept his religion continually in his mind, not only by symbolical rites, but by prescribed words. There was little leisure for the lighter pleasures of

life, and little taste for them. Lengthened prayers in set forms had to be repeated three times each day, and also at all feasts, half-feasts, and fast days; each kind of day having its special prayers. In every week there was a preparation day for the Sabbath, and there were similar preparation days for each feast in the different months; public worship was held twice weekly, each Monday and Thursday, and on feast days and holy days. Three pilgrimages to Jerusalem were required yearly, and others were often undertaken. A whole week was occupied by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and by that of Tabernacles, and by the Feast of the Dedication. Every Jew was, moreover, occupied to a large extent, through his connection with the Temple, by tithes, sacrifices, and vows. He visited the Holy Place as often as possible, for prayer, and to offer special gifts. He had to pay the most minute attention, continually, to permitted and forbidden food and clothing, and to the strict observance of all laws respecting the accessories of his public and private worship, his rolls of the Law, his phylacteries, the blowing of trumpets, the gathering of palm twigs at the right times, and much more. The endless rules respecting the cleanness and uncleanness of persons and things, demanded the greatest care every hour. Both men and women, as such, had many details to observe. Then, there were the ever-recurring usages, festivities, or events of family life—circumcisions, betrothals, marriages, divorces, deaths, and mourning; the laws of the Sabbath year, recurring periodically, and many other diversified occurrences, which had each its prolixity of religious form, not to be overlooked. Besides all, extraordinary solemnities were appointed on special occasions, and these, again, made grave demands on the thoughtful care of the whole population.⁸ No wonder * Jost, I, 198, 194 that the Law was almost the one thing in a Jew's mind, nor that a child brought up in such an atmosphere should, in most cases, be blindly conservative and narrow.

Opportunity will be taken hereafter to illustrate what life under the Law really was, but even without the statement of details, it is evident that a system which spread its close

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⁹ c. Apion. ii.
16, 17.

¹⁰ Hausrath, i.
83.

¹¹ Cohen, 162.

¹² Sota f. 20;
quoted by
Hausrath i. 68.

¹³ Schlirer, 506.

meshes over the whole of life,⁹ must have been a heavy burden on the conscientious, and a fruitful source of hypocrisy and dead formality to the mass.¹⁰ The hedge invented by Rabbinism was a unique expansion of a few written precepts to infinite detail. Artificial interpretations of Scripture, often contrary to the sense, and even to the letter of the Law, were invented as occasion required, and then enforced as of more authority than the Law itself.¹¹ The Rabbi could "bind and loose;" no case escaped his casuistry: religion was turned into a lifelong slavery, so burdensome, that even the Talmud itself speaks of "the vexatious worry of the Pharisees."¹² Ethics and theology were refined into an elaborate system of jurisprudence, till even where the requirements were right, their morality was poisoned in its principles, and deadened the fresh pulses of spiritual life.¹³

Still there were many in Israel who retained more or less of the primitive godliness of the nation. If Rabbinism, as a system, had fallen from its earlier and nobler idea of binding the nation permanently to the true faith; if it had substituted teaching for a change of heart; legality for spontaneous fidelity; endless prescriptions for the life-giving spirit, there were not a few, alike among the Rabbis and the people, to whom the external was not all. There may have been a Rabbi at Nazareth as self-righteous as Nechimza Ben Hakana, who, when he left his school, was wont to pray—"I thank Thee, O Lord, my God, that Thou hast given me my portion among those who frequent the House of Instruction, and not among those who are busy at the street corners, for I rise early, and they rise early; I apply myself early to the Law, and they to vain things; I work, and they work; I work and receive my reward, they work and receive none; I run, and they run; I run after eternal life, and they to the pit." But there may have been, also, another, like the Rabbi of Jamnia, who told his scholars, "I am a creature of God, and my fellow-man is no less so. I have my calling in the town, he, his, in the field. I go early to my work, and he to his. As he is not made proud by his labour, I am not made proud by mine. If

you think that I am busied with great matters and he with small, remember that true work, whether great or small, leads to the same end."¹⁴

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The child Jesus, must have often heard in the house of such a man as Joseph, and in those of his neighbours of like mind with him, whom he visited, a healthy intelligent religiousness, beautiful in any age. The popular proverbs and sayings which have come down to us may easily bring back many an evening scene in Nazareth, when friends or neighbours of Joseph's circle met for an hour's quiet gossip, when their day's toil was over. "Quite true, neighbour," we may fancy one of such a group saying, "he who knows the Law and has no fear of God, is like the ruler of the synagogue who has only the key of the inner door, but not of the outer."¹⁵ "Yes, Zechariah, a God-fearing Rabbi is like a good player who has his harp with him, but a godless Rabbi is like one who has nothing on which to make music."¹⁶ "You speak truly, Menahem; a godly man is the glory of a town, its reward, and its ornament; if he leave it, its glory, its reward, and its ornament, leave it with him."¹⁷ "My father used to tell me," chimes in Hananyah Ben Hizkiyah, "that there are four who never have the face of God lifted upon them—the scoffer, the liar, the hypocrite, and the slanderer."¹⁸ "Rabbi Nathan," says the fifth, "is right, I think; I have heard him say that the man who stands firm in temptation, and the hour of whose death is like that of his birth, is the only man to be envied."¹⁹ ^b

¹⁴ Berachoth 17. a and 28. b; quoted in Delitzsch, *Jud. Handwerkerleben* 36.

¹⁵ Dukes, *Rab. Blumenlese*, 27*.

¹⁶ Dukes, 279.

¹⁷ Dukes, 260.

¹⁸ Dukes, 118.

¹⁹ Dukes, 126, 127.

Good counsels to the young were not wanting. The Hazan who taught the Nazareth school in the synagogue, may have told his scholars—"Get close to the seller of perfumes if you want to be fragrant."²⁰ ^c He may have given the groups of little ones at his feet words of wisdom such as these—that "grapes on vines are beautiful, and in their right place; but grapes among thorns are neither."²¹ ^d "A Nazarite should go round about, rather than come near a vineyard."²² ^e "A friend who, as often as he meets you, tells you, in secret, your faults, is better than one who, whenever he meets you, gives you a gold piece."²³ ^f "If you see an humble man, you may almost take for

²⁰ Dukes, 590.

²¹ Dukes, 603.

²² Dukes, 441.

²³ Dukes, 363.

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- granted that he fears God,²⁴ but a proud man is no better than an idolater."²⁵ "Make the best of your childhood; youth is a crown of roses; old age of thorns. Yet do not fear death, it is only a kiss, if you fear God."²⁵ "Truth is the seal of God."²⁶ "Trust in the mercy of God, even if the sharp sword be at your throat; He forsakes none of His creatures to give them up to destruction."²⁷ "Take a lesson from Jose Ben Joezer, who was the first Jew ever crucified. He died for his faith in the evil time of the Syrian kings. As he was being led to death, his sister's son, Alkim, tried to make him believe that God showed more favour to transgressors of the Law than to the godly. He could have saved Jose's life, if the martyr had yielded to him. But Jose only answered, 'If God prepares such a fate as mine for the godly, what will become of the wicked?'—and passed on to the cross."²⁸ "The humble man is he who is as reverent before God as if he saw Him with his eyes."²⁹
- A wise teacher may have spoken thus to the children in the school, but wise counsels would not be wanting at home. Like all Orientals, Joseph was, doubtless, given to speak in proverbs and parables. "One sheep follows another,"³⁰ he might have said. "As is the mother, so is the daughter."³¹ "A man without friends is like the left hand without the right."³² "The road has ears, and so has the wall."³³ "It is no matter whether a man have much or little, if his heart be set on heaven."³⁴ "A good life is better than high birth."³⁵ "The bread and the rod came from heaven together."³⁶ "Seeking wisdom when you are old is like writing on water; seeking it when you are young is like gravings on stone."³⁷ "Every word you speak, good or bad, light or serious, is written in a book."³⁸ "Fire cannot keep company with flax without kindling it." "In this world a man follows his own will; in the next comes the judgment."³⁹ "With the same measure with which a man measures to others it will be measured to him again."⁴⁰ "Patience, and silence in strife, are the sign of a noble mind."⁴¹ "He who makes the pleasures of this world his portion, loses those of the world to come; but he who seeks those of heaven, receives, also, those of earth."⁴² "He who humbles himself will be exalted

²⁴ Dukes, 361, 359.²⁵ Dukes, 313, 323.²⁶ Dukes, 287.²⁷ Dukes, 113.²⁸ Josh. I. 125.²⁹ Dukes, 86.³⁰ Dukes, 6.³¹ Dukes, 15.³² Dukes, 16.³³ Dukes, 32.³⁴ Dukes, 33.³⁵ Dukes, 38.³⁶ Dukes, 47.³⁷ Dukes, 97.³⁸ Dukes, 103.³⁹ Dukes, 145.⁴⁰ Dukes, 162. Compare Matt. 7. 1.⁴¹ Dukes, 305.⁴² Dukes, 380.

by God ; but he who exalts himself, him will God humble."⁴³ CHAP. II.
 "Whatever God does is right."⁴⁴ "Speech is silver ; silence ⁴³ Compare
 is worth twice as much."⁴⁵ "Sin hardens the heart of ⁴⁴ Luke 18. 14.
 man."⁴⁶ "It is a shame for a plant to speak ill of him who ⁴⁵ Dukes, 452.
 planted it."⁴⁷ "Two bits of dry wood set a moist one on ⁴⁶ Dukes, 461.
 fire." All these are Jewish sayings, which Jesus may well ⁴⁷ Dukes, 548.
 have heard in His childhood.

Nazareth would, no doubt, have its finer spirits who, from time to time, shed the light of their higher nature over family gatherings, and none of this could be lost on such a child as Jesus. On some glorious night, when the moon was walking in brightness, a mind like this may have told the children round him some such fine Hebrew apologue as follows :—

"The Eternal sent forth His creating voice, saying, 'Let two lights shine in the firmament, as kings of the earth, and dividers of the revolving year.'

"He spake, and it was done. The sun rose as the first Light. As a bridegroom comes forth in the morning from his chamber ; as a hero rejoices on his triumphal march, so rose he, clothed in the splendour of God. A crown of all hues encircled his head ; the earth rejoiced, the plants sent up their odours to him, and the flowers put on their best array.

"The other Light looked on with envy, as it saw that it could not out-vie the Glorious One in splendour. 'What need is there,' it asked, murmuring to itself, 'of two kings on one throne ? Why was I the second instead of the first ?'

"Forthwith its brightness faded, chased away by its inward chagrin. It flew from it high through the air, and became the Host of Stars.

"The Moon stood pale as the dead, ashamed before all the heavenly ones, and wept—'Have pity on me, Father of all creatures, have pity.'

"Then the angel of God stood before the Sad One, and told her the decree of the Highest. 'Because thou hast envied the light of the Sun, unhappy one, henceforth thou wilt only shine by his light, and when yonder earth comes between

CHAP. III. thee and him thou wilt stand darkened, in part, or entirely, as now.

"Yet, Child of Error, weep not. The Merciful One has forgiven thy sin, and turned it to good for thee. "Go," said He, "speak comfortably to the Sorrowful One; she will be, at least, a queen, in her brightness. The tears of her sorrow will be a balm to quicken all living things, and renew the strength which the beams of the Sun have made faint."

"The Moon went away comforted, and, lo, there streamed round her that brightness in which she still shines: she set forth on that peaceful path in which she still moves, as Queen of the Night and leader of the stars. Lamenting her sin, and pitying the tears of men, she seeks whom she can revive, and looks for any one she can cheer."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Herder, Blumenlese Morgenländischer Dichter, 14.

⁴⁹ Mark 6, 3.

Such, no doubt, would be some of the characteristics of Nazareth life. Every one would know every one;⁴⁹ industry and idleness; worth and vice; pleasure and sadness; would be around the growing Child. The oxen ploughing the little valley below the town and the great plain outside, would often arrest his eyes; the asses and mules, and camels laden with goods or produce, would pass then, as now, up the mountain track to the narrow Nazareth streets: the different trades of the village would be busy, as they are still. The wise and the simple: the clown and the scholar: the poor and the rich: the soiled workman and the proud squire: helpless infancy, and as helpless age; the school, the play-ground, the market, the court, the synagogue, and the cemetery, would each in turn be prominent for the time. But it would be under Joseph's roof, as in a silken nest, with the counsels of Joseph, and the gentle and lofty devoutness of Mary, that the young soul, destined one day to be so great, would learn its richest lessons of childhood.

⁵⁰ On the Synagogue, see Keim's Jesu von Nazara, i. 481. Leyrer, Herzog, xv. 800. Zinz, Gottendienst. Vorträge, 2. Schlirer's Lehrbuch, 468. Hausath, i. 73. Jost, i. 168. Ewald iv. 314; vi. 407. Renan, Vie de Jésus, 83. Schneckenburger, Zeitgeschichte, 106. Bibel Lexicon, Art. "Synagogue."

At a very early age, Jesus would be taken to the synagogue with Joseph and Mary, and the other children of the Nazareth family circle, for even then that institution had become the banner of Jewish nationality, the centre of national life, and the ægis of the Jewish faith,⁵⁰ whose services no Israelite would think of neglecting.

The importance of the Synagogue dates not later than the

age of the Maccabees.⁵ It rose from the institution, by Ezra, of periodical readings of the Law in public.⁵¹ Its earliest history is not known, for we can hardly trust the Rabbinical traditions, that there were hundreds in Jerusalem under the second Temple.⁵² But the germ of the Synagogue doubtless existed in Babylon. The exiles could no longer offer their sacrifices, for this could be done only in the Temple at Jerusalem. Hence they naturally betook themselves to prayer, and lifted their hands, in their loneliness, to God, at the times when their sacrifices were wont to be consumed. Instead of these they presented their prayers,^h and prophets like Ezekiel, on the Sabbath, spoke to them of their duty. It would seem as if the Law itself had been well-nigh unknown during the exile, from the fact of Ezra summoning the people to hear it, as something which they had transgressed, from ignorance of its requirements. To him, apparently, belongs the signal honour of establishing the custom of constant public reading of the sacred books before the congregations of the people, and of taking care that, as Hebrew was no longer understood, interpreters should be provided, to translate the Scripture lessons, at the public services, into the spoken dialect.ⁱ Established, first, in Jerusalem, synagogues soon spread over the land, and even beyond it, wherever Jews had settled. They gradually became the great characteristic of the nation, for, though the services of the Temple were yet cherished, the Synagogue, by its local convenience, its supreme influence in fixing Jewish religious opinion, and its natural importance as the centre of each community, and the basis of their social life, carried with it the seeds of the destruction of the strictly local Temple service. The priest, henceforth, was of less importance than the lay Rabbi, for while the one touched life at only a few points, the other directed its every movement. In Christ's day there were synagogues everywhere.⁵³ In Jerusalem, alone, there gradually rose, according to the Talmud, no fewer than 480.^k Tiberias had thirteen, Damascus ten, and other cities and towns in proportion to their population. But the Mother Synagogue in the Temple still remained, as it were, the model after which all other synagogues were organized.

CHAP. XIII.
Began B.C.
167.

⁵² Jost, i. 390.

⁵³ Matt. 13. 54.
Luke 4. 28, 31.
Acts 17. 17;
18. 4; 9. 2, 20;
13. 5; 16. 13.
Bell. Jud. vii.
7. 3. Vit. 51.

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Wherever ten Jews were settled, it was incumbent on them to form themselves into a congregation, and have synagogue service. Open structures on the banks of rivers, or on the sea-shore⁵⁴ were preferred, where the Jewish population was small, from their convenience for the necessary purifications; but, wherever it was possible, a synagogue was erected by the free contributions of the people. Sometimes, indeed, a rich man built one at his own expense.⁵⁵ The ruins of those in Galilee, Christ's own country, enable us to learn many particulars respecting this locality at least. In selecting sites, the builders by no means always chose prominent positions. If, in some cases, the Rabbinical requirements were observed that the synagogue should be raised on the highest part of the town,⁵⁶ and its entrance be on the western side, they were, seemingly, more frequently neglected. The ruins of the old synagogues in the district on the Sea of Galilee, and north of it, are sometimes in the lower part of the town, and at others have had a site excavated for them in the rocky side of a hill.⁵⁷ Their entrances are almost always at the southern end, an arrangement hardly to have been expected, as it required every Jew, on entering, to turn his back to Jerusalem.

The building was always rectangular, with its longest dimension in a nearly south and north direction, and its interior divided into five aisles, by four rows of columns, unless it was very small, when two rows of columns were used, making only three aisles. The walls were well and solidly built of native limestone: the stones "chiselled" into each other, without mortar, and, while finely dressed outside, left rough on the inner side, for plastering. The entrances were three in number; one large doorway, opening into the central aisle, and a smaller one on each side, though sometimes, in small synagogues, there was only one entrance. Folding doors, with socket hinges, closed by bars on the inside, gave them security. Over the doors was more ornament than we might have expected—sculptures of the golden candlestick—or of the pot of manna—or of the paschal lamb—or the vine. The floors were paved with slabs of white limestone, and the arrangement of the

⁵⁴ Acts 16. 13.⁵⁵ Luke 7. 5.⁵⁶ Cohen, 194.⁵⁷ Capt. Wilson, R.E., on Synagogues in Galilee. Pal. Explo. Fund. Rep. No. 2, 37, 38.

columns was the same in all. The spaces between these were very small, though the columns themselves were sometimes elaborately finished with Corinthian and Ionic capitals. Blocks of stone laid from column to column received the wooden rafters, which were bedded deeply in these supports for strength, and were very broad as well as thick, to bear up a flat roof, covered heavily with earth, which was the fashion in private houses also, as it still is in nearly all Arab dwellings, as best adapted for keeping out the intense heat of the sun.¹ The ruins are too imperfect to show the arrangement of the windows.

The synagogues were open every day for three services,¹¹¹ but as those of the afternoon and evening were always joined, there were, in reality, only two. It was the duty of every godly Jew to go to each service, for so sacred was daily attendance, that the Rabbis taught that "he who practised it saved Israel from the heathen."⁵⁸ The two market days, Monday and Thursday, when the country people came into town, and when the courts were held, and the Sabbaths, were the special times of public worship. Feast days, and fasts, were also marked by similar sacredness.

¹¹¹ Bab. Berach.
f. 8. l.

The interior of the synagogues was arranged, as far as possible, after the model of the Tabernacle or the Temple. Before the doors of some, a sunken space for a porch formed a counterpart to the forecourt of the sanctuary. The space immediately inside was for the congregation. A little beyond the middle, a raised and enclosed platform, in the centre of the floor, in some measure corresponded to the altar.¹¹² Here the official stood to conduct the services, by reading from the sacred books and chanting the prayers. In the wall at the farther end was a recess, before which hung a veil; the recess the equivalent of the Holy of Holies; the veil, of the one before that mysterious chamber in the Temple. In this shrine were kept the Sacred Rolls, wrapped in several covers of linen and silk; the outer one adorned, as means allowed, with gold and silver. The Rabbis required that this shrine should look towards Jerusalem, but this was not generally provided for in the Galilean synagogues of Christ's day. Before the shrine hung an

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ever-burning lamp—the representative of the “eternal fire” in the holy place in the Temple. Beside it stood a large eight-branched lamp, like the “golden candlestick” of the Temple, which we now see sculptured on the Arch of Titus. It was adorned with inscriptions, and was kept for the illumination made at the Feast of the Dedication,⁵⁹ each December, when the joy of the nation at the rekindling of the lamps in the Temple, after the triumph of Judas Maccabæus, was celebrated for eight days together. Other lamps hung up and down the synagogue to illuminate it during the Sabbath evening service, whether needed or not, in honour of the day, as was done also in private houses. Rabbis and the elders of the Synagogue sat on raised cushions next the shrine, facing the people, in the “chief seats.” The men of the congregation filled the open floor next these, and in small synagogues, the women, separated by a lattice, sat with their backs to the men.⁶⁰ Where space allowed, however, a flat gallery was built for them, but, in any case, they were not visible to the other sex. Trumpets for proclaiming the new moon, and for publishing sentences of excommunication, formed part of the furniture, but were kept in the house of the Hazan. In the porch was a tablet with prayers for the reigning prince, and another with the names of any who had been excommunicated, while below them were boxes to receive the alms of the congregation, as they entered, for the poor.

The greatest reverence was paid by every Jew to his synagogue. It could not be built near a public bath, or a wash-house, or a tannery, and if it were taken down no one would on any account cross the ground on which it had stood.

The chief authorities of the Synagogue were a council of elders,⁶¹ of whom one acted as head, though only the first among equals. They pronounced excommunications, delivered sentences on offenders of various kinds, managed the charities of the congregation, and attended to the wants of strangers.⁶² They were a local counterpart of the “elders of the people,” who, through the whole history of Israel,⁶³ formed a kind of national senate,⁶⁴ and of those humbler

⁵⁹ John 10. 22. This was the Chanuka Feast.

⁶⁰ Kneucker in Schenkel's Bible Lexicon, Art. "Synagogue."

⁶¹ Schürer, 471.

⁶² Leyrer, 312.

⁶³ Ex. 24. 1. Lev. 4. 16.

⁶⁴ Ezra 5. 3. Mark 14. 43. 1 Macc. 12. 6; 14. 9, &c. &c.

"elders" who constituted the ruling body over towns and districts,⁶⁵ as they formerly had also done over the different tribes.⁶⁶ It marks the simple and healthy basis of society in Israel, that the one idea of the family and household, ruled by its head, thus lay at its root, as is indeed implied in the very name—House of Israel—by which the nation, as a whole, was known.⁶⁷ The head ruler or elder of the Synagogue was formally consecrated by the laying on of hands.⁶⁸

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⁶⁵ 1 Sam. 16. 4.
Lam. 2. 10.
2 Kings 10. 1.
⁶⁶ 2 Sam. 19. 11.
Deut. 31. 28.

⁶⁷ Kneucker in
Bibel. Lex.
Art. "Aelteste."

The inferior offices were held by various officials. The Hazan, or "minister,"^a had the charge of the building, of cleaning the lamps, opening and closing the doors, and doing any other necessary servile work, like a modern sexton, besides acting as messenger to the rulers. But he, also, in many cases, led the prayers and chants. It was his part to hand the roll of the Law to the Reader for the time, pointing out the proper lesson of the day.⁶⁸ The Reader, as representative of the congregation, had to blow the trumpet at the new moon, and to strew ashes on his head on fast days.⁶⁹ The alms of the congregation were collected and distributed by special officers, of whom two were required to act together in the receiving: three in the distribution.⁷⁰ There seems to have been no functionary for reading the prayers, which was done in the name of the congregation, and by its authority, by any one empowered for the time.⁷¹ Any member of the congregation, unless he were a minor, was qualified to do so. As a rule, however, it is likely that the Hazan generally led the chanting, and read the ordinary lessons. A curious feature in the organization was, that in each synagogue, ten men, known as Batlanim, were paid to attend every service from its opening to its close, that there might never be fewer present than the Rabbis required to constitute a lawful service.

⁶⁸ Buxtorf, Lex.
790.

⁶⁹ Jost, l. 194.

⁷⁰ Schürer, 471.

⁷¹ Schürer, 471.

There seems to have been only one synagogue in Nazareth,⁷² so that, as all the Jews in the town doubtless attended it, a large proportion of the population must have been other than Israelites, or the town itself must have been small, to judge from the size of other synagogues of Galilee, whose ruins have been discovered. The congregation would, in many respects, be very different from

⁷² Luke 4. 16.

CHAP. XIII. Western notions. The men came in the long, flowing, and, to us, feminine-looking dress of the East; their heads covered with turbans of various colours—some simple, others costly—or with the plain keffiyeh, a kerchief of cotton, linen, or silk, of various colours, folded so that three of the corners hung over the back and shoulders, leaving the face exposed, and loosely held round the head by a cord—as is still the Arab custom; their clothing, only a long white or striped tunic, of linen or cotton, with sleeves, next the body—bound at the loins by a sash or girdle,—and a loose abba or cloak thrown over it; their bare feet shod with sandals. Over the abba some would wear a wide scarf of white wool, thin and light; with bars of red, purple, and blue; but with many, this scarf, enlarged to an abba, would be the only outer garment. A few rich men might, perhaps, wear one of silk, adorned with silver or gold. This was the Tallith, an indispensable part of the clothing of a Jew.^{73r} From its four corners hung four tassels of eight threads a-piece,^s of hyacinth-blue,^t of wool alone, woven and made up with superstitious care, as a half religious art, by a Jew only.⁷⁴ These were the Zizith, or fringes, worn in fulfilment of an express commandment of Moses, that the sight of them might make the wearer “remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them.”⁷⁵ So sacred, indeed, were they, that a smaller Tallith, as well, duly provided with them, was worn underneath the clothing by every Jew, from his earliest years, and he had been taught, even in childhood, never to put it on without repeating the prayer—“Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and given us the commandment of the fringes.” The outer Tallith, indeed, was only worn because the fringes of this one were covered up, and could not be kissed, as the Rabbis required, from time to time, during one of the synagogue prayers.^u The right use of the lessons of the fringes a Jew believed equivalent to keeping the whole Law, for the Rabbis told him that, as the letters of the name Zizith, used as figures, made up the number 600, they and the five knots and eight threads, are equal to the whole 613 receipts of the Law.⁷⁶

⁷³ תלית from
תלית, *tegeret*,
operire,
Buxtorf, 877.

⁷⁴ Delitzsch,
Schatz weis,
ein Mensch.
5. Schiller,
496.

⁷⁵ Num. 15, 38,
39. Deut.
22, 12.

⁷⁶ Buxtorf, s. v.
תלית, 1908,
1909.

The Jewish mothers and daughters of Nazareth, as they made their way to the synagogue, were not less Oriental and strange. They were always veiled in white at public worship,⁷⁷ and not unfrequently at other times.⁷⁸ Their flowing mantles showed as great variety of colour as female dress does now, but they were much the same in shape as they had been for centuries. Like many of the men, they wore turbans, but they showed a contrast to the other sex in their ornaments. On week days they wore nose rings, but they were not allowed to wear these on the Sabbath,⁷⁹ though they indulged in earrings, and metal armlets, and necklaces and leg rings, which tinkled as their wearers walked. Their feet, like those of the men, were shod with sandals. The males of a family might go to the synagogue any way they chose, but the women went only by back streets, to avoid the gaze of men.⁸⁰ All, alike, were required to greet no one, and to make no reverence, whoever passed, nor to loiter by the way, lest it should distract their minds from thinking upon God. At the threshold all laid aside their sandals, for it was unbecoming to enter even one's own house with shod feet, far less the house of God; but, for the same reason, all kept their heads covered during the whole service. Every man, on entering, prepared to put on his Tephillin^x or phylacteries, which must be worn every day during morning prayer.⁸¹ They consisted of two small parchment boxes, about an inch square, one divided into four parchment compartments, the other left undivided. On the two sides was stamped the letter ם, as part of the word Shaddai—one of the names of the Almighty. Four slips of parchment, each about an inch wide and eight inches long, inscribed with the verses—Deut. vi. 4—9; Deut. ix. 13—21; Exod. xiii. 2—10; and Exod. xiii. 11—16, were placed in the different compartments of the one, a parchment lid enclosing the whole, with long leather thongs attached, to bind it on the forehead. The second box was exactly the same, except that its interior was not divided, and the verses of Scripture enclosed were written, in four columns, on *one* piece of parchment.

The former of these phylacteries, or amulets, was bound

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⁷⁷ 1 Cor. 11. 5.

⁷⁸ See Art. "Kleidung," in Schenkel, Winer, and Herzog.

⁷⁹ Talmud; quoted by Leyrer. Art. "Kleidung," in Herzog.

⁸⁰ Philo in Place. 977.

⁸¹ Matt. 23. 5.

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on the forehead exactly between the eyes, before morning prayer began ; the other on the left arm, opposite the heart, its thongs being wound seven times round the arm and thrice round the middle finger.⁸² Their wearer was now ready to take part in the services. As in the case of the Tallith, the Tephillin were put on with words of prayer in the prevailing language of the country.

The worship of the synagogue was limited to prayer and reading the Law and the Prophets, for though a Rabbi or other person, if present, might be asked to speak, this was an addition to the prescribed forms. The service began with silent prayer by all present, the congregation standing during this as during all the prayers. Then the Reader, wearing his Tallith, having entered the raised enclosure in the middle of the synagogue, recited a prayer of adoration from the desk—"Blessed be Thou by whose word the world was created ; blessed be Thou for ever ! Blessed be Thou who hast made all out of nothing ; blessed be He who orders and confirms ; blessed be He who has pity on the earth ; blessed be He who has pity on his creatures ; blessed be He who richly rewards His saints ; blessed be He who lives for ever, and is for ever the same ; blessed be He, the Saviour and Redeemer ! Blessed be Thy name ! Blessed be Thou, O Eternal ! Our God ! King of the universe ! All-Merciful God and Father ! Thy people utter Thy praise with their lips : Thy godly servants proclaim thy glory and honour. We would praise Thee, Eternal Lord God, with the psalms of Thy servant David ; we would laud and magnify Thee with songs of thanksgiving and praise. We do homage to Thy name, our King, our God, the only One, He who liveth for ever, O Lord, whose name is glorious for ever and ever ! Blessed be Thou, O Eternal ! Lord, blessed be Thou in songs of praise !" To this, as to all prayers, the congregation answered, Amen.⁸³

⁸² Cohen, 202.⁸³ Cohen, 203.

Readings from different parts of the Scripture then followed, in part a collection of separate verses, in part connected extracts, ending with the last six Psalms,⁷ this introductory portion of the service closing with another short but exalted prayer. A few verses more from Scripture

followed,⁸⁴ and then came the Song of Moses at the Passage of the Red Sea, and another short prayer.

Presently the Reader summoned the congregation to join in a short responsive utterance of praise known as the Kadish.⁸⁵ "Praise the Lord," said he, "who is worthy to be praised," and to this the people, bowing, responded, "Praised be the Lord, who is ever and eternally worthy of praise!" and so, through several antiphonies.

It was obligatory on every Jew to repeat certain verses twice every day, morning and evening. These were now read. They were known by the name of S'chma,⁸⁶ or "Hear," from their beginning with the words, "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, is one Eternal God." Two prayers preceded them, the one, heard with joy and yet with trembling, exalting God for His Majesty in the heavens, amidst the armies of the angels. It was believed to be listened to by all heaven, God Himself and the angels responding, at its close—"Happy the people in such a case; happy the people whose God is Jehovah!"⁸⁵ The other⁸⁵ thanked God for His love to Israel, and asked enlightenment in His holy law. Another short prayer was now read, thanking Him for the mighty works He had done for their fathers, especially in delivering them from Egypt, and closing with supplication for delivery as a nation from their evil state. The closing words chanted by the Reader were striking—"Rock of Israel! up! to the help of Israel: save, for Thy promise sake, Judah and Israel! Save us, Eternal God, eternal God of Hosts! whose name is the Holy One of Israel. Blessed be Thou, O Eternal, who of old didst redeem Israel!"

During all these prayers the congregation stood,⁸⁶ with their faces towards the shrine of the Law. Only the Reader spoke: the congregation simply responded "Amen," except at the Kadish.

Now commenced the second part of the service—the repeating of the "prayers known as the eighteen Benedictions,"⁸⁷ or simply as "The Prayer."⁸⁷ It was originally drawn up by the men of the Great Synagogue,⁸⁸ but finally arranged in its present form, with one or two additional prayers, about the year 100 after Christ.⁸⁹ The whole were

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⁸⁴ 1 Chron. 29.
10—13.
Nehem. 9. 7—
12.

⁸⁵ Ps. 144. 14.
Zunz and
Ewald.

⁸⁶ Matt. 6. 5.
Mark 11. 23.
Luke 18. 11.

⁸⁷ Tefilla.

⁸⁸ Dorenbourg,
345.

⁸⁹ Schürer, 500.

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spoken by the entire congregation softly, and then aloud by the Reader, and this was repeated at the evening service, it being required of every Israelite that he should repeat them all, for himself, three times every day, just as he was required to repeat the S'chma twice daily. During this series of prayers the whole congregation stood, immovable, with their faces towards the shrine, and their feet close together, in an attitude of fixed devotion.⁹⁰ At the beginning and close of the first and sixteenth Benedictions all bent the knee, and bowed their heads to the earth. As in the case of the S'chma, these prayers were read without the change or addition of a word. After the congregation had recited them the Reader, still standing in the raised enclosure, took three steps backwards, then three forwards: stood quite still, and commenced, "Lord, open Thou our lips, that our mouth may show forth Thy praise!"⁹¹ "I will call upon the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God!"⁹² The first three prayers of the eighteen contained ascriptions of praise, the last three thanksgivings, and the twelve between, supplications for the nation and for individuals. As the Reader closed, he recited the words—"We, here below, would hallow Thy name, as it is hallowed in heaven, as is written in the prophets"⁹³—"One cried to another, and said——." The congregation then responded, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory!" Then the Reader began again: "They who stand before Him say, 'Blessed;'" and the congregation answered, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place."⁹⁴ The Reader, once more, began: "In Thy holy Scripture it is written:"⁹⁵ and the congregation answered, "The Lord shall reign for ever, even Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Hallelujah!"

On Mondays and Thursdays, and on Sabbaths, the Law was now read. For the Sabbaths, the five Books of Moses were divided into fifty sections, of seven lessons each, and a complete section was repeated each Sabbath, so that the Law was read through in a year. At the end of each lesson, and at its beginning, a collect was read, and between each, the Expositor—a member of the congregation who had been

⁹⁰ Cohen, 207.⁹¹ Ps. 51, 15.⁹² Deut. 32, 3.⁹³ Isaiah 6, 3.⁹⁴ Ezek. 3, 12.⁹⁵ Ps. 146, 10.

invited for the purpose, and who stood in the desk beside the Reader while the lesson was being read—delivered a short address from it. A priest, if present, had the first invitation, then a Levite, and any one who seemed to know the Law came after. The roll of the Prophets was handed to him by the Reader after the closing collect of the lesson. At each service there was thus a series of short comments. One Expositor gave a general address on the Law embodied in the lesson: another an exhortation based on it, and a third expounded the allegorical mysteries it shadowed forth. Each was, however, expected to illustrate the three cardinal points of Jewish piety—the love of God, of virtue, and of one's neighbour, this last duty being additionally enforced by a collection in the boxes at the door “for the land of Israel.”⁹⁶

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Very few relics of these synagogue addresses survive, but we are able even from these, as preserved in the Talmud, to realize their general characteristics. Short, and in great measure made up of proverbs, natural imagery, and parables, they were very different from our sermons. One example will suffice. An ancient address from the same chapter of Isaiah⁹⁷ from which Jesus took His text in the synagogue of Nazareth, runs thus—the special words commented on being, “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation:”—

⁹⁶ Philo, l. 877.

“There are seven garments,” says the speaker, “which the Holy One, blessed be His name, has put on since the world began, or will put on before the hour when He will visit with His wrath the godless Edom.”⁹⁸ When He created the world He clothed Himself in honour and glory, for it says:⁹⁹ ‘Thou art clothed with honour and glory.’ When He showed Himself at the Red Sea He clothed Himself in majesty, for it says:¹⁰⁰ ‘The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty.’ When He gave the Law He clothed Himself with might, for it says:¹⁰¹ ‘Jehovah is clothed with might, where- with He hath girded Himself.’ As often as He forgave Israel its sins He clothed Himself in white, for it says:¹⁰² ‘His garment was white as snow.’ When He punishes the nations of the world He puts on the garments of vengeance, for it

⁹⁷ Ch. 61.⁹⁸ A hidden allusion to the Roman Empire.⁹⁹ Ps. 104. 1.¹⁰⁰ Ps. 83. 1.¹⁰¹ Ps. 93. 1.¹⁰² Dan. 7. 9.

CHAP. XIII. says:¹⁰³ 'He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing

¹⁰³ Isaiah 59. 17. and was clad with zeal as a cloak.' He will put on the sixth robe when the Messiah is revealed. Then will He clothe

¹⁰⁴ Isaiah 59. 17. Himself in righteousness, for it says:¹⁰⁴ 'For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation on His head.' He will put on the seventh robe when He punishes Edom. Then will He clothe Himself in Adom (red), for it says:¹⁰⁵ 'Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel?'

¹⁰⁵ Isaiah 63. 2. But the robes with which He will clothe the Messiah will shine from one end of the world to the other, for it says:¹⁰⁶ 'As a bridegroom who is crowned with his turban, like a priest.'

¹⁰⁶ Isaiah 61. 10. See Gesenius, Kommentar. *in loc.* And the sons of Israel will rejoice in His light, and will say, 'Blessed be the hour when the Messiah was born, blessed the

womb which bore Him,¹⁰⁷ blessed the eyes that were counted worthy to see Him.¹⁰⁸ For the opening of His lips is blessing

and peace,¹⁰⁹ His speech is rest to the soul,¹¹⁰ the thoughts of

His heart confidence and joy, the speech of His lips pardon and forgiveness, His prayer like the sweet-smelling savour of a sacrifice, His supplications holiness and purity.' O how

blessed is Israel for whom such a lot is reserved, for it says:¹¹¹ 'How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.'"¹¹²

¹¹² Pesikta de Rab. Kahana 149 a, ed. Buber; quoted in Delitzsch, Ein Tag in Capernaum, 131—133. On Mondays and Thursdays the first of the seven lessons for the next Sunday was read, but it was divided into three portions, before each of which one of the congregation was called up to the desk.

A few prayers more from the Reader, and the service was ended, with a parting benediction delivered by a priest with uplifted hands, if one were present, if not, by the Reader. The prayers were repeated in the common dialect of Palestine as a rule, but in Greek towns, such as Cæsarea, they were also recited in Greek. The Hebrew or Chaldee of the Law or the Prophets was translated into the spoken language¹¹³ by an interpreter, who stood by the side of the Reader.

¹¹³ Jost, i. 177.

Such was the morning service. In the afternoon the congregation met once more; heard a shorter service, and remained, frequently, listening to addresses, till lamplight in the evening. The "Amen" of the congregation, from time to time, was the only interruption sanctioned, but among

Orientalists it would have been hopeless to enforce silence. Ever and anon a hearer volunteered assistance if the speaker hesitated, or corrected a mistake if he supposed one made, and the whole congregation, at times, signified aloud their agreement, shouted a contradiction, or even ordered the speaker to be silent.^{dd}

When to the many prayers of the synagogue service we add those required in private life, the "vain repetitions"¹¹⁴ ¹¹⁴ Matt. 6. 7. against which Christ cautioned His hearers on the Mount may be understood. Besides the five daily repetitions of the S'chma and the Benedictions, every Jew gave thanks before and after every act of eating or drinking, before, and, often, after, each of the countless external rites and exercises required of him; and there were, besides, special prayers for new moons, new years, feasts, half feasts, and fasts, and many for special incidents of private or family life. Prayer, always prescribed in exact words, was in fact multiplied till it was in danger of becoming too often formal and mechanical—a mere outward act, of superstitious importance in itself, apart from the spirit in which it was offered.

Such a circle of synagogue service, constantly repeated, we must conceive the child Jesus to have frequented from his earliest years, day by day, and week by week.

The influence of an institution in which the Law was read, throughout, every year, on the Sabbath, and, in part, twice each week, with extra readings on special high days; in which the Prophets and Psalms were constantly brought before the congregation, and in which multiplied prayers, always the same, impressed on the mind every emotion and thought of the national religion, in language often grand and solemn in the extreme—must have been great. The synagogue was, in fact, the seed-bed of Judaism: its inspiring soul and its abiding nurture.^{ee} It was in it that Jesus was first drawn into love and sympathy, as a child, for His people, and that He heard the rights, duties, and prospects, of the suffering people of God, and drank in a deep knowledge of the Law and the Prophets, by which, as St. Luke tells us, "He kept on growing in wisdom."^{ff} The lessons He learned in it can be traced through the whole Gospels. The addresses He

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heard were no doubt, for the most part, lifeless Rabbinical refinements, with a Pharisaic colouring, which His pure and sinless soul, filled with the love of His heavenly Father, instinctively prized at their true value. His words in after life often show that He had been accustomed to see Pharisees and Scribes in the synagogue, who made the Mondays and Thursdays, on which service was held, their days of fasting; who paraded a show of long prayers or of liberal alms; and eagerly pressed forward to the front seats, where they would be most in honour, and would be most likely to be called up to speak. As He grew older He would meet, in turn, in the synagogue, every shade of the religion of the day, —the strictness of the school of Shammai, and the mildness of that of Hillel; Jewish bigotry, and Galilæan freedom and tolerance; the latitudinarianism of the Sadducee, or the puritanical strictness of the Essene. The great doctrines of ceremonial purity, of the righteousness of works, of the kingdom of God, and of the coming redemption of Israel, would sound in His ears Sabbath by Sabbath, giving Him much to retain and still more to reject. In the synagogue He came in contact with the religious life of His race, in its manifold aspects. We see, in His public life, how the crowds that gathered round Him, as the new Rabbi of Israel, entered into conversation with Him on the subjects of His discourse, or commented on them afterwards, and He had, no doubt, done much the same with the teachers He heard in His earlier years. The Rabbis whom He met in the synagogues, in the markets, or at meals, were accustomed to exchange question and answer with all, and must often have had to reply to His searching questions, and deep insight into Scripture. Nor would the longing of the people at large, for the vengeance of God on the oppressors of the nation escape His notice. As a man in all things like other men, except in His sinlessness—the synagogue with its services, and the free expression of thought, both in public and private, which it favoured, must have been one of the chief agencies in developing His human nature.” 115

115 Matt. 13. 54.
 Luke 4. 22.
 Matt. 9. 33;
 11. 16; 16. 13,
 14. Mark 1.
 27. Matt. 8. 2;
 5. 19; 9. 3;
 14. 18, 27;
 19. 3, 13, 16.
 Luke 11. 15,
 27, 37; 12. 13,
 31; 14. 15.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOCIAL INFLUENCES.

AMONG the influences amidst which the child Jesus grew up at Nazareth, the Synagogue, with its constantly recurring services, was, no doubt, one of the most important. It was a characteristic of Jewish life, however, that its religion was interwoven with the whole tissue of daily events, from the cradle to the grave. CHAP. XIV.

The Jewish ecclesiastical calendar, with its cycle of feasts, half-feasts and fasts, must have had a great effect in colouring the general mind, and perpetuating the system and sentiments which they illustrated. There were four different reckonings of the Hebrew year—that which commenced with the first day of Nisan, and was known as “the year of kings and feasts;” a second, which dated from the first of Elul—that is, from the full moon of August—from which the year was calculated for the tithing of cattle; a third, from the first day of Tisri—that is, from the new moon of September—from which the years from the creation of the world were reckoned; and a fourth, from the first day of the eleventh month, Schebet—from which the age of trees was counted, for the payment of tithes, and for noting the time when it became lawful¹ to eat the fruit.

The stir made to catch the first glimpse of the new moon would be a great event each month, even in a retired place like Nazareth. Jesus would hear, how, on the last day of each month, men were posted on all the heights round Jerusalem to watch for it; how they hastened, at the utmost speed, to the Temple, with the news, even if it were Sabbath,² and how the sacred trumpet sounded to announce it, and special sacrifices were offered.³ The appearance of the new

¹ *Mischna*; quoted in Grunz's *Art. "Jahr."* in *Bibel Lexicon*.

² *Mischna* Rosh-ha-Shana, i. 4. Ginsburg, New Moon. Kito's *Cyclo*.

³ Plutarch, *de vitando aere alieno*, c. 2.

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⁴ 2 Num. 10. 10;
28. 11—15.
Jos. Ant. III.
10. 1.

moon had in all ages been a great day in Israel, as it also was among the Greeks and Romans.⁴ The Rabbis affirmed that God Himself had spoken of it to Moses, and told him how to observe it. All over the land it was celebrated, monthly, by special religious solemnities, and by universal rejoicing; in some months more than in others; every one in Jerusalem, who could, repairing to the Temple, and all, elsewhere, making it a point to attend the synagogue on that day. In the fondly remembered times of the past, the day of the new moon had been that on which, especially, the people flocked to the prophets to receive instruction,⁵ and on which their ancestors, at some periods, had been wont to worship, from their roofs, the returning light, as that of the Queen of Heaven.

⁵ 2 Kings 4. 23.
Ezek. 26. 1: 29.
17; 31. 1. Hag.
1. 1. Isaiah
47. 13.

Many things would impress this event on the Nazareth children. They doubtless noticed how all the men of the village watched from their doors, each month, for the new light, and they had often heard their fathers, with covered head, repeat the prayer still used by every pious Jew at first seeing it—"Blessed be Thou, Lord, our God! who, through Thy Word, didst create the heavens, and their whole host, by the breath of Thy mouth. He appointed them a law and time that they should not go back from their places. Joyfully and gladly they fulfil the will of their Creator, whose working and whose works are truth. He spoke to the moon, and commanded her that she should renew herself in glory and splendour, for those whom He has carried from their mother's breast,⁶ for they, too, will be one day renewed like her, and glorify their Creator after the honour of His kingdom. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who renewest the moons.⁷ Nor would the simple household feast that followed be unnoticed, with its invited guests, nor the Sabbath rest of all from their daily work,⁸ for it must have been a welcome monthly holiday to the school children of Nazareth.

⁶ Isaiah. Isaiah
46. 3.

⁷ Talmud
Synedr. f. 42 a;
quoted by
Kneucker,
"Neumond,"
Bibel Lexicon.

⁸ Hosea 2. 13.
Coloss. 2. 16.
Ewald's Alter.
470.

The great festival of the Hebrew year—the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread—began on the 15th day of Nisan, the first month, and lasted till the 22nd.^b It was one of the three yearly feasts which every Israelite, if he

could, attended in Jerusalem. Like circumcision, which, indeed, was hardly thought so sacred,⁹ its due observance was esteemed a vital necessity, on no account to be neglected in any year. It was the annual sacrament of the whole Jewish race. The Passover lamb was the one offering which all presented spontaneously. It not only commemorated a national deliverance—the “passing over” of Israel by the destroying angel, but was believed to secure the same mercy for themselves hereafter.¹⁰ Every one regarded it as a debt he owed, and must by all means pay, if he would be counted worthy of a part in the congregation of Israel. It was, in fact, a household sacrifice, which each family offered on its own behalf, that its transgressions through the year might be “passed over.” Even till the later ages of Jewish history the father of each household himself killed the male lamb or goat required, and sprinkled the blood on the lintel and doorposts, as an expiation for the family as a whole, and for any who might have joined them in keeping the feast.¹⁰

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⁹ Ewald's Alter. 474.¹⁰ Ewald's Alter. 467.

Pious Israelites were careful to accustom their children, from the earliest years, to the requirements of their religion, and hence often brought them with them to Jerusalem at the great feasts. Indeed, even the liberal school of Hillel made it binding to do so as soon as a child was able, with the help of its father's hand, to climb the flight of steps into the Temple courts.¹¹

¹¹ Lightfoot, Choro-graph Cent. 76.

The Passover itself was eaten only by males,¹² but the week of the feast was a time of universal rejoicing, so that husbands were wont to take their wives, as well as their sons, with them.

¹² Ewald's Alter. 474.

Joseph and Mary¹³ went to Jerusalem, every year, to the Passover, and took Jesus with them, for the first time, when He was twelve years old. Like His cousin John,¹⁴ He had grown in mind and body, and showed a sweet religious spirit.^{15d} The journey must have been the revelation of a new world to Him—a world, beyond the hills of Samaria, which had hitherto seemed the limit of the earth, as He looked away to them from the hill-top behind Nazareth.

¹³ Luke 2. 41.¹⁴ Luke 1. 80: where the same words are used of John.¹⁵ Luke 2. 40.

Only a Jew could realize the feelings such a visit must have raised even in a child. Jerusalem, to the Israelite, was more,

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if possible, than Mecca is to the Mahommedan. The whole "land of Israel" was "holy," since it, only, could offer to God the first-fruits, or the firstborn, or the "perpetual" shewbread. Its walled towns were still "holier." No leper was allowed in them, and a corpse carried out to burial could not be brought into a town again.¹⁶ But Jerusalem, the sacred city, the seat of the Temple, had a sanctity all its own. By Rabbinical laws, which, however, were, doubtless, often neglected, even holy offerings, of the lower kinds, and second tithes, might be eaten in it. The dead must be carried out before sunset of the day of death. No houses could be let for lodgings, and no sepulchres, except those of the house of David, and of Huldah, the prophetess, had been tolerated. No impurity was suffered, lest creeping things should defile the holy city; nor could scaffolds be set up against the walls, for a similar fear of defilement. Smoke from household fires was forbidden; poultry were unlawful, because they scratched up the soil, and might defile passing offerings; no leper could enter the gates; gardens were prohibited, because the decaying leaves and the manure would make an offensive smell.¹⁷ Superstition had invented the most amazing fancies, as proofs of the passing holiness of the city in its whole extent, and these were, doubtless, universally and implicitly believed. It was maintained that no serpent or scorpion ever harmed any one in Jerusalem; that no fly was ever seen in the place for slaughtering the sacrifices; that no rain ever put out the fire of the altar, and that no wind ever blew aside the pillar of smoke over the altar. But the hospitality of the holy city was less open to question; for it was a common boast that no one had ever failed to find friendly entertainment, or a hearth on which to roast his passover. However churlish to all besides, the hospitality of the citizens to their own nation was unbounded.

But if the city were holy, it was mainly so because of the far greater holiness of the sanctuary within its bounds. The Temple mountain held the fourth place in local holiness. The ceremonially unclean could not enter it. The space between the court of the heathen and the inner courts—the Zwinger, or Chel—ranked next; none but Israelites could enter it,

¹⁶ Jost, i. 135.¹⁷ Lightfoot, Chorograph. Cent. 47, 48.

and not even they, if defiled by a dead body.⁹ The women's court came next. No unclean person, even after bathing, could enter it till sunset. The Forecourt of the Israelites was still holier. No one could go into it who needed expiation to be made for him. Even the clean must bathe before entering, and any unclean person intruding, through oversight, must atone for his error by a trespass-offering. The Forecourt of the Priests was yet more sacred. None but the priests or Levites could cross its threshold, except on special occasions, specified by the Law. The space between the altar and the Temple had a still greater sanctity, for, into it, no priest with any bodily defect, or with his hair in disorder, or with a torn robe, or who had tasted wine, could enter. The Temple itself stood apart, in the tenth and highest degree of sanctity. Before entering it, every priest had to wash both hands and feet. In this revered centre, however, there was one spot more awful than all the rest—the Holy of Holies, which the high priest alone could enter, and he only once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, in the performance of the rites of the day, which required his entering it four times.

Such a country and city could not fail to be the objects of abiding and passionate sentiment. Affection for their native land led to the unique historical phenomenon of the return of the exiles from Babylon. Many psalms of the period still record how the captives wept by the rivers of Babylon when they remembered Zion, and hung their harps on the willows of their banks;¹⁸ and the same intense longing for Palestine is illustrated even yet, by the fond fancy of the Targum¹⁹ that the bodies of the righteous Jews who die in foreign lands, make their way, under ground, to the Mount of Olives, to share in the resurrection of the just, of which it is to be the scene. The wailing of the Jews of Jerusalem over their ruined Temple, as they lean against the few stones of it which yet remain, shows the same feeling, and it is shared by all the race so strongly, that some earth from the land of their fathers is sprinkled on the grave of every Jew that dies away from it, to make him rest in peace.

Love of their mother-land, however, was not especially

¹⁸ Ps. 137.

¹⁹ Upon Cant. 8. 1; quoted by Lightfoot, l. 87. Rom. and Jerusalem, 18.

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that which linked the Jews of all countries in Christ's day into a great brotherhood, and attracted them continually to Jerusalem, for they were voluntarily settled, far and wide, in foreign lands. Nor was it their longing for freedom and independence, for they were contented subjects of all forms of government. Their eyes were everywhere turned to the Temple, and they found in it the centre of their national unity. Their heavenly and earthly fatherland seemed to meet in its sacred enclosure. From all the earth, wherever a Jew lived, rose the same cry as that of the exiles at the sources of the Jordan. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? I pour out my soul in me when I remember these things—how I went with the pilgrim bands, and marched up with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise; with the festive crowd!"²⁰ To the Jews of every land it was the crown and

²⁰ Ps. 42. 1—4
See Ewald,
Zunz, and
Moll.

²¹ Schnecken-
burger's
Vorlesungen,
110.

²² Herzog, xviii.
420.

²³ Philo, de
Monarchia,
lib. ii. § 3.
Mang. ii. 224.

glory of their religious system. In their scattered synagogues and houses of prayer they looked towards it at every service. Their gifts and offerings flowed to it in a golden stream, partly to satisfy the requirements of the Law, but even more to gratify their religious devotion. Every Jew over twenty throughout the world gave his didrachma yearly—in payment of the first-fruits required by the Law—to maintain the Temple and its sacrifices.²¹ Constant voluntary gifts, besides, often of great value, streamed into the holy treasury. Tithes, also, were claimed by the Rabbis from all Jews abroad as well as at home, and were doubtless given by the devout.²² "In almost every town," says Philo, "there is a chest for the sacred money, and into this the dues are put. At fixed times it is entrusted to the foremost men to carry it to Jerusalem. The noblest are chosen from every town to take up the Hope of all Jews, untouched, for on this payment of legal dues rests the hope of the devout."²³ Egypt, though it had a Temple of its own at Leontopolis, sent this yearly tribute regularly; it came constantly from Rome and all the West; from Lesser Asia and all Syria. But it flowed in the richest stream from Babylonia and the

countries beyond the Euphrates, from which it was brought up under the protection of thousands, who volunteered to escort it to Jerusalem, and protect it from plunder by the Parthians on the way.²⁴

²⁴ Jos. Ant. xviii.
9. 1. Philo,
Legat. ad
Calum § 31.

Thus Jerusalem and the Temple were the grand religious centre of all Israel, to the remotest limits of its wanderings. The Sanctuary lived in every heart. To maintain it inviolate was the one common anxiety. Foreign rulers might hold sway over Palestine, and even over Jerusalem, and so long as the Temple was left untouched, submission was paid them, as the will of fate. If, however, the haughtiness or greed of the enemy violated, or even only threatened, the Sanctuary, there ran through the whole Jewish world a feeling of indignation that roused them at once, and at the cry that the Temple was in danger, weapons were grasped and solemn prayers rose, and one deep resolve pervaded all—to shed the last drop of their blood on the battle-field or at the Altar, for Jerusalem and the Sanctuary.²⁵

²⁵ Jost, i. 137.

It must have been a wonderful sight to the child Jesus²⁶ to visit the Holy City at the season of the Passover. The multitudes who flocked to the feast from all countries were countless. "Many thousands," says Philo, "from many thousand towns and cities, make a pilgrimage to the Temple at every feast; some by land, others by sea, from the east and the west, the north and the south²⁷. Even at Pentecost, which attracted a much smaller number, vast crowds of Jews and proselytes were present from every part of the Roman empire, which was nearly equivalent to the then known world.²⁸

²⁶ Luke 7. 9.

²⁷ Philo. de
Monarchia,
lib. ii. § 1.
Mang. ii. 223.

²⁸ Acts 2. 9, 11.

Josephus reckoned the numbers attending a single Passover at 2,700,000, inclusive of the population of the city.^{29f} Every house in the narrow limits of Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims, and the whole landscape round covered with the tents or booths,³⁰ of mat, and wicker work, and interwoven leaves, extemporized to serve as shelter—like the similar structures of the Easter pilgrims still³¹—for those who could not be accommodated in any house. The routes by which they travelled to the Holy City from all lands must have been like those to Mecca, at certain seasons, even now: countless vessels laden with living freights of pilgrims: all the main

^{29f} Bell. Jud. vi.
9. 3.

³⁰ Succoth.

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lines of road thronged with huge caravans: every port of the Mediterranean, and every city and town on the highways leading to the great centre, thronged as with the passage of armies. The vast "dispersion"—Jewish by birth, sentiment, or adoption—converged more and more densely on the one point,—Jerusalem. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and Mesopotamians, in the costume of the far East, with their long trains of camels and mules; crowds from every province of Lesser Asia—Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, each band with the distinctive characteristics of its own district; swarthy multitudes, in long caravans, or afoot,—after a sea voyage to Joppa or Cæsarea—from Egypt, the headquarters of the foreign Jews, and from Libya and Cyrene; pilgrims even from imperial Rome; men from the slopes of Cretan Ida, and from the far-off cities and towns of sandy Arabia, met under the shadow of the Temple. The whole world, in a sense, was gathered to one spot, and this, itself, to a mind such as that of the boy Jesus, must have been rich in the most varied influence and knowledge.

The appearance of the city would make an impression never to be forgotten. If there were no gardens in Jerusalem,³¹ there was a girdle of them reaching, from its very walls, down the valleys, and up the opposite hill-sides; one of them³¹ so famous that the figs from it were sold for three or four assarii each.³² The garden walls and ditches netted over all the approaches to the city, on each side. On the hills around rose the mansions of the rich citizens, and at the bend where the valleys of Kidron and Hinnom met, beside the Pool of Siloam, the eye regaled itself with the wide and rich verdure of the royal gardens.

As Joseph, and Mary with her Son, came in sight of the city from the north, they would be on ground as high as Mount Zion:³³ and rising, to the north-west of the city, even a few feet higher, while, on the west, Zion rose, on an average, about 100 feet above the hills across the Valley of Hinnom; and, on the east, the Mount of Olives overtopped the highest part of the city by 100 feet, and the Temple hill by no less than 300. Except on the north, however, the high ground was divided from Jerusalem by deep valleys, which

³¹ Lightfoot, 89.

³² 24d. and 3d.

³³ Map of English Ordnance Survey.

could be reached from within the city only by steep streets and roads. The pilgrims encamped in the valleys of Kidron or Hinnom saw the buildings and towers of Mount Zion more than 500 feet above them; and those whose tents were pitched not far from the same place, at Joab's Well, were nearly 600 feet below the houses of the upper city. The Court of the Priests looked over to the Pool of Siloam, 370 feet below; and from Mount Zion it needed a descent of 264 feet to reach the Garden of Gethsemane, in the Valley of the Kidron.³⁴

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Jerusalem was thus, pre-eminently, a mountain city, surrounded on all sides by hills,³⁵ and with hills, famous and sacred beyond all others, as its own site. The road from Nazareth entered the new lower town, by the Damascus gate, and passed through the most stirring business street—in the bottom of the Valley of the Cheesemakers, or the Tyropæon: a deep and narrow hollow between Mounts Zion and Moriah, then crowded with the narrow lanes which serve for streets in Eastern cities. In the new town, under the shadow of the two hills, were the shops of the braziers; the clothes' bazaar, and the square where the authorities received announcements of the new moon, and gave the public feasts that followed, monthly. In the Tyropæon, the streets ran, in terraces, up the steep sides of the hill, side lanes climbing here and there, to the top, past the bazaar of the butchers, and that of the wool-dealers, to the upper street, where Ismael Ben Camithi, the high priest at the time, having gone out on the great Day of Atonement, to speak with a heathen, a fleck of spittle fell on his clothes, from the lips of the uncircumcised, and defiled him, so that he could not perform the services of the day, and had to get his brother to take his place.

³⁴ These details are from the Ordnance Survey Map.
³⁵ Ps. 125. 2.

On the west of the Tyropæon, on the top of Mount Zion, rose the old, or upper city, known also as the City of David. In it were the shops of the goldsmiths, and the houses of the priests who lived in Jerusalem. The Wall of David ran along its north side, opening through the gate Gennath, to Akra, or the lower town. High above this wall, which was over fifty feet in height, rose the three famous castles—Hippikus,

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Phasaelus, and Mariamne—built by Herod the Great, and then fresh from the builder's hands. Of these, Hippikus, stern and massive, towered 120 feet above the wall, at its north-west corner: a great square of huge stones, in successive stories, the upper one surmounted by battlements and turrets.³⁶ Close by, and in a line with it, rose Phasaelus, the splendid memorial to Herod's brother Phasael, who had beaten out his brains against the walls of his dungeon when a prisoner of the Parthians. It, also, was square, for sixty feet of its height above the wall, but from amidst the breastworks and bulwarks of this lower fortress, rose a second tower about seventy feet higher, with magnificent battlements and turrets. Within, this upper tower was like a palace, and it was, doubtless, intended as a refuge for the king, in case of necessity. Mariamne, the smallest of the three castles, was about thirty feet square, and about seventy-five in height, but its upper half was more highly finished than that of either of the others, as if to quiet its builder's conscience for the murder of her whose name it bore. All three fortresses, towering thus grandly aloft, above the high wall,—which itself rose along the crest of a high hill,—were of white marble: each stone thirty feet long, fifteen in breadth, and from seven to eight in thickness; and all squared so exactly that their joinings could hardly be seen. "Each tower," to use the words of Josephus, "looked like a great natural rock which had been cut by the workman into shape, like the rock-hewn buildings of Edom."³⁷

³⁶ Jos. Bell. Jud. v. 4. 3.
³⁷ Bell. Jud. v. 5. 4.

Under the protection of these splendid structures rose the new palace of Herod, about the centre of the northern half of Mount Zion, a great part of which was enclosed within its park walls, themselves a second line of defence, forty-five feet in height, with strong towers rising, at equal distances, from their broad tops. The palace itself was indescribably magnificent. Spacious rooms, with elaborately carved walls and ceilings, many of them crusted with precious stones, displayed Oriental splendour to hundreds of guests at a time. Gold and silver shone on every side. Round this sumptuous abode, porticoes with curious pillars of costly stone, offered shady retreats. Groves and gardens

stretched on every side, intermingled with pools and artificial rivers, bordered by long, delightful walks, frequented, through the day, by all who could endure the desecration of Jerusalem by the countless statues which adorned them.

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The theatre built by Herod, to the horror of the nation, was also, apparently, in this part of the city;³⁸ and outside, at a little distance, was the amphitheatre, an object of still greater popular aversion, from its gladiatorial shows, in which men condemned to death fought with wild beasts. Inscriptions in honour of Augustus, and trophies of the nations Herod had conquered in his wars, adorned the exterior of the theatre; and the games in the circus, though shunned by the Jews, were celebrated with the greatest pomp, strangers from all the neighbouring countries being invited to them. The trophies round the theatre especially excited indignation, being supposed to cover images, and hence being looked upon as heathen idols. So great, indeed, had the excitement become, in Herod's lifetime, that, for policy, he had caused the armour to be taken from some of them, in presence of the leading men, to show that there was nothing but shapeless wood beneath. Yet even this did not calm the people, and no Jew passed the hated building without the bitterest feelings at its presence in the holy city.

³⁸ Jos. Ant. i. 8.
1.

On the eastern crest of Zion stood the old palace of the Asmonean kings, and, north of it, an open space surrounded by a lofty covered colonnade, known as the Xystus.ⁱ A bridge spanned the Tyropæon Valley to the south-west corner of the Temple enclosure, and near the Xystus rose a hall, known as the Hall of the King's Council. The main streets ran north and south—some along the brow of the hill, others lower down, but parallel, following the course of the valley, with side lanes or narrow streets connecting them. They had raised pavements, either because of the slope of the ground, or to allow passers by to avoid contact with persons or things ceremonially unclean.^k The upper city was mainly devoted to dwelling-houses of the better kind; but in the lower city, bazaars, or street-like markets were then, as now, a prominent feature, each devoted to a special branch of commerce.

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Looking out at the Gennath gate on the north of Zion, the Almond pool, near at hand, refreshed the eye. Beyond it, across a little valley, slightly to the north-west, near the Joppa road, was Psephinos, another of the castles by which the city was at once defended and overawed. It rose in an octagon, high into the clear blue, showing from its battlements the whole sweep of the country, from the sea-coast to beyond the Dead Sea, and from the far north, away towards Edom, on the south. In Christ's day it stood outside the city, by itself, but soon after His death it was included in the line of wall built by Herod Agrippa.³⁹

³⁹ A.D. 41—44.

The northern part of the lower town, known as Akra, was mainly interesting for the bustle of restless city life of every colour which it presented. The wood bazaar, the city council-house, and public records office, were in it. Nor was it destitute of attractions, for the double pool of Bethesda lay at its north-east corner. The Temple and its courts occupied nearly the whole of Mount Moriah, the second hill on which the city was built, the only other building on it contrasting strangely in appearance and character. It was the great fortress Antonia, at the north-west corner, on an isolated rock, separated by a cleft from Mount Moriah, and cased with stone where exposed, so that no foe could scale it. The castle occupied, with its enclosures, nearly a third of the great Temple plateau,¹ and was built originally by John Hyrcanus, but had been rebuilt by Herod with great magnificence, with baths, fountains, galleries, piazza, and great rooms, to fit it for a residence for princely guests. It served now as the quarters of the Roman garrison, sent from Caesarea at the time of the great feasts, to keep peace in the city.⁴⁰ In Christ's day the robes of the high priest were kept in it by the Romans, to prevent a seditious use of them. Covered ways led from the castle to the Temple area, to allow the soldiery free access in case of tumult or disturbance.

⁴⁰ Acts 21. 31.
Jos. Bell. Jud.
ii. 12. 1.

Such was the city to which Jesus now came for the first time. As he was led through its crowded streets, and saw its famous palaces, and towers, and marts, and above all, the Temple, what strange thoughts must have risen in the opening mind of the wondrous boy.⁴¹

Luke 2. 40.

The panorama spread before Him from the city, at its different points, was no less filled with interest. From the Temple he looked eastward to Mount Olivet, then crowned by two great cedars, underneath which were booths for the sale of all things needed for ceremonial purifications, including the doves for the various offerings.⁴² He would no

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⁴² Talmud; quoted in Lightfoot's Chor. Cent. 87. Jost, l. 189.

doubt hear how, in former times, beacon fires had been kindled on the hill-top at each new moon, and how mountain after mountain, catching the sight, spread the news in an hour over the whole land. Some one would, doubtless, also, tell Him that it was the hated Samaritans who had brought the custom to an end, by holding up lights at wrong times, and thus misleading Israel.

The Valley of the Kidron, below, would be equally interesting. It was to it the pilgrims came down at the Feast of Tabernacles, to cut the long boughs of willow which they carried in procession to the Temple, and laid bending over the altar.⁴³ On the eve of the first day of the feast, Jesus would see men sent by the Temple authorities—a great crowd following—to cut the sheaf of first-fruits. Perhaps He saw the three reapers, with basket and sickle, step to spots previously marked out, asking, as they stood beside the new barley, “Has the sun set yet? Is this the right sickle? Is this the right basket?” and, if it were Sabbath, “Is this the Sabbath?”—to be followed by another question, thrice repeated, “Shall I cut?” which was answered with what seems, now, childish formality, but then thrilled all hearts, “Cut.”⁴⁴ Religious bitterness lay behind all this minute triviality, for did not the hated aristocratic Sadducees maintain that the first sheaf should be cut only on the first week-day of the feast, which would have affected the date of Pentecost, fifty days later?⁴⁵ The Child from Nazareth would follow, when the sheaf, thus reaped, was carried, amidst great rejoicings, to the forecourt of the Temple, and presented by the priest as a heave-offering,⁴⁶ then threshed, winnowed, and cleansed, dried over a sacred fire, and forthwith ground into flour, the finest of which was the new-harvest “meat-offering” before God. He knew that till this had been presented at the altar, no field could

⁴³ Lightfoot, 89.

⁴⁴ 2 Sam. 21. 9. Ruth 1. 22; 2. 23. Jos. Ant. iii. 10. 5.

⁴⁵ Jost, l. 166.

⁴⁶ Lev. 23. 5—14.

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⁴⁷ Lightfoot,
Horn. Heb. l.
23, 84.

be cut, except to get fodder for cattle, or for other necessary ends.⁴⁷

Looking into the Valley of Hinnom from the southern end of the Temple, with its magnificent Royal porch, His eyes must have turned from the sight one spot in it offered, the fires kept up, night and day, to burn all the garbage and offal of the Temple, and the refuse of the city—the symbol of the unquenchable flames of the Pit. It was in this valley that children had been burned alive to Moloch in the old idolatrous times, and the remembrance of this, with the foulness of the part where the perpetual fires now burned, had made Gehenna—the name of the valley—the word used afterwards even by Jesus Himself, for the place of the lost.

Between Hinnom and Kidron, where the two valleys met at the south-east of the city, His eyes, looking down from the Temple Mount, would rest on the contrasted sweetness of the softly-flowing waters of Siloam, which bubbled up noiselessly at the foot of the hill, and after filling a double pool, glided on to the south, till they lost themselves in the king's gardens.

City and people: the past and the present, must have filled the whole being of the Child with awe and wonder, for He now stood, for the first time, under the shadow of His Father's Temple, and the murmur of countless languages that filled the air, was, in very truth, homage to that Father from all the world.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PASSOVER VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

THE vast multitudes coming to the Passover arranged to reach Jerusalem, at the latest, on the 14th of Nisan, the day on the evening of which the feast was celebrated. In the city, however, there had been a great stir for some days already, in anticipation of the solemnity. So far back as from the 15th of the preceding month,¹ all the bridges and roads, far and near, had been begun to be repaired. All graves near the lines of travel, or round Jerusalem, had been either fenced in, or the head-stones had been whitewashed,² that they might be seen from a distance, and thus warn off the pilgrims, whom they might otherwise have defiled,³ and made unfit for the feast. The fields, throughout the whole country, had been anxiously gone over, to see if they were unclean by any plants growing together in them, which the Law forbade being allowed to do so.⁴ On the Sabbath immediately preceding the 14th—the Great Sabbath—special services had been held in all the synagogues and in the Temple itself, and the Rabbis had discoursed to the people on the laws and meaning of the festival. The lambs, or he goats, had been selected, in earlier times, on the 10th, from the vast flocks driven to the city at this season, to supply the Passover demand. But this was impossible now, as the pilgrims arrived, mostly, after that day.⁵ Only male lambs, or he goats, of a year old, and without blemish, could be used,⁶ and they were selected with the most scrupulous care by the head of each company of relatives or neighbours, who proposed to eat the feast together.⁷

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1 Adar.

2 Matt. 23. 27.

3 John 18. 28.

4 Lev. 19. 19.

5 John 11. 55, 56.

6 Ex. 12. 1—28.

7 Luke 22. 8.

The fourteenth day, which began at sunset of the 13th, was also the first day of the feast of "Unleavened Bread,"⁸

8 Ex. 13. 7.

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⁹ John 19. 14.

and was hence known as the "preparation day."⁹ No particle of leaven could be left in any house. The head of each family, as the evening closed, began the household purification with the prayer—"Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and requirest us to remove the leaven," and then proceeded, in rigorous silence, to search every room, gathering every crumb that could be found, and finally tying all up till the following morning. A further search, which must end before noon, was then made for any liquid or solid product of fermented grain, and for all dishes or vessels that had held it. All were taken out of the house, and the crumbs and dough carefully burned, with a repetition of prescribed prayers. The house itself was then cleansed in every part, and no one could enter the unpurified house of a heathen, henceforth, during the feast,¹⁰ without being defiled. Nothing leavened could be eaten or permitted in the house during the next seven days,—for defilement, bringing with it unfitness to eat the Passover, would follow in either case.¹¹

¹⁰ John 18. 28.
¹¹ John 11. 55.
Jos. Bell. Jud.
vi. 9. 3.

This purification of the house, however, was by no means all. Vessels of any kind, to be used at the feast, were cleansed with prescribed rites, in a settled mode. Metal dishes, &c., after being scoured, must be first dipped in boiling water—in a pot used for no other purpose—and then into cold. Iron vessels must be made red-hot; then washed in the same way. Iron mortars, for crushing grain for baking, were filled with red coals, till a thread, tied outside, was burned through. Wooden vessels, after being wetted, were rubbed with a red-hot stone. No clay dish could be used at all if not quite new, and it had to be first dipped thrice in running water, and consecrated by a special prayer. Personal purity was as strictly enforced. Every one had to cut his hair and nails, and to take a bath.

The baking of the unleavened bread was accompanied with equally formal care. On the evening of the 13th, "before the stars appeared," the head of each household went out and drew water for the purpose, uttering the words

as he did so, "This is the water for the unleavened bread," and covering the vessel that contained it, for fear of any defilement. In grinding the flour, the most anxious care was observed to keep all leaven from coming near the woman at the mill, and to take no grain that was at all damp, lest it might have begun to ferment. After baking, one loaf, to be taken to the priest at the Temple, was laid aside, with another prescribed prayer.

The afternoon of the 14th was a time of the intensest bustle, for the ram's horn trumpets would presently announce, from the Temple, the beginning of the feast. At the sound, every one took his lamb to the Temple, the court walls of which were gaily hung with many-coloured carpets and tapestries, in honour of the day. The countless victims must be first examined by the priests, to see if they were without blemish, then slaughtered and prepared for roasting, in the forecourts of the Temple,¹² by the heads of the different households, or by men deputed by them, or by the Levites in attendance,¹³ with indescribable haste and confusion, for there was more than work enough for all, to kill, almost at the same time, the 256,000 lambs sometimes required.¹⁴ The exact time for killing the victims was "between the evenings," from sunset of the 14th till the stars appeared, though they might be killed in the three last hours of the day.

¹² 2 Chron. 35. 5.
Mischna Pesachim, v. 6. 8.

¹³ 2 Chron. 30.
17. Ez. 6. 20.
2 Chron. 35. 6,
14 f.

¹⁴ Jos. Bell. Jud.
vi. 9. 3. See the
vivid account
of the Pass-
over in
Josiah's times,
2 Chron. 35.
1—20.

As soon as the courts were full, the gates were shut on the multitude within, each holding his lamb. Three blasts of trumpets then announced the beginning of the heavy task. Long rows of priests, with gold and silver bowls, stood ranged between the altar and the victims, to catch the blood, and pass it on from one to the other, till the last poured it on the altar, from which it ran off, through pipes beneath. When the lamb had been drained of blood, the head of the family to which it belonged took it to the hooks on the walls and pillars round, where it was opened and skinned. The tail, which, in the sheep of Palestine, often weighs many pounds, and the fat, were handed to the nearest priest, and passed on till they reached the altar, to be burned as an offering to God. The lamb was killed without the

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Not fewer than ten, but as many as twenty, might sit down at a company.¹⁵ Women were allowed to join their households, though it was not required that they should eat the Passover;¹⁶ and lads from fourteen,¹⁷ and even slaves and foreigners, if circumcised, sat down with the rest. Everything was hurried, for the lambs¹⁸ were required to be killed, roasted, and eaten, between three in the afternoon and nine or twelve at night. They were, properly, to be eaten in the courts of the Temple, but this, after a time, having become impossible, they might be eaten anywhere within the Rabbinical limits of the city.¹⁹ Thousands of fires, in special ovens, prepared them; for they must be roasted only, not boiled, or cooked except in this way. It was trussed with spits of pomegranate wood,²⁰ inserted in the form of a cross, and the whole creature roasted entire. None of the flesh was allowed to remain till morning, any fragments left being forthwith burned, that they might not be defiled. The very dress and attitude of all who took part had been originally prescribed, but these details were now out of use.

The feast itself must have impressed a child like Jesus no less than the preparations. Not a bone of the lamb must be broken, under a penalty of forty stripes, nor must any part of it touch the oven; and if any fat dropped back on it, the part on which it dropped was cut off. The company having assembled, after the lamps were lighted, arranged themselves in due order, on couches, round the tables, reclining on their left side. A cup of red wine, mixed with water, was filled for every one, and drunk, after a touching benediction, by the head man of the group. A basin of water and a towel were then brought in, that each might wash his hands,²¹ and then another blessing was pronounced.

A table was then carried into the open space between the couches, and bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, with a dish—made of dates, raisins, and other fruits, mixed with vinegar to the consistency of lime, in commemoration of the mortar

¹⁵ Jos. Bell. Jud. vi. 9. 3. Targ. Jon. on Ex. 12. 4.

¹⁶ Mischna Pesachim, viii. 1.

¹⁷ The Buch d. Jubiläen, c. 49, says, from 20, upwards.

¹⁸ D. Buch d. Jubiläen, c. 49.

¹⁹ Deut. 16. 6, 7. D. Buch d. Jubiläen, c. 49. Mischna Sebachim, v. 8.

²⁰ Mischna Pesachim, vii. 1. 2.

²¹ John 13. 4, 5, 12.

with which their fathers worked in Egypt,—set on it, along with the paschal lamb. The head man then took some of the bitter herbs, dipped them in the dish,²² and, after giving thanks to God for creating the fruits of the earth, ate a small piece, and gave one to each of the company.²³ A second cup of wine and water was then poured out, and the son²⁴ of the house, or the youngest boy present, asked the meaning of the feast. The questions to be put had been minutely fixed by the Rabbis, and were as formally and minutely answered in appointed words, the whole story of the deliverance from Egypt being thus repeated, year after year, at every Passover table, in the very same terms, throughout all Israel.^b

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Matt. 26. 23.

Matt. 26. 23.
John 13. 26.Ex. 12. 26.
Deut. 32. 7.

The first part of the great Hallelujah—Psalms cxiii. and cxiv.—was now chanted, and was followed by a prayer, beginning, “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast redeemed us and our forefathers from Egypt.” A third cup was now poured out, and then came the grace after meals. A fourth and last cup followed, and then Psalms cxv., cxvi., cxvii., and cxviii., which formed the rest of the Hallelujah, and another prayer, closed the feast.

At midnight the gates of the Temple were once more opened, and the people, who seldom slept that night, poured through them, in their holiday dress, with thank-offerings, in obedience to the command that none should appear before the Lord empty.²⁵ Of these gifts the priests took their rightful share, and gave back the rest to the offerers, who had it cooked for them in the Court of the Women, and sat down to a second feast in the Temple cloisters, or in some part of the town, within the limits of which alone it was lawful to eat such food.

Ex. 23. 15.

The whole week was full of interest. The 15th was kept like a Sabbath.²⁶ It was one of the six days of the year on which the Law prohibited all servile work. Only what was necessary for daily life might be done. It was a day for rest, and for the presentation of freewill offerings in the Temple.

Ex. 12. 16.
Lev. 23. 7.
Num. 28. 18.

It was on the third day that the first-fruits of the harvest were brought from the Kidron valley to the Temple, to be

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waved before God in solemn acknowledgment of His bounty in giving the kindly fruits of the earth. This incident Jesus, doubtless, saw. He would notice, besides, how the sheaf had no sooner been offered than the streets were filled with sellers of bread made of new barley, parched ears of the young crop, and early growths and fruits of all kinds, which had been kept back till then.

From the 17th to the 20th the days were only half holy, and many of the people had already begun to leave Jerusalem. Crowds still remained, however, to enjoy the great holiday time of the year, and the days and even the nights, with their bright moon, went merrily by.

The last day, the 21st, like the first, was kept as a Sabbath. Only necessary work was permitted, and it closed with a rehearsal of the Passover supper, for the sake of those who could not come up on the first great day of the feast.^c

But amidst all the sights and wonders of the week one specially interested Jesus. His heart was already set supremely on "His Father's house,"²⁷ the Temple. Can we doubt that, with the early habits of the East, He found time to watch its daily service throughout?

This began, in reality, the night before. The priests required for the services of the next day, or to watch through the night, assembled in the evening in the great Fire Chamber. The keys of the Temple, and of the inner forecourts, were then handed them by their brethren whom they relieved, and hidden below the marble floor. The Levites on watch through the night, or to serve next day, also received the keys of the outer forecourts from their brethren whose duties were over. Besides these, twenty-four representatives of the people, on duty,—men delegated by the nation to represent it,—at the daily sacrifices, were also present.^d

As the morning service began very early, everything was put in train beforehand. Ninety-three vessels and instruments needed for it were received from the retiring Levites, and carried to a silver table on the south of the Great Altar, to be ready. The gates of the Temple building itself, and of the inner forecourts, were locked up for the night, the key once more put in its place, the priest who had

²⁷ Luke 2. 49.

charge of it kissing the marble slab as he replaced it, and lying down to sleep over it through the night. The gates of the outer forecourts were now also shut, and the watches of priests and Levites set for the night. But the Temple was too sacred to be entrusted to them alone; the Representatives slept in it on behalf of the people; and some ecclesiastical dignitaries, deputed by the authorities, and one of the higher priests, who was to preside over the lots for daily offices next morning.

Towards dawn, the captain of the watch and some priests rose, took the keys, and passing into the inner forecourt, preceded by torch-bearers, divided into two bands, which went round the Temple courts, to see that all was safe, and every vessel in its right place.

Meanwhile, the other priests had risen, bathed, and put on their white robes. The duties of each for the day were fixed by lot each morning, to prevent the unseemly quarrels, resulting even in bloodshed, which had formerly risen.²⁸ 28 Cohen, 172. Assembling in a special chamber, all stood in a circle, and the lot was taken by counting a given number from any part of the ring, the choice remaining with him whose place made up the figure. Meanwhile, the Levites and Representatives waited the summons to gather. The priests for the day now once more washed their hands and feet in a brazen laver, which, itself, had been kept all night in water, for fear of its being defiled. The feet were left bare while the priests were on duty.

All the gates were presently opened by the Levites, and the priests blew thrice on their trumpets to announce to the whole city that the worship of the day would soon begin. The Great Altar was forthwith cleansed by priests to whose lot this duty had fallen. The singers and musicians of the day, and the priests to blow the trumpets at the morning sacrifice, were set apart; the instruments brought; the night-watchers dismissed, and then the day's service had begun. All this took place by torchlight, before dawn.

The morning sacrifice could not be slain before the distinct appearance of the morning light. A watcher, therefore, standing on the roof of the Temple, looked out for

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the first glimpse of Hebron, far off, on the hills, as the sign of morning having come. When it was visible, the summons was given—"Priests, to your ministry! Levites, to your places! Israelites, take your stations!" The priests then once more washed their feet and hands, and the service finally began.

Entering first the Temple, and then the Holy Place, with lowly reverence, a priest now, after prayer, cleansed the altar of incense, gathered the ashes in his hands, and went out slowly, backwards. Another, meanwhile, had laid wood on the Great Altar, and a third brought a year-old lamb, selected four days before, from the pen in the Temple, to the north side of the altar. The Representatives having laid their hands on its head, it was slaughtered with the head to the west side of the Temple, and the blood caught in a bowl, and stirred continually to prevent its curdling and becoming unfit for sprinkling.

The incense offering was now kindled. At the tinkling of a bell, the people in the inner forecourt began to pray, and the priests whose lot it was entered the Holy Place. The first brought out the censer last used, praying and walking backward as he retired. The blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the four sides of the Great Altar as soon as he reappeared.

A second priest having now extinguished five of the seven lamps of the golden candlestick in the Holy Place, a third took in a glowing censer and laid it on the altar, prayed, and retired backwards. A fourth now went in, handed the censer to an assistant who followed, shook incense on the coals, prayed, and retired. The two remaining lights were then extinguished, and the offering ended.

The skin was now stripped from the slain lamb, the bowels taken out and washed, the body cut in pieces, laid on a marble table, and salted. The food or meat-offering of meal, mixed with oil, and strewed with incense, was then prepared, and a fixed measure of wine poured into a costly cup for the drink-offering. It was now sunrise.

As the sun rose, the nine pieces of the sacrifice were lifted by nine priests, and carried to the Great Altar, in order—

laid on it and consumed—the other priests and the people repeating morning prayer. The meat-offering was then laid on the altar, salt and incense added, and then a handful of it was thrown on the altar fire, the rest falling to the priest as his perquisite. Twelve cakes, the bread-offering of the high priest, were next burned, after being strewn with salt. Every detail had occupied a separate priest, and now another poured the wine of the drink-offering into a silver funnel in the altar, through which it ran into a conduit underneath.

The morning sacrifice was now over. Forthwith two priests sounded their trumpets nine times, and twelve Levites, standing on a raised platform in the Court of the Priests, recited the psalms of the day to the music of their instruments, and then came the ancient priestly benediction—"The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and grant thee peace."²⁹

²⁹ Num. 6. 24—26.

Voluntary offerings, and those required on special grounds, occupied the priests, for a time, after the morning sacrifice. At three in the afternoon the evening sacrifice and incense offering presented the same details, the victim being left on the altar to burn away through the night. At sunset the S'chma was read again, and the evening prayer offered; the seven lamps in the Holy Place again kindled and left to burn till morning, and all the vessels cleaned by the Levites, and made ready for next day.

This daily service was no doubt watched by the child Jesus, who now, for the first time, saw the priests in His Father's house at their ministrations. But the city itself would be sure to arrest His notice. At early dawn he would hear the trumpets of the Roman garrison in Antonia, and see the booths open shortly after, on the Mount of Olives. Three trumpet blasts from the Temple had already waked the slumbering citizens and pilgrims, and the first beams of the sun had announced the hour of morning prayer. The streets had already filled in the twilight, for the Oriental, in all ages, has been an early riser. Sheep and cattle dealers, and money-changers, were hurrying to the Court of

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the Heathen. Worshippers were thronging across the Xystus bridge from the Upper City to the Temple, and through the Market gate, from the Lower Town, along all the streets. The countless synagogues were open for morning service. Men wearing the Greek dress, and speaking Greek, had gathered in some, and other nationalities in others.

With the first sight of the risen sun every one bowed his head in prayer, wherever at the moment he might be. Yonder a Pharisee, who has purposely let the hour overtake him, in the street, suddenly stops, and ties his Tephillin,³⁰ broader and larger than common, on his forehead and arm. The olive-gatherer, with his basket, prays where he is, in the tree. Pilgrims and citizens are alike bent in prayer.

³⁰ Matt. 23, 5.

It was an uneasy time when Jesus first visited Jerusalem. Archelaus had been banished two years before, and the hateful race of the Edomites no longer reigned in the palace on Zion, but the hopes built on the change to direct government by a Roman Procurator had not been fulfilled. Judea was now only a part of a Roman province, and the first act of the direct imperial rule had been to make a census of the whole country for heathen taxes. Galilee and Judea, alike, had been in wild insurrection, which had been quenched in blood. Men spoke with bated breath, but were at one in deadly hatred of the foreigner, and in the yearning hope that the Messiah might soon appear to drive him out.

The great bazaar in the Lower New Town was early full of bustle. It was a long street, crowded with stalls, booths, and shops. Fine bread of the wheat of Ephraim was sold after the second day of the feast. Cakes of figs and raisins; fish of different kinds from the Sea of Tiberias; wood-work of all kinds, filled the open stalls. Dibs—the syrup of grapes—had many sellers, and there were booths for Egyptian lentiles, and even for cinnamon and pepper. Mechanics plied their trades in the streets, too busy to rise even when a great Rabbi passed. In the side streets trades of every kind filled the roadway. Potters were busy in their sheds; fruiterers offered choice Jerusalem figs from

gardens made rich with the blood of the sacrifices; flax-beaters pounded their flax in the streets. The numbers of passing priests showed that Jerusalem was the Holy City. Levites, with their peculiar head-dress, and an outside pocket containing a small roll of the Law; Pharisees, with broad phylacteries and great fringes; Essenes in white, with the air of old prophets; gorgeous officials of the governor's court, at present in the city—pilgrims in the costume of every land, and speaking a babel of languages—passed and repassed in endless variety.³¹

The people of Jerusalem might well value the feasts, for they lived by the vast numbers of pilgrims. The money spent by individuals, though little compared to the wealth which flowed yearly into the Temple treasury, from the whole Dispersion, was great in the aggregate. Their gifts in money to the Temple might in part remain there; but they needed doves, lambs, and oxen for sacrifices, wood for the altar, and liked to carry home memorials of Jerusalem. The countless priests and Levites, and officials connected with the Temple, caused a great circulation of money, and the building itself, and the requirements of its worship, involved constant expenditure. We need not, therefore, wonder that Jerusalem was wildly fanatical in its zeal for the Holy Place. It was bound to it not less by self-interest than by religious bigotry.

³¹ See Delitzsch, *Handwerker-leben, passim.*

Jerusalem, though by no means large, was the headquarters of the great religious institutions, as the capital of the theocracy. Countless scribes, rulers, presbyters, scholars, readers, and servants were connected with its schools and synagogues. It was the seat of all the famous teachers of the Law, the focus of controversy, the university town of the Rabbis, the battle-ground of religious parties,—the capital of the Jewish nation, in short, in a measure only possible from its having in its midst the one Temple of the race. It was the Delphi and Olympia of Israel, and how much more! Such a city, at such a time, must have made lasting impressions on the boy Jesus. But His heart was set supremely on higher things than the merely outward and earthly. From His earliest years His mother's faith in the mysterious words

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spoken by saints and angels respecting Him, even before His birth, must have shown itself in a thousand ways in her intercourse with Him, and have kindled mysterious thoughts in His boyish mind.³² We cannot conceive the relations of His divine nature to the human, but it must be safe to follow the Gospels in their picture of Him as maturing year by year, from the simplicity of the child to the wisdom and strength of riper years.

Physical and intellectual ripeness come early in the East. David, Herod, Hyrcanus, and Josephus showed, even in boyhood, traits which in more backward climates mark much later years.³³ Josephus tells us that numbers of Jewish boys put to torture in Egypt, under Vespasian, after the fall of Masada, bore unflinchingly the utmost that could be inflicted on them, rather than own Cæsar as their lord,³⁴ and even in our own day children in Palestine are so early matured that marriages of boys of thirteen and girls of eleven are not unknown.³⁵ Philo, in Christ's day, notes different ages strangely enough to our ideas. "At seven," he says, "a man is a logician and grammarian; at fourteen mature, because able to be the father of a being like himself; while, at twenty-one, growth and bloom are over."³⁶ "A son of five years," says Juda Ben Tema, "is to read the Scriptures aloud (that is, in school), one of ten to give himself to the Mishna, of thirteen to the Commandments, of fifteen to the Talmud, of eighteen to marriage."³⁷

The Rabbis, perhaps from the tradition that Moses left his father's house when twelve years old,³⁸ that Samuel had begun to prophesy when he had finished his twelfth year,³⁹ and that Solomon had delivered some of his famous judgments when as young,⁴⁰ had already in Christ's day fixed that age as the close of boyhood and the opening of a manlier life. "After the completion of the twelfth year," says the Talmud, "a boy is to be considered a youth,⁴¹ and is to keep the fast on the Day of Atonement."⁴² Till he is thirteen his religious duties are to be performed for him by his father, but on his thirteenth birthday the parent is no longer answerable for his son's sins.⁴³

Jesus, who had ended His twelfth year when taken up to

³² See Valhinger in Heitzog, x. 41.

³³ Ant. xv. 10. 5; xii. 4. 6. Vit. 2.

³⁴ Bell. Jud. vii. 10. 1.

³⁵ Burckhardt, Travels, 570. Winer. Ehs.

³⁶ Philo, Leg. Alleg. xlii. 1.

³⁷ Pirke Aboth. v. 21.

³⁸ Talmud; quoted in Nork, 131.

³⁹ Jos. Ant. v. 10. 4.

⁴⁰ Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. iii. 43.

⁴¹ Berachoth, fol. 24. col. 1. in Nork's Rabbiniſche Quellen. 131.

⁴² Joma. f. 82. col. 1.

⁴³ Berachoth Rabbæ f. 63.

the Passover, was thus already a "Son of the Law," and, as such, required to perform all religious duties. The Tephillin or phylacteries had, doubtless, as was usual, been put on Him publicly in the synagogue of Nazareth, to mark the transition from boyhood, to remind Him that He was henceforth to wear them, to keep the fasts, to follow the laws of the Rabbis, and to think seriously of His future calling in life.⁴⁴ He would be much freer, therefore, to go where He liked, without supervision, than a boy of the same age with us, and hence all Jerusalem, with its thousand wonders, lay before Him, to study as He chose.

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Talmud;
quoted in
Lighthoot,
Hor. Heb. III.
43.

The week of the feast ended, Joseph and Mary turned their faces towards home. The confusion and bustle around must have been indescribable. Any one who has seen the motley crowds of Easter pilgrims returning from the Jordan at the present day may have some faint idea of the scene. The start is always made at night, to escape the great heat of the day, and in the darkness, lighted only by torches, it needs care not to be trampled under foot. At narrow or difficult parts of the road the noise and confusion are bewildering—women in terror of being trampled down by a long file of camels, tied one behind another; parents calling for lost children; friends shouting for friends; muleteers and ass drivers beating and cursing their beasts; the whole wedged into a moving mass, all alike excited.

As the distance from Jerusalem increased, and different divisions branched off to different roads, danger would cease, and the scene become more picturesque. Veiled women and venerable men would pass, mounted on camels, mules, or perhaps horses; younger men walking alongside, staff in hand; children playing at the side of the path as the cavalcade slowly advanced; and the journey ever and anon beguiled with *tâbret* and pipe. Only when the pilgrims had thus got away from the first crowd, would it be possible for each group to know if all its members were safe.

Among many others, some one of whose family had for the time been separated from them in the confusion, were Joseph and Mary. On reaching their first night's encampment they discovered that the boy Jesus was not in the

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Nothing was left but to return to Jerusalem, which they re-entered on the evening of the second day. But they could learn nothing of Him till the day after, when, at last, they found Him in one of the schools of the Rabbis, held in the Temple courts.

These schools were a characteristic of the times. They were open, and any one entering might answer or propose a question.⁴⁶ The Rabbi sat on a high seat; his scholars on the ground, at his feet, in half-circles: their one study the Law, with its Rabbinical comments.

In the school in which Jesus was found, a number of Rabbis⁴⁵ were present, perhaps because it was the Passover season. The gentle Hillel—the Looser—was perhaps still alive, and may possibly have been among them. The harsh and strict Shammai—the Binder—his old rival, had been long dead.⁴⁷ Hillel's son, Rabban Simeon, and even his greater grandson, Gamaliel, the future teacher of St. Paul, may have been of the number, though Gamaliel would, then, like Jesus, be only a boy. Hanan, or Annas, son of Seth, had been just appointed⁴⁶ high priest, but did not likely see Him, as a boy, whom he was afterwards to crucify. Apart from the bitter hostility between the priests and the Rabbis, he would be too busy with his monopoly of doves for the Temple, to care for the discussions of the schools, for he owned the shops for doves on Mount Olivet, and sold them for a piece of gold, though the Law had chosen them⁴⁷ as offerings suited for the poorest from their commonness and cheapness.

Among the famous men, then, apparently, living in Jerusalem, was Rabbi Jochanan Ben Zacchai, afterwards reputed a prophet, from his once crying out—when the Temple gate opened of itself—“Temple, Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that thou wilt shortly be destroyed, for it says—‘Open, Lebanon, thy gates, and let fire devour

⁴⁵ Luke 2. 46.

⁴⁶ A.D. 7.

⁴⁷ Derenbourg, 468.

thy cedars.' ⁴⁸ Jonathan Ben Uzziel, the Targumist, revered by his nation; Rabbi Ben Buta, who, though of Shammai's school, was almost as mild as Hillel, and, like him, had a great reputation for Rabbinical sanctity; now blind these many years, for Herod had put out his eyes; Dosithai of Jethma, a zealous opponent of Herod; Zadok, who had taken part in the rising of Judas the Gaulonite; Boëthus, father of one of Herod's wives—the second Mariamne—⁴⁹ once high priest, and now the head of the courtly Herodian and Roman party; Nicodemus, who afterwards came to Jesus by night, and the rich Joseph of Arimathea,—in a grave given by whom Jesus was afterwards to lie, were all apparently, then alive.⁵⁰ But we can only conjecture in whose presence Jesus sat, for dates are sadly wanting. One picture alone survives in Scripture, of Hebrew boyhood in its noblest beauty—that of David, with his lustrous eyes, auburn hair, and lovely features.⁵¹ It is no great stretch of fancy to believe that He who was at once David's heir and his lord—the Son of David in a sense higher than man had dreamed—realized the name not less in His personal beauty than in other respects. The passion of His soul—to learn more of His Father's business^k—had led Him naturally to the famed schools in His Father's house, where the wisest and most learned of His nation made the holy books, in which that Father's will was revealed, their lifelong study. The mystery of His own nature and of His relations to His Father in Heaven was dawning on Him more and more. His mother's words, from time to time, had daily a deeper and more wondrous significance, and His sinless spirit lived more and more in communion with unseen and eternal realities. He had naturally, therefore, sought those who could open for Him the fountains of Heavenly wisdom for which His whole being panted, and was the keenest listener, and the most eager in His questions, of all the group seated at their feet. The days would come when no further growth was possible, and then He would sit in the courts of the same Temple, as a teacher who needed no human help. As yet, however, He could not honour His Father more than by seeking, as a child, to know His holy

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⁴⁸ Quoted from the Talmud in Delitzsch, *Durch Krankheit*.

⁴⁹ Ant. xv. 9. 3.
Pell. Jud. i.
28. 4.

⁵⁰ Ellicott's *Lectures on the Life of Christ*, 92.

⁵¹ 1 Sam. 16. 11;
17. 42.

CHAP. XV. Word from its accredited expounders.¹ Enthusiasm so pure and lofty in one so young, lighting up the beauty of such eyes and features, may well have filled the heart of the gravest Rabbi with wonder and delight.

In this school of the Rabbis Mary and Joseph found Him, sitting on the ground, with others, at the feet of the half-circle of "doctors," His whole soul so absorbed in the Law and the Prophets that He had forgotten all other thoughts: His family circle—the flight of time. It was no wonder to find Him in such a place, for as "a Son of the Law" it was only what a Jew expected, but it might well amaze them that He had been so engrossed with such matters as to be still there, after the feast was over, and not only Mary and Joseph, but the great throng of pilgrims, had left for home. As befitted her higher relationship, and with the greater zeal natural to a mother's love in such a case, she, not Joseph, spoke. "Son," said she, "why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." It seemed so strange that one so gentle, docile, and loving, who had never given them an anxious thought by any childish frowardness, should cause them such pain and alarm. The answer, gentle and lofty, must have fallen on Mary's heart as a soft rebuke, though she could not understand its fulness of meaning: "How is it that ye sought me? There was no place where I could so surely be as in my Father's house—there were no matters which could so rightfully fill my thoughts as His?" Her son was outgrowing His childhood: the light of a higher world was breaking in on His soul; the claims of the home of Nazareth fading before others infinitely greater and holier.

A sinless childhood had made the past a long dream of peace and love in the home at Nazareth, and this only deepened as the simplicity of early years passed into the ripeness of a perfect manhood. Though He must have felt the growing distance between Himself and Joseph, or even Mary: their weakness and His own strength; their simplicity and His own wisdom; their frail humanity, touched by daily sin, and His own pure and sinless nature, He remained subject to them, as if only like others. If ever there was a

son who might have been expected to claim independence it was He, and yet, to sanctify and enforce filial obedience for ever, He lived on, under their humble roof, exemplary in the implicit and far-reaching obedience of a Jewish youth to his parents.^m

CHAPTER XVI.

EARLY YEARS.

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FOR nearly eighteen years after the Passover visit to Jerusalem, a deep obscurity rests over the life of Jesus. Like His cousin John, or the shepherd Moses, or the youthful David, He came before the world at last, only after a long and humble seclusion. The quiet valley and hills of Nazareth saw Him gradually ripen into youth and manhood—as son, brother, citizen, neighbour, friend—like others.¹ There was no sudden or miraculous disclosure of His Divine greatness. Like the grain in the fields beneath His early home, His growth was imperceptible. The white, flat-roofed houses of to-day are, doubtless, much the same as those amidst which He played as a child, and lived as a man; vines shading the walls; doves sunning themselves on the flat roofs; the arrangements, within, as simple, as they are unpretending, without. A few mats on the floor, a built seat running along the wall, spread with some modest cushions, and the bright quilts on which the inmates sleep at night, and serving by day as shelf for the few dishes in common use; a painted chest in the corner; some large clay water jars, their mouths filled, perhaps, with sweet herbs, to keep the contents cool and fresh; the only light that entering by the open door; a low, round, painted, wooden stool, brought, at meals, into the middle of the room, to hold the tray and dish, round which the household sit, with crossed knees, on mats—supply the picture of a house at Nazareth of the humbler type. It may be that differences in details were found in early times, for many of the houses of ancient Chorazin are yet tolerably perfect, and show some variations from present dwellings. Generally square, they ranged

¹ Luke 2. 52.

downwards in size, from about 30 feet each way, and had one or two columns in the centre, to support the flat roof. The walls, which are still, in some cases, six feet high, and about two feet thick, were built of masonry or of loose blocks of basalt, Chorazin being on the volcanic edge of the Sea of Galilee, and not, like Nazareth, on limestone hills. A low doorway opened in the centre of one of the walls, and each house had windows a foot high and about six inches broad. But, like the houses of to-day, most had only one chamber, though some were divided into four.²

² Recovery of Palestine, 347.

In the shelter of some such home, in one of the narrow, stony streets of Nazareth, Jesus grew up. On the hill-sides, in the little crossways between the houses, in the rude gardens, in the fields below the town, beside the bounteous fountain on the hill-side, near the road—from which the village mothers and daughters still bear the water for their households—He was a child among other children. As He grew, year by year, His great eyes would shine with a spiritual brightness, and His mind would be filled with strange loneliness that would separate Him from most. He must, inevitably, have, early, seemed as if raised above everything earthly, and no impure word or thought would appear befitting in His presence. As a growing lad, He would already feel the isolation which, in His later years, became so extreme, for how could sinlessness be at home with sin and weakness? He would seek the society of the elders rather than of the young, and, while devoted to Joseph, would be altogether so to His mother. The habits of His later life let us imagine that, even in His youth, He often withdrew to the loneliest retreats in the mountains and valleys round, and we may fancy that Mary, knowing His ways, would cease, after a time, to wonder where He was.³ One height, we may be sure, was often visited: the mountain-top above the village, from which His eye could wander over the wondrous landscape.

³ See Delitzsch's *Durch Krankheit*, 155.

The Passover, though the greatest religious solemnity of the year, was only one in a continually recurring series. Four times each year, in July, October, January, and March, different events in the national history would be more

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or less strictly observed in the Jewish community at Nazareth. Special fasts were, moreover, ordered, from time to time, in seasons of public danger or distress. These days, set apart for repentance and prayer, excited a general and deep religious feeling. At all times striking, they sometimes, in exceptional cases, were singularly impressive. On special public humiliations all the people covered themselves with sackcloth, and strewed ashes on their heads, as they stood before the Reader's desk, brought from the synagogue into some open place, and similarly draped in mourning. Jesus must have seen this, and how ashes were put on the heads of the local judges and rulers of the synagogue, on such a day, and He must have listened to the Rabbi calling on all present to repent, and to the prayers and penitential psalms which followed, and to the trumpets⁴ wailing at the close of each. He may have gone with Joseph and all the congregation, when the service ended, to the burial-place of the village to lament.

⁴ Jost, i. 185.

But such sadness was by no means the characteristic of the national religion. Fifty days after the Passover, multitudes were once more in motion towards Jerusalem, to attend the Feast of Weeks, or First-Fruits. The vast numbers present at it are recorded in the second chapter of the Acts. It was one of the three great festivities of the year, and there can be little doubt that in His Nazareth life Jesus and the household of Joseph, as a whole, took part in so great and universal a rejoicing.

The intending pilgrims in Nazareth and the district round met in the town, as a convenient centre, to arrange for the journey. As before the Passover, however, no one slept in any house immediately before starting, all going out into the open country and sleeping somewhere in the open air, lest a death might happen where they lodged, and defile them, so that they could not keep the feast. They had to be in Jerusalem before the 6th of Siwan (June), on which and the 7th the feast was held, and, therefore, set off some days before. The early harvest was mostly over, so that many could go. Wives, unmarried sisters, and children accompanied not a few. Flocks of sheep and oxen, for sacrifice and feasting,

were driven gently along with the bands of pilgrims, and strings of asses and camels, laden with provisions and simple necessities, or with free-will gifts to the Temple, or bearing the old or feeble, lengthened the train. Every one wore festal clothes, and not a few carried garlands and wreaths of flowers. The cool banks of streams, or some well, offered resting-places by the way, and the pure water, with melons, dates, or cucumbers, sufficed for their simple food. Different bands united as they passed fresh towns and villages. All were roused, each morning, with the cry, "Rise, let us go up to Zion, to the Eternal, our God!" The offerings of first-fruits—the choicest of the year—in baskets of willows, or even of gold or silver; doves for burnt offerings, with their wings bound, and the ox, intended for a peace-offering,—its horns gilded, and bound with wreaths of olive,—went first. Flutes forthwith struck up, and the cavalcade moved on, to the chant, "I was glad when they said to me, We shall go into the house of the Lord."⁵ Similar hymns cheered them ever and anon on each day's march. When within sight of Jerusalem, all was enthusiasm. Many threw themselves on their knees in devotion, lifting their hands to heaven. Presently all burst into the grand ode, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the North, the city of the great King"—the excitement culminating in the climax—"For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death." A halt was now made to get everything in order. All arrayed themselves to the best advantage. The wheat-sheaves were wreathed with lilies and the first-fruits bedded in flowers, and set out as effectively as possible. Each company unrolled its banner, bearing the name of the town or village from which it came. When near the city, priests in their white robes came out to meet them, accompanied by a throng of citizens in holiday dress; and as they entered the gates they sang aloud to the accompaniment of flutes, the Psalm, "I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."⁶ The workmen at their trades in the streets, or at their doors, rose in honour of the procession as it passed, with the greeting,

⁵ Ps. 122. 1.⁶ Ps. 122. 2.

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"Men of Nazareth (or elsewhere), welcome!" a great crowd as they advanced, filling the air with gladness. At the Temple hill, every one, rich and poor—for all shared in these processions—took his basket on his shoulder and ascended to the Court of the Men, where the Levites met them, and fell into the procession, singing, to the sound of their instruments, the Psalm, beginning, "Hallelujah! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power."⁷ "I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast heard me, and hast not let mine enemies rejoice over me."⁸ The doves hanging from the baskets were now handed to the priests for burnt offerings, and the first-fruits and gifts delivered, with the words prescribed by Moses, "I profess this day unto the Lord Thy God that I am come into the country which the Lord sware to our fathers to give us."⁹ And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which Thou, O Lord, hast given me." The pilgrims then left the Temple, followed by a great throng, some to lodge with relations and friends, others with some of the many hosts inviting them.

There can be little doubt that Jesus was more than once a spectator of such rejoicings, and often in His earlier years saw the vast encampments of pilgrims from every part, round the city: the tents spread on each house-top to lodge the overflowing visitors; the windows and doors decked with branches of trees, and garlands and festoons of flowers, the streets fluttering with banners wreathed with roses and lilies, and filled with gay throngs.

In the month of August another festivity drew many from Nazareth to Jerusalem. In the middle of that month¹⁰ the wood for the Temple, which all Jews had to contribute, was taken to the capital with great rejoicings. The 1st of October,¹¹ which was celebrated as New Year's day, or the Feast of Trumpets, was the next event in the religious calendar of the months. As the day of the first new moon of the year, it was ushered in, over the land, by a blast of trumpets,^a and special sacrifices were offered in Jerusalem. No work was done. It was the day, in the eyes of the Jew, on which an account was taken by God of the acts of the past year;

⁷ Ps. 150.⁸ Ps. 41. 11.⁹ Deut. 26. 3, 10.¹⁰ The 15th of Ab.¹¹ Tisri.

the day of judgment,¹² on which the destiny of every one for the coming year was written in the Heavenly books.¹² It was a fast, therefore, rather than a festival. The synagogues were visited earlier than usual for a week before it; special prayers were offered, and no one ate till mid-day or even till sunset. In the synagogue of Nazareth, as elsewhere, its eve was like that of a Sabbath. It must have been a great event in a household like that of Joseph.¹³

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תענית
Cyclo. Bib.
Lit. Art.
"New Year."

The ten days that followed were the Jewish Lent, in preparation for the Day of Atonement,¹⁴ a time so solemn and sacred that it was known as THE DAY.¹⁵ It was a Sabbath of Sabbaths: a day of entire rest.¹⁶ The entire people fasted during the twenty-four hours.¹⁷ Worldly and household affairs were neglected; no one even bathed. The whole day was spent in the synagogue, where each stood wrapped in the white shroud, and wearing the white cap in which he was hereafter to be buried.¹⁸ As was befitting, all disputes between friends and neighbours were required to be settled before it began. Each made a formal confession of his sins before God, in words duly prescribed. It was the most solemn day of the Jewish year.

¹² Cohen, 251.¹⁴ 10th Tisri (October).¹⁵ 1a Talmud

מגן

¹⁶ Based on Lev. 16, 1—34; 23, 26—32. Num. 29, 7—11.¹⁷ Jost, I. 181.¹⁸ Pressel, Art. "Fasten." Herzog, iv. 334.

In the Temple the high priest alone officiated. Jesus would early hear how, for seven days before, he had gone through daily rehearsals of every rite, for fear of his introducing Sadducean innovations, and had been cleansed by sprinklings of holy water.¹⁹ He would hear how the night before the great day was spent in reading to him, or hearing him read aloud, to keep him awake, for he must not sleep till after next sunset. How must He have felt the puerility of Rabbinism when He learned that the supreme pontiff of the nation had to change his dress, on the great day, six times, to wash his hands and feet eight times, and to bathe his whole body five times, between dawn and sunset!²⁰ The high priest entered the Holy of Holies four times, to offer incense, to pray, to sprinkle the blood of a goat towards the mercy seat; and, at the close, to bring out the censer. Jesus must often have seen him, clad in white, his golden robes laid aside, with bare feet and covered head, drawing aside the veil, and passing alone into the awful darkness

¹⁹ Num. 19. 13. Jost, I. 162.²⁰ Jost, I. 163.

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which no one but he ever invaded, and he only on this one day of the year.^b Rites so countless and intricate that even the historian of Judaism will not attempt to recount them:²¹ the services of hundreds of priests,²² the whole culminating in a threefold confession of sin for the nation: the utterance ten times of the mysterious name of God, and the formal absolution of Israel with the sprinkling of blood: the vast congregation of worshippers prostrating themselves on the earth three times, with the cry, "Blessed be His glorious name for ever," at each utterance of the awful name, the high priest responding after each shout, "Ye are clean!" were all seen and watched, again and again, by the future Saviour.

These high solemnities over, the day ended in a reaction natural to the East. No sooner had the exhausted high priest left the Temple, accompanied by throngs, to congratulate him on his safety, than a religious feast began at Jerusalem, and, we may be sure, over all the land. The gardens below Mount Zion, and round the walls, were gay with the maidens of the city, dressed in white, gone to meet the youths, who were to choose their future wives, that evening, from among them.

Five days later came the closing great feast of the year—that of Tabernacles, with its rejoicings—one of the three great annual festivals at which every Israelite was required, if possible, to make a journey to Jerusalem. It celebrated the Forty Years' Wandering in tents, but it was also the great harvest thanksgiving for the fruits of the year, now fully gathered.^c Like others, Jesus, doubtless, often lived for the week, at least by day, in booths of living twigs, which rose in every court, on every roof, and in the streets and open places of Jerusalem,^d—and watched the crowds bearing offerings of the best of their fruit to the Temple: each carrying a palm or citron branch as a sign of joy. The merry feasting in every house: the illuminated city: the universal joy, were familiar to Him.²³

The 25th of Chislew—our December—commemorated the re-opening of the Temple^e by Judas Maccabæus, after its profanation by the Syrians.²⁴ It brought another week of

²¹ Jost, I. 164.²² Far over 500. Schille Hag.²³ Winer, H.W.B. Laubbütten-fest.²⁴ 1 Macc. 4. 62—69.

universal rejoicings. All through the land the people assembled in their synagogues, carrying branches of palm and other trees in their hands, and held jubilant services. No fast or mourning could commence during the feast, and a blaze of lamps, lanterns, and torches illuminated every house, within and without, each evening.²⁵ In Jerusalem the Temple itself was thus lighted up. The young of every household heard the stirring deeds of the Maccabees, to rouse them to noble emulation, and with these were linked the story of the heroic Judith and the Assyrian Holofernes. There was no child in Nazareth that did not know them.

²⁵ 1 Macc. 4. 52—
59. 2 Macc.
10. 6.

The Feast of Purim brightened the interval between that of Tabernacles and the Passover. It was held on the 14th and 15th Adar—part of our February and March—to embody the national joy at the deliverance, by Esther, of their forefathers in Persia, from the designs of Haman. The whole book of Esther was read at the synagogue service of the evening before, to keep the memory of the great event alive; the children raising their loudest and angriest cries at every mention of the name of Haman; the congregation stamping on the floor, with Eastern demonstrativeness, and imprecating, from every voice, the curse, "Let his name be blotted out. The name of the wicked shall rot." Year by year, in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus must have seen and heard all this, and how the Reader tried to read in one breath, the verses in which Haman and his sons are jointly mentioned, to show that they were hanged together.

Such was the Jewish religious year, with its fifty-nine feast days and its background of fastings, as it passed before the eyes of Jesus.²⁶ Each incident had its special religious colouring, and the aggregate influence, constantly recurring, impressed itself in a thousand ways on the national language, thoughts, and life. Religion and politics, moreover, are identical in a theocracy, and thus the two principles which most powerfully move mankind constantly agitated every breast. In such an atmosphere Christ spent His whole earthly life.

²⁶ Winer, *Art.*
"Feste."

But neither the synagogue services, nor the feasts at Jerusalem, which the Galileans delighted to attend, were

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the supreme influences, humanly speaking, in the growth of Jesus in "wisdom." Like the teaching of the Rabbis, they were only so many aids to the understanding of that sacred book, in which His heavenly Father had revealed Himself to Israel. The Gospels show, in every page, that, like Timothy,²⁷ Jesus, from a child, knew "the Holy Scriptures." In such a household as that of Joseph, we may be sure that they were in daily use, for there, if anywhere, the Rabbinical rule would be strictly observed, that "three who eat together without talking of the Law, are as if they were eating (heathen) sacrifices."²⁸ The directness, joy, and naturalness of Christ's religion speak of the unconstrained and holy influences around Him in early years. A wise and tender guidance in the things of God, leading the way to heaven, as well as pointing it out, must have marked both Mary and Joseph. The fond pictures of home and childhood in the Gospels, speak of personal recollections. The allusions to the innocent playing of children; to their being nearest the Kingdom of Heaven; the picture of a father powerless against his child's entreaty; and that touching outburst at His own homelessness, compared even with the birds and the foxes,²⁹ show how Christ's mind went back, through life, to the pure and happy memories of Nazareth.

Mary and Joseph, we can scarcely doubt, were, themselves, the earliest teachers of Jesus. At their knees He must have first learned to read the Scriptures. Pious Jewish parents took especial care to have a manuscript of the Law, in the old Hebrew characters, as their especial domestic treasure. Even so early as the Asmonean kings, such rolls were so common in private houses,³⁰ that the fury of the Syrian king, who wished to introduce the Greek customs and religion, was especially directed against them. In Joseph's day, the supreme influence of the Rabbis and Pharisees must have deepened into a passion the desire to possess such a symbol of loyalty to the faith of Israel. Richer families would have a complete copy of the Old Testament, on parchment, or on Egyptian papyrus; humbler homes would boast a copy of the Law, or a Psalter, and all, alike, gloried in the verses on their door-posts and in their phylacteries.³¹

²⁷ 2 Tim. 3. 15.

²⁸ Pirke Aboth. ii. 3.

²⁹ Matt. 8. 20;
11. 16; 19.
13—15. Luke
13. 12.

³⁰ 1 Macc. 1. 56,
57. Jos. Ant.
xii. 5. 4.

³¹ L. ut. 6. 8, 9,
Lev. 13. 9.
Deut. 11. 18.
Jos. Ant. iv.
8. 15. Deut.
6. 4—6; 11.
13—22; 6.
4—10. Exod.
13. 8, 9.

Children had small rolls, containing the S'chma, or the Hallel, or the history of Creation to the flood; or the first eight chapters of Leviticus.³²

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³² Herzfeld, III. 267.

From the modest but priceless instructions of home, Jesus would, doubtless, pass to the school in the synagogue, where He would learn more of the Law, and be taught to write,³³ or rather, to print, for His writing would be in the old Hebrew characters—the only ones then in use.

³³ John 8. 8.

His deep knowledge of the Scriptures shows itself throughout the Gospels. He has a quotation ready to meet every hostile question. It was so profound that it forced even His enemies to recognize Him as a Rabbi. His frequent retort on the Rabbis themselves—"Have ye not read?"³⁴ and the deep insight into the spirit of Scripture, which opposes to rubrics and forms the quickening power of a higher life, prove how intensely He must have studied the sacred books, and that the zeal that drew Him, in His boyhood, to the Temple school at Jerusalem, to hear them explained, was the sacred passion of His life. In the Gospels we find two quotations from Genesis, two from Exodus, one from Numbers, two from Deuteronomy, seven from the Psalms, five from Isaiah, one from Hosea, one from Jonah, two from Malachi, two from Daniel, one from Micah, and one from Zechariah, respectively.³⁵ The whole of the Old Testament was as familiar to Him as the Magnificat shows it to have been to His mother, Mary.³⁶ It was from the clear fountain of the ancient oracles His childhood drank in the wisdom that cometh from above. They had been His only school-book, and they were the unwearying joy of His whole life. From them He taught the higher spiritual worship which contrasted so strongly with the worship of the letter. It was to them He appealed when He rejected what was worthless and trifling in the religious teaching of His day.

³⁴ Matt. 12. 5; 19. 4; 21. 16; 42; 22. 31; 13. 52.

The long years of retired and humble life in Nazareth were passed in no ignoble idleness and dependence. The people of the town knew Jesus as, like Joseph, a carpenter,³⁵ labouring for His daily bread at the occupations which offered themselves in His calling. Study and handiwork

³⁵ Mark 6. 3.

CHAP. XVI. were familiarly associated in the Jewish mind, and carried with them no such ideas of incompatibility as with us.

³⁶ P. Aboth, l. 10. "Love handiwork," said Schemaia, a teacher of Hillel,³⁶ and it was a proverbial saying in the family of Gamaliel, that to unite the study of the Law with a trade kept away sin, whereas study alone was dangerous and disappointing.³⁷

³⁷ P. Aboth, il. 2. Rabbis who gave a third of the day to study, a third to prayer, and a third to labour, are mentioned with special honour. Stories were fondly told of famous teachers carrying their work-stools to their schools, and how Rabbi Phinchas was working as a mason when chosen as high priest.³⁸ Of the Rabbis in honour in Christ's day or later, some were millers, others carpenters, cobblers, tailors, bakers, surgeons, builders, surveyors, money-changers, scribes, carriers, smiths, and even sextons.³⁹ In a nation where no teacher could receive payment for his instruction the honest industry which gained self-support brought no false shame.

³⁸ Sifra. ed. Malbim f. 192, b.

³⁹ Delitzsch, Lehrstand u. Handwerk. 76.

The years at Nazareth must have been diligently used in the observation of the great book of nature, and of man, as well as of written revelation. The Gospels show, throughout, that nothing escaped the eye of Jesus. The lilies and the grass of the field, as He paints them in the Sermon on the Mount; the hen, as it gathers its young, in its mother's love, under its widespread wings; the birds of the air, as they eat and drink, without care, from the bounty around them; the lambs which run to follow the shepherd, but sometimes go astray and are lost in the wilderness; the dogs so familiar in Eastern cities; the foxes that make their holes in the thickets; the silent plants and flowers, the humble life of the creatures of the woods, the air, the fold, and the street, were all, alike, noticed in these early years of preparation. Nor was man neglected. The sports of childhood; the rejoicings of riper life; the bride and the bridegroom; the mourner and the dead; the castles and palaces of princes, and the silken robes of the great; the rich owners of field and vineyard; the steward, the travelling merchant, the beggar, the debtor; the toil of the sower and of the labourer in the vineyard, or of the fisher on the lake; the sweat of the worker; the sighs of those in chains,

or in the dungeon, were seen, and heard, and remembered. Nor did He rest merely in superficial observation. The possessions, joys, and sufferings of men, their words and acts, their customs, their pride or humility, pretence or sincerity, failings or merits, were treasured as materials from which, one day, to paint them to themselves. He had, moreover, the same keen eye to note the good in those round Him as their unworthy striving and planning, their avarice, ambition, passion, or selfishness. It is, indeed, the noblest characteristic in this constant keen-sightedness, that amidst all the imperfections and faults prevailing, He never failed to evoke the hidden good which He often saw even in the most hopeless.^b

Publicans and sinners were not rejected. Even in them He discovered a better self. In Zaccheus He sees a son of Abraham; in Mary Magdalene He gains a weeping penitent, and in the dying robber He welcomes back a returning prodigal. Nor was it mere intellectual penetration that thus laid bare the secrets of every heart. His search of the bosom is pervaded throughout with the breath of the warmest love.⁴⁰ As the brother and friend of all, who has come to seek and to save that which was lost,⁴¹ He looks at men with eyes of infinite pity, whatever their race.

The life of Nazareth, in its quiet and obscurity, is passed over in a few lines by the Evangelists; but in the counsels of God it had its full and all wise purpose, from first to last, as a preparation for the great work of the closing years of our Lord's life. We cannot conceive of Him otherwise than as furnished from His first appearance in the world with all that was needful in its Saviour: as the incarnation of the divine Word, though for a time silent; the Light which should shine in darkness, though still, for a time, concealed. He must have been marked out from all around Him by His higher spiritual nature, and separated by it from all fellowship with evil.⁴² Yet, in His human nature, there must have been the same gradual development as in other men; such a development as, by its even and steadfast advance, made His life apparently in nothing different from that of His fellow townsmen, else they would not have felt

⁴⁰ Matt. 7, 9—11; 12, 35. Luke 13, 16; 19, 9.

⁴¹ On this subject see a fine passage in Kelm's *Jesu v. Nazara*, I. 444, 445; and another in Kelm's *Christus*, 10.

⁴² See Sermon by Schleiermacher, *Predigten*, II. 65.

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the wonder at Him which they afterwards evinced. The laws and processes of ordinary human life must have been left to mould and form His manhood—the same habits of inquiry; the same need of the collision of mind with mind; of patience during long expectation; of reconciliation to home duties and daily self-denials; of calm strength that leans only upon God. He must have looked out on the world of men from the calm retreat of those years as He, doubtless, often did on the matchless landscape from the hill above the village. The strength and weakness of the systems of the day; the lights and shadows of the human world, would be watched and noted with never-tiring survey, as were the hills and valleys, the clouds and sunshine of the scene around. Year after year passed, and still found Him at His daily toil, because His hour was not yet come. In gentle patience, in transparent blamelessness of life; in natural and ever-active goodness; in tender love and ready favour to all around; loved, honoured, but half veiled in the mysterious light of perfect manhood and kindling divinity, thirty years passed quietly away.⁴³

⁴³ See a Sermon
by Robertson,
of Brighton,
vol. ii. 196.

CHAPTER XVII.

LIFE UNDER THE LAW.

BESIDES the humbler schools of the towns and villages, CHAP. XVII.
 there were others in Jerusalem, and in some of the larger centres of population, in the days of Christ, in which a higher education was given by the Rabbis—the learned class of the nation. There was nothing, however, to attract Jesus to such schools, though he had been so eager in His attendance during His first brief visit to Jerusalem. It may be that even so short a trial was enough to show Him how little could be gained from them.

The wonderful revival of Judaism under Ezra and his associates had had the most lasting effect on the nation. An order known, indifferently, as “Scribes,”^a “Teachers of the Law,” or “Rabbis,”¹ gradually rose, who devoted themselves to the study of the Law exclusively, and became the recognized authorities in all matters connected with it. It had been a command of the Great Synagogue that those who were learned in the Law should zealously teach it to younger men, and, thus, schools, rose ere long, in which famous Rabbis gathered large numbers of students. The supreme distinction accorded to the Rabbi in society at large, in which he was by far the foremost personage: the exaggerated reverence claimed for his office by his order itself, and sanctioned by the superstitious homage of the people; the constant necessity for reference to its members, under a religion which prescribed rules for every detail of social or private life, and, not least, the fact that the dignity of a Rabbi was open to the humblest who acquired the necessary learning, made the schools very popular. As the son of a peasant, in the middle ages, if he entered the Church, might rise above the

CHAP. XVII. haughtiest noble, the son of a Jewish villager might rise above even the high priest, by becoming a Rabbi. It was, doubtless, remembered, in Christ's day, that some sixty years before, when the high priest had been returning from the Temple after the service of the Day of Atonement, attended, according to custom, by a crowd, to congratulate him on his having come safely from the terrors of the Awful Presence, and to escort him to his dwelling—two Rabbis having chanced to pass by, the people left the high priest, greatly to his indignation, and paid reverence, instead, to the Teachers of the Law.² The most abject prostration of intellect and soul before any priesthood never surpassed that of the Jew before the Rabbi.

From their scholars the Rabbis demanded the most profound reverence. "The honour," says the Talmud,³ "due to a Teacher borders on that due to God." If a choice were necessary between one's father and a Rabbi, the Rabbi must have the preference. A father has only brought him into the world, but the Rabbi, who teaches him wisdom, brings him to the life hereafter. If one's father and a Rabbi be carrying burdens, the burden of the Rabbi must be carried for him, and not that of the father. If one's father and a Rabbi be both in prison, the Rabbi must first be redeemed, and only then, the father.⁴ The common discourse of a Rabbi was to be revered as much as the Law.⁵ To dispute with one, or murmur against him, was a crime as great as to do the same towards the Almighty.⁶ Their words must be received as words of the living God.⁷ As in the blind passive obedience required from the Jesuits,^b a scholar of the Rabbis was required to accept what his master taught, if he said that the left hand was the right.⁸ A scholar who did not rise up before his Rabbi could not hope to live long, because "he feareth not before God."⁹ It was a principle universally accepted that "the sayings of the Scribes were weightier than those of the Law."¹⁰

The transmission of the as yet unwritten opinions of former Rabbis—forming an ever-growing mass of tradition—was the special aim of the Rabbis of each age. In the course of centuries many of the Mosaic laws had become

² Jost, i. 251.

³ Quoted in Schüler, 442.

⁴ Bava Mezia ii. 11, quoted by Gfrörer, i. 168.
⁵ Eisenmenger, i. 330.

⁶ Eisenmenger, i. 331, 332. The texts quoted in support of this are Num. 26. 13; 26. 9.

⁷ Eisenmenger, i. 456, 457.

⁸ Eisenmenger, i. 351.

⁹ Eccles. 8. 13. Eisenmenger, i. 335.

¹⁰ Jost, i. 93.

inapplicable to the altered state of things, and as their literal observance had become impossible, new prescriptions began to be invented, after the Return, to perpetuate their spirit. Many were virtually obsolete: others required careful exposition by the Rabbis. The comments thus delivered formed, as time rolled on, a great body of unwritten law, which claimed equal authority with the law of Moses, and was necessarily known in any full degree only by the professional Rabbis, who devoted their lives to its study. It might be increased, but could never be altered or superseded in any particular. Once uttered, a Rabbi's words remained law for ever, though they might be explained away and virtually ignored, while affected to be followed.

Uniformity of belief and ritual practice was the one grand design of the founders of Judaism; the moulding the whole religious life of the nation to such a machine-like discipline as would make any variation from the customs of the past well-nigh impossible. A universal, death-like conservatism, permitting no change in successive ages, was established, as the grand security for a separate national existence, by its isolating the Jew from all other races, and keeping him for ever apart. For this end, not only was that part of the Law which concerned the common life of the people—their Sabbaths, feast days, jubilees, offerings, sacrifices, tithes, the Temple and Synagogue worship, civil and criminal law, marriage, and the like—explained, commented on, and minutely ordered by the Rabbis, but also that portion of it which related only to the private duties of individuals in their daily religious life. Their food, their clothes, their journeys, their occupations: indeed, every act of their lives, and almost their every thought, were brought under Rabbinical rules. To perpetuate the Law, a “hedge” of outlying commands was set round it, which, in Christ's day, had become so “heavy and grievous a burden,”¹¹ that even the ¹¹ Matt. 23. 4. Talmud denounces it as a vexatious oppression.¹² So vast ¹² Sota f. 20. had the accumulation of precepts become, by an endless series of refined deductions from the Scriptures—often connected with them only by a very thin thread at best—that the Rabbis themselves have compared their laws on the proper

CHAP. XVII. keeping of the Sabbath to a mountain which hangs on a hair.¹³

¹³ Hauerath, N.
T. Z. G. I. 89.

In the later Grecian age,^e when heathen culture was patronized by the Sadducean high priests, and foreign customs were in increasing favour with the people, the Rabbis, who were the zealots or puritans of Judaism, sought to stem the flood of corruption, by enforcing increased strictness in the observance of the multitudinous precepts they had already established. From that time unconditional obedience was required to every Rabbinical law.

A system which admitted no change : in which the least originality of thought was heresy : which required the mechanical labour of a lifetime to master its details, and which occupied its teachers with the most trifling casuistry, could have only one result—to degenerate, to a great extent, into puerilities and outward forms.

It would be wearisome and uninteresting to quote, at any great length, illustrations of the working of such a scheme of ecclesiastical tyranny, in daily life, but an example or two will show the system to which Jesus opposed the freedom of a spiritual religion. It is difficult to realize the condition of a people who had submitted to such mental and bodily bondage.

One of the great questions discussed by the Rabbis was ceremonial purity and defilement, a subject so wide that it gave rise to countless rules. Uncleaness could be contracted in many ways ; among others, by the vessels used in eating, and hence it was a vital matter to know what might be used, and what must be avoided. In hollow dishes of clay or pottery, the inside and bottom contracted and caused uncleaness, but not the outside, and they could only be cleansed by breaking. The pieces, however, might still defile, and hence it was keenly discussed how small the fragments must be to ensure safety. If a dish or vessel had contained a lôg of oil, a fragment could still defile that held as much oil as would anoint the great toe ; if it had held from a lôg to a seah, the fragment, to be dangerous, must hold the fourth of a lôg ; if it had held from two or three seahs to five, a piece of it could defile if it held a lôg. As, however,

hollow earthen vessels contracted uncleanness only on the inside, not on the out, some could not become unclean—as, for instance, a flat plate without a rim, an open coal shovel, a perforated roaster for wheat or grain, brick-moulds, and so on. On the other hand, a plate with a rim, a covered coal shovel, a dish with raised divisions inside, an earthen spice-box, or an inkstand with any divisions, may become unclean. Flat dishes of wood, leather, bone, or glass, do not contract uncleanness, but hollow ones might do so, not only like earthen ones, inside, but also outside. If they are broken they are clean, but the broken part is unclean if large enough to hold a pomegranate. If a chest, or cupboard, wants a foot, it is clean, whatever its size, and a three-footed table, wanting even two feet, is clean, but it may be made unclean if wanting the whole three feet, and the flat top be used as a dish. A bench which wants one of the side boards, or even the two, is clean, but if a piece remain a handbreadth wide, it may defile. If the hands are clean, and the outside of a goblet unclean, the hands are not defiled by the outside, if the goblet be held by the proper part. Every thing of metal, that has a special name, may defile, except a door, a door bolt, a lock, a hinge, or a door knocker. Straight blowing horns are clean; others may defile. If the mouthpiece is of metal, it may defile. If a wooden key have metal teeth, it may defile, but if the key be of metal and the teeth of wood, it is clean.

The removal of uncleanness was no less complicated. Even the kind of water to be used for the different kinds of cleansing, for sprinkling the hands, for dipping vessels into, and for purifying baths for the person, caused no little dispute. Six kinds of water were distinguished, each of higher worth than the other. First—A pool, or the water in a pit, cistern, or ditch, and hill water that no longer flows, and collected water, of not less quantity than forty seahs,¹⁴ if it has not been defiled, is suitable for preparing the heave-offering of dough, or for the legal washing of the hands. Second—Water that still flows may be used for the heave-offering (Teruma), and for washing the hands. Third—Collected water, to the amount of forty seahs, may be used

¹⁴ A seah was 1½ gallons.

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for a bath for purification, and for dipping vessels into. Fourth—A spring with little water, to which water that has been drawn is added, is fit for a bath, though it do not flow, and is the same as pure spring water, in so far that vessels may be cleansed in it, though there be only a little water. Fifth—Flowing water which is warm, or impregnated with minerals, cleanses by its flowing; and lastly, sixth—Pure spring water may be used as a bath by those who have sores, or for sprinkling a leper, and may be mixed with the ashes of purification.

These general principles formed the basis of an endless detail of casuistry. Thus, the Mishna discourses, at wearisome length, under what circumstances and conditions “collected water”—that is, rain, spring, or flowing water, that is not drawn, but is led into a reservoir directly, by pipes or channels—may be used for bathing, and for the immersion of vessels; and the great point is decided to be that no drawn water shall have mixed with it. A fourth

¹⁵ A lôg was a half-pint.

of a lôg¹⁵ of drawn water in the reservoir, beforehand, makes the water that afterwards falls or runs into it unfit for a bath, but it requires three lôg of drawn water to do this, if there were water already in the reservoir. If any vessels are put under the pipe emptying itself into the bath, it becomes drawn water, and is unfit for a bath. Shammai's school made it the same whether the vessel were set down on purpose, or only forgotten; but Hillel's school decided that if it had been forgotten, the water might still be used for a bath. If drawn water and rain water have mixed, in the court-yard, or in a hollow, or on the steps of the bath-room, the bath may be used, if most of the water be fitting, but not if the proportion be reversed. This, however, only takes effect if they have mixed before entering the bath. If both flow into the bath, the bath may be taken, if it be known certainly that forty seahs of proper water ran in before three lôg of unsuitable water, but otherwise it must not be taken. There was endless discussion, also, whether snow, hail, hoarfrost, ice, and the like, could be used to fill up a bath. So simple an act as the washing of one's hands before eating entailed the

utmost care not to transgress some Rabbinical rule. The water could only be poured from certain kinds of vessels, it must be water of a special kind, only certain persons, in certain legal conditions, could pour it, and it was a momentous point that the water should be poured neither too far up the arm nor too low towards the hand.¹⁶

¹⁶ Schiller, 491—495.

This ceremonial slavery owed its rise to the reaction from the Syrian attempts to overthrow the national faith. The Rabbis of the austere but noble puritan party, which had delivered their country, sought to widen the gulf, for the future, between Judaism and all other creeds, by laying a fresh stress on legal purity and the reverse, and their scholars strove to keep their rules as strictly as possible. The dread of touching anything unclean, and the consequent self-withdrawal from the mass of the people, and from the ordinary intercourse of life, soon showed itself in the name—Parusch, or Pharisee—for those thus “separated.” In the hands of this party, cleanness and uncleanness steadily grew to a system of endless refinements.

Ceremonial purity had, at first, been strictly observed only by the priests, for the people at large were hardly in a position to attend to the many details required. After the Maccabæan revival, however, greater carefulness was demanded. A priest, or Levite, lost the privileges of his caste if he hesitated to fulfil any of the ritual obligations it entailed, and a proselyte was rejected who would not undertake all that was required from an Israelite. For Israelites themselves, these ceremonial rules were greatly extended, and any neglect of them was noted unfavourably. The tithes, &c., were strictly demanded from all produce, and were either entirely forbidden to be eaten, or could be so only under fixed conditions, while a wide sweep of injunctions and rules was introduced as to the use of different kinds of food, and even in every detail of family life.

Those, including, of course, the Rabbis, who undertook to observe all these rules, henceforth formed a kind of union of “Comrades,” or “Habermim,” which any one might enter—all who did not join them being stigmatized as ignorant Am-ha-aretz, or boorish rabble.

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It was to this league that the amazing development of legalism was latterly due. Careful inquiry was everywhere instituted to ascertain if all dues for priests, Levites, or the poor were regularly paid. An indefinite due (*Teruma*) for the priests, and a tithe for them and the Levites, were required each year from every kind of farm or garden produce, even the smallest,¹⁷ and from all live stock, and property of any kind, and a second tenth each third year for the poor. Nor were these demands confined to Israelites living in the strictly Jewish territory; they were, after a time, extended over those neighbouring countries in which Jews had settled. These material results were only a subordinate advantage of this widely extended claim; it established an organized system of all-pervading influence in social intercourse, and on the private life of every household. Part of the dues was *holy*, and to use anything *holy* was a mortal sin. Every purchaser had, therefore, to make certain beforehand whether they had been paid from what he proposed to buy, though many things in the markets came from abroad, or had been grown or made by others than Jews, or were under other complications as regarded their liability to tithe and gift.

¹⁷ Matt. 23. 23.

To save heavy loss it was conceded that the *Teruma* should be strictly separated, but the various tithes were apparently left to be paid by the buyer, though the assurance of an owner that everything had been tithed could only be taken if the seller could prove his trustworthiness. Failing this, all produce, and whatever was made from it, was regarded as doubtful,¹⁸ and the *Teruma*, or holy portion, was to be taken from it before it could be used. The second tithe might be turned into money, that it might be the more easily consumed in Jerusalem. It was not obligatory, however, to separate the first tithe, or that for the poor, since a doubt hung on the matter, and so the Levite or the poor must prove their claim. These harassing regulations shut off strict Jews from either buying or accepting hospitality from any but their own nation,¹⁹ and made it imperative on every fruit or food seller to establish his trustworthiness, by joining the union of the "Comrades," or

¹⁸ Demol. Food for the people.¹⁹ Matt. 9. 11.
Mark 2. 16.
Luke 15. 2.

"Separated"—that is, the "Pharisees." It required for this, only a declaration before three of the Rabbis, and afterwards before three "trustworthy" persons, that one would henceforth abstain from all that had not been tithed. Henceforth, not only was personal trustworthiness established, but that of all the members of his family, and even of his descendants, so long as no ground of suspicion was raised against his wife, children, or slaves.

The nation was thus gradually divided into *Haberim* and *Am-ha-aretz*—strict followers of the Rabbis and despised rabble,—and intercourse and hospitality between the two classes became steadily more circumscribed, till it well-nigh ceased, as the laws of the Rabbis grew more exacting. It was difficult, for instance, when from home, to ascertain the conscientiousness of a host, companion, or tradesman; scruples rose whether produce that might be foreign was liable to dues; how far purchases not intended for eating might be used without tithing, and so on, till all social freedom was utterly hampered, and cases of conscience accumulated which afterwards filled whole volumes, and meanwhile gave constant anxiety.

This self-isolation from the community at large of the members of the "League of the Law," procured them the name of *Peruschim*, or Pharisees—that is, the separated—and introduced different grades of purity even among them, according to the greater or less strictness in the observance of the multitudinous Rabbinical rules. Religiousness consisted, above everything, in avoiding ceremonial defilement, or removing it, if at any time contracted, by prescribed washings and bathing. Rules for preserving Mosaic purity multiplied the risks of defilement as casuistry increased, and thus a graduated scale of "holiness" was introduced, rising to the harshest asceticism in its highest development. To partake of anything from which the due tithes had not been separated,²⁰ or of the tithe itself, or the priest's portion,²¹ the hands must be washed. Before eating parts of sacrifices or offerings, a bath had to be taken, and a plunge bath was required before the sprinkling with water of purification, even if only the hands were "unclean." But he who

²⁰ Called *Cholin*.

²¹ The *Toruma*.

CHAP. XVII. bathed in order to partake of what was as yet untithed, had not the right to make use of the tithe; he who took a bath to qualify him to enjoy the tithe could not touch the priest's portion: he who could touch *that*, could not eat what was *holy*, while he who might touch *it*, must yet keep from water of purification. The higher grades, on the other hand, included the less holy. Even to touch the clothes of a "common man," defiled a Pharisee; the clothes of an ordinary Pharisee were unclean to one who could eat tithes; those of an eater of tithes to an eater of offerings; and his, again, to one who enjoyed the sprinkling of the water of purification. Some gained one grade, some another, but few the highest. A special initiation, training, and time of trial was required for each grade, from thirty days for the lowest, to twelve months for the highest.

²² Delitzsch Jud. Handwerker-leben, 36.

Religiousness was thus measured by the more or less complete observance of ten thousand Rabbinical rules²² of ceremonial purity, and fanatical observance of them was secured, not less by religious pride, than by their appeal to a spurious patriotism, and to self-interest. This severe and inflexible discipline, which regulated every act of life, foresaw every contingency, and interfered with common liberty, at every step, from the cradle to the grave, had been slowly elaborated by the Rabbis, to isolate the Jew from all other nations. His very words and thoughts were prescribed; he was less a man than a mechanical instrument. Any deviation in word or deed, or even in thought, from Rabbinical law, was regarded as impious.^a

Theocracies have enforced in all ages a similar isolation on their adherents. "The kings of Egypt," says Diodorus, "could not act as they would. Everything was ruled by laws, not only in their public, but even in their most private life. The hours of the day and night at which special duties must be performed, were fixed by law. Those for sleep, for rising, for bathing, for sacrifice, for reading, for meals, for walking, and much beside, were inflexibly prescribed. It was no less rigidly settled what they were to eat at each meal, and what amount of wine they were to drink."²³ The Brahmin is under the same rigid and all-embracing

²³ Diod. Sicul. l. 70.

tyranny of religious forms. His whole life is covered with the meshes of a vast net of rites and ceremonies. The law of Manu prescribes how he is to eat, and what, how he is to clothe himself, drink, wash his feet, cut his nails and hair, bathe, and perform even the most private functions. It fixes the rights and duties of each caste and subdivision of caste, the washers, the weavers, the tillers of the soil, &c.^o Such systems annihilate individuality, and reduce whole populations to a single type, which perpetuates itself with an unchanging and almost indestructible constancy, begetting, besides, a fanaticism which, at any moment, may burst into flames, especially when identified, as in the case of the Jews, with patriotism. Life under the Jewish law had already kindled this spirit of scarcely veiled revolution long before our Lord's birth.

An additional illustration of the working of Rabbinical rules in Jewish daily life is afforded by those for the proper observance of the Sabbath. In Exodus xvi. 5, it is commanded that food for the Sabbath be prepared on the sixth day, no doubt with the design, that the rest of the servant should be as sacred as that of her master or mistress. The Rabbis, pondering this command, raised the question, whether an egg which a hen had laid on a Sabbath could be eaten on the sacred day, and decided it by a strict negative, if it had been laid by a hen kept to lay eggs; because, in that case, it was the result of work begun on a week-day, and brought to an end on the Sabbath. On this the Rabbis were unanimous. But how would it be if the hen were one intended not to lay eggs, but for eating, and how, if a Sabbath, and a feast day, observed as a Sabbath, should come together? On this point Shammai, one of the two great Rabbis of the day, was disposed to be liberal, and decided that it was lawful to eat the egg of a hen, itself destined to be eaten, on whichever day the egg had been laid. But Hillel, the other great Rabbi, argued as follows:—Since the egg has come to maturity on a Sabbath or feast day, and is therefore of unlawful origin, it is not allowed to make use of it; and though it would be lawful to make use of the egg of such a hen, laid on a feast day

CHAP. XVII. or Sabbath, not followed or preceded by another similarly sacred day, yet it must not be eaten if two such days come together, because, otherwise, there would be a temptation to use it on the second holy day. And since it is forbidden even to carry unlawful food from one place to another, such an egg must not only not be eaten, but must not be touched, to put it away. The conscientious man, therefore, is not to put a finger on it, for *that* might lead to his taking it altogether into his hand, and is not even to look at it, for *that* might possibly make him wish he could eat it.²⁴ Hillel's opinion carried the day, for, says the Talmud, "There came a voice from heaven, saying—'The words of both are the words of the living God, but the rule of the school of Hillel is to be followed.'"

²⁴ Erubin 13 b. quoted in Delitzsch's Jesus u. Hillel 22.

These worthless puerilities were in keeping with the fantastic exaggerations in which many of the Rabbis delighted. What shall we say of a learned order which has treasured in that great repertory of its sayings and acts, the Talmud, such wild Eastern inventions as that Adam, when created, was so tall that his head reached heaven, and so terrified the angels by his gigantic size, that they all ascended to the upper heavens, to God, and said, "Lord of the world, two powers are in the earth!" and that, on this, God put his hand on the head of Adam, and reduced his height to only a thousand cubits—over fifteen hundred feet!²⁵ We are told that there were sixty thousand towns in the mountains of Judea, each with sixty thousand inhabitants; that there is a bird so large that when it flies it intercepts the light of the sun; that when the Messiah comes, Jerusalem will have ten thousand palaces and the same number of towers, that there will be a hundred and eighty thousand shops of vendors of perfumes alone; that Adam had two faces and a tail; that from one shoulder to the other Solomon measured not less than sixty cubits; and that at one blow of an axe David killed two hundred men.

²⁵ Bartolocci's Bibliotheca Rabbinica, quoted in Brunet's Évangiles Apocryphes, 171. Lightfoot's Horæ Hebraeae, I. 28, &c.

The form of teaching in the schools of the Rabbis was by question and answer. The teacher propounded questions of legal casuistry to the scholars, and let them give their

opinions, adding his own if he thought fit. The scholars also could propose questions in their turn.²⁶ They sat, during class time, on the ground, the teacher, on a raised seat, known as the seat of Moses.²⁷ As all the knowledge of the Law was strictly traditional and oral, teacher and scholar alike had to depend entirely on memory, the one faculty of supreme importance to both.²⁸ To attain high fame, a Rabbi must have the reputation of knowing the whole immense mass of tradition down to his day, by heart, so as to be able to cite authorities for any possible question. Originality was superstitiously dreaded, and nothing more shrinkingly avoided than the giving any opinion unsupported by that of some former Rabbi. To forget a single word he had heard from his teacher was an inexcusable crime on the part of a scholar.²⁹

The feats of memory produced by such a system were so amazing, that we may readily credit the tradition of the whole Talmud having been learned by heart, in sections, by the disciples of a Persian Rabbi, who feared that all the copies of it would be destroyed, in a local persecution, in the seventh century.³⁰ The mass of the Rabbis, to use a Jewish phrase, must have been mere book-baskets;³¹ grown children, full of the opinions of others, but piously free from any of their own—the ideal of pedants.

The Rabbis were both jurists and preachers. They explained, defined, and taught the Law in their schools;³² gave judicial opinions and decisions on it in their official meetings, and delivered expositions of Scripture, in their own style, to the people in the synagogues. Their systems of interpretation were peculiar. The professional statement of Rabbinical law, on one point or other, occupied them chiefly; for every Rabbinical precept had to be justified, not only by precedents, but by some reference to the written law, and this often required both tediousness and ingenuity. There was no end of points on which a legal opinion was volunteered from the synagogue pulpit, and trifles infinitesimal to any but Jews, served for ceaseless wrangling in the schools.³³

The interpretation of Scripture gave even more scope to

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²⁶ *Horeb* Hebraicae.
Luke 2. 46.

²⁷ Acts 22. 3.
Jost, i. 231.
Derenbourg,
66. Matt. 23. 2.

²⁸ Jost, i. 255.

²⁹ *Aboth*, iii. 8.
Schlirer, 446.
Gfrörer, i. 169.

³⁰ Quoted in
Gfrörer, i. 167.
³¹ Duke's Blum-
enlese, 228.

³² A school of
the Rabbis
was called
Beth-ha-
midrasch—
the house of
study, the
academy.

³³ Schlirer,
444 ff.

CHAP. XVII. Rabbinical fancy. Three modes were in vogue: the using single letters to explain whole words or clauses: what was called the practical exposition; and what bore the name of the "Mystery"—an elucidation of the lofty secrets of the Creation, the world of angels, and such transcendental matters, from the most improbable sources. Rules were provided for the treatment of these different methods, but the utmost license prevailed, notwithstanding. The nature and value of the instruction thus given may be judged from some illustrations of the teaching, in the days of our Lord, respecting the secret power of numbers.

In the first and last verses of the Bible the first letter, Aleph (א), occurs six times, and as six alephs are equal to our figures 6,000—for the Jews used letters for figures—it was held to be proved by this that the world would last 6,000 years.^f Words in a verse might be exchanged for others whose letters were of equal numerical value. Thus the statement, which greatly offended the Rabbis, that Moses had married an Ethiopian woman³⁴—in violation of his own law³⁵—was explained as a figure of speech which hid an orthodox meaning. The letters of the word "Cushith" בִּישִׁית, an "Ethiopian woman," when added together as figures, represented 736, and the letters of the much more flattering words, "fair of face,"³⁶ made the same sum, and, therefore, they were clearly the true meaning!

Another fancy was to explain texts by putting the numerical value of a word in the place of the word itself. Thus, in Proverbs viii. 21, the word which we have translated—"substance"—was read as the number 310, its value in figures, and the doctrine educed from it that God will give 310 worlds to every just man as his inheritance!

This strange system was so much in vogue in the days of our Lord that it occurs even in the New Testament, and in early Christian writings. In the book of Revelation the name of "the Beast" is veiled from common eyes by the mystical number 666, but the reason for its being so becomes very apparent when we find that it is a cypher for the letters of the name of NERO.^g The early Christians imagined that God had already revealed the doctrine of the Cross to

³⁴ Num. 12. 1.

³⁵ Ex. 34. 16.
Deut. 7. 3, 4;
23. 3.

³⁶ פֶּה יָפֶה
פֶּה יָפֶה
Targum of
Onkelos on
the verse.

Abraham in the number of his servants—318 : for 18 is written in Greek letters, IH —the symbol of the word Jesus, and 300 is the letter T , which means the Cross!³⁷ With the same liking for mystery, 801 was used as the symbol for Christ, because the Greek word for dove (περιστέρα) makes that cypher, and so do the letters Alpha and Omega.

CHAP. XVII.

Epist. Barnab.
c. 9.

This love of the mystical prevailed in all Rabbinical teaching. Thus the account of the Creation and Ezekiel's vision of the Wheel were made the foundation of the wildest fancies. "Ten things," we are told, "were created in the twilight of the first Sabbath eve:—The abyss below the earth (for Korah and his company); the mouth of the spring (of Miriam, which gave the tribes water in the wilderness); the mouth of Baalam's she ass; the rainbow; the manna in the wilderness; the rod of Moses; the schamir (a worm which cleaves rocks); alphabetical characters; the characters of the Tables of the Law; and the Tables of stone themselves. Some Rabbis add to these—evil spirits, the grave of Moses, and the ram that was caught in the thicket."³⁸

³⁸ Schürer, 450.

Such was the teaching of the Rabbis, as a whole, though even in such sandy wastes there were not wanting specks of verdure, as one still sees in the Talmud. Finer minds here and there, for a moment, gave a human interest to these teachings, or touched the heart by poetry, and simple feeling. But, as a rule, the "Law," to the study of which the youth of Israel were summoned so earnestly, was a dreary wilderness of worthless trifling. The spell of the age was on all minds, and bound them in intellectual slavery. On every side, Christ, in His childhood and youth, heard such studies extolled as the sum of wisdom, and as the one pursuit supremely pleasing to God. Yet He rose wholly above them, and with immense originality and force of mind, valued them at their true worthlessness, leaving no trace of their spirit in the Gospels, but breathing, instead, only that of the most perfect religious freedom. It has been sometimes insinuated that He only followed the teachers of His nation : that He was indebted to Hillel, or to the Pharisees as a class :^h but enough has been said to show that the latter were the

CHAP. XVII. representatives of all that He most utterly opposed, and the distance between Him and Hillel may be measured by their respective estimates of the sanctity of the marriage bond, which Hillel treated so lightly as to sanction divorce, if a wife burned her husband's dinner.³⁹

³⁹ Dellitzsch's Hillel u. Jesus, 27. See it *passim*, for further illustrations of Hillel's morality.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JUDEA UNDER ARCHELAUS AND ROME.

THE death of Herod removed the strong hand that for CHAP. XVIII.
 more than a generation had repressed alike the hatreds and the hopes of the nation. Fanaticism had muttered in secret, and had at last burst out in the tumults at the Temple, just before he died; but when he was gone, there was no one to hold the wild forces in check that had so long been pent up.

His reign had served the purpose, in providence, of delaying the breaking up of the Jewish people, and its being scattered among the nations, and made its dissolution easier in the end; and, on the other hand, it had called forth the sympathies of heathenism for Judaism more strongly, and had conquered lasting rights for it among the nations, as in a sense the salt of the earth and as the forerunner of Christianity.¹

¹ Kelm, *Art.*
 "Herodes,"
 Schenkel's
 Bibel Lexicon.

The rejoicings of the nation, that the scandal of an Edomite sitting on the throne of David was past, knew no bounds. A negro conqueror, at the White House in Washington, in the days of slavery, would scarcely have raised such indignant hatred, or have been so revolting to the national instincts of the white population of America, as an Edomite reigning on Mount Zion was to the Jews. Even the founders of the two races had been mortal enemies, as the twin sons of Abraham, and Jewish tradition embittered the story of Genesis, by adding that, at last, Esau killed Jacob with an arrow from his bow.² When Israel was exiled from Egypt, Edom had refused it a passage through its territory, and had entailed on it the dreary years of wandering in the wilderness.³ The Edomites had been mortal

² Jubil. c. 37.

³ Num. 20,
 14—21. Judges
 11. 17, 18.

CHAP. XVIII. enemies of its first king.⁴ David had conquered them, and he and Solomon had reigned over them. In the decline of Israel under its later kings, they had been its deadliest and most implacable foes. They had joined the Chaldeans in the final conquest of Judea under Nebuchadnezzar, and had rejoiced over the destruction of Jerusalem, in the hope of getting possession of its richer territory, and adding it to their own wild mountain land. The prophets, from Amos and Joel, in the ninth century before Christ,⁵ had denounced them as the bitterest enemies of the theocracy. "Edom shall be a desolate wilderness," cried Joel, "for their violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in the land."⁶ "For three transgressions of Edom, or for four, saith Jehovah," cried Amos, "I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever. But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."⁷ Obadiah, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, taunted them⁸ with having been among the enemies of Israel, in the day when strangers carried away captive the force of the land, and foreigners entered its gates and cast lots on Jerusalem, and with having rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction. Jeremiah and Ezekiel had denounced the wrath of God against them,⁹ and, indeed, every prophet had proclaimed them the enemies of God, whom Israel was one day to crush with an utter destruction. During the exile they took possession of great part of the territory of Judah, and were only finally driven back, by John Hyrcanus,¹⁰ who conquered them 130 years before Christ, and compelled them to submit to circumcision. The deadly hatred of centuries was intensified by such a history. "Thou hatest me," says Jacob to Esau, in the book of Jubilees, "thou hatest me and my sons for ever, and no brotherly love can be kept with thee. Hear this, my word, which I say—"When I can change the skin and the bristles of a swine to wool, and when horns spring from its head like the horns of a sheep, then will I have brotherly love to thee; and when

⁴ 1 Sam. 14. 47.

⁵ Amos B.C. 825.
Joel B.C. 810.
Under Jehoshaphat and Jeroboam II., Kings of Israel, and Amaziah and Uzziah, Kings of Judah.
⁶ Joel 3. 19.

⁷ Amos 1. 11, 12.

⁸ Obad. 5. 10.
B.C. about 585.

⁹ Jer. 49. 7—22.
Ezek. 35. 13.

¹⁰ B.C. 135—106.

wolves make peace with lambs, that they shall not devour them or spoil them, and when they turn their hearts to each other to do each other good, then shall I be at peace with thee in my heart; and when the lion is the friend of the ox, and goes in the yoke and ploughs with him, then will I make peace with thee; and when the raven grows white, then shall I know that I love thee, and shall keep peace with thee. Thou shalt be rooted out, and thy sons shall be rooted out, and thou shalt have no peace."¹¹ It is thus that a Jew speaks of Edom, apparently in the very days of Herod,¹² and it is only the natural culmination, when he prophesies, in the next chapter, that the sons of Jacob will once more subdue and make bond-slaves of the hated race.¹³

CHAP. XVIII.

¹¹ Jubil. c. 37.¹² Dillmann, Pseudepigraphen. Herzog, xii. 300—336.¹³ Jubil. c. 38.

Yet one of this execrated and despised people had for more than a generation ruled over Israel! His death was the removal of a national reproach, that had been bitter beyond words. The hope of the land now was that the abhorred usurper might prove the last of his race on the throne of Judah. Archelaus in his stead was even worse than to have had Herod, for he was not only of Idumean blood, but his mother was of the equally hated race of the Samaritans! Rome, rather than Edom or Samaria!

Palace intrigues, and especially the systematic whisperings of Antipater, who hated his brothers as rivals, had caused Herod to change his will once and again in his last years.¹⁴ In the end nothing seemed likely to put an end to the rivalries of his family but the breaking up of the kingdom, which it had been the work of his life to create. His latest gained territories beyond the Jordan were left to Philip,¹⁵ the son of Cleopatra, a maiden of Jerusalem, whom Herod had married for her beauty. Galilee, with Perea, he left to his son Antipas,¹⁶ and Judea, Idumea, and Samaria, with the title of king, to Archelaus,¹⁷ both sons of Malthace. He had at one time intended to have left the whole kingdom to Herod, son of the second Mariamne, as successor to Antipater, but the complicity of the mother of that prince in the intrigues of the Rabbis was fatal to him.¹⁸ Salome, Herod's sister, the ruthless enemy of the Maccabæan family, received the gift of the towns of Jamnia and Ashdod in the

¹⁴ B.C. 4. Jesus Christ perhaps 2 or 3 years old.¹⁵ Born about B.C. 20. Age now 16 or 18.¹⁶ Born about B.C. 20. Age now 16.¹⁷ Born about B.C. 22 or 21. Age now 17 or 18.¹⁸ Bell. Jud. i. 30. 7.

CHAP. XVIII. Philistine plain, and of Phasaclis, in the palm groves of the Jordan valley.

¹⁹ B.C. 4.

As soon as Herod was dead¹⁹ his sister Salome and her husband set free a multitude of the leading men of the Jews, whom Herod had summoned to Jericho, that he might have them butchered at his own death. They next assembled the army and the people in the amphitheatre at Jericho, and having read a letter left by the dead king for the soldiers, opened his will, which, with his ring, was to be carried forthwith to Cæsar, that the settlements might be confirmed, and the due acknowledgment of dependence made. Meanwhile, the soldiers hailed Archelaus as king, and forthwith took the oath of allegiance to him. It was noted, however, that Archelaus held a grand feast on the night of his father's death.²⁰

²⁰ Ant. xvii. 9. 4.

²¹ Jesus at least 4 years old.

This over, the funeral of Herod followed, after due preparation.²¹ All the magnificence of the palace had been laid in contribution. The body lay on a couch of royal purple; a crown and diadem on its head; a sceptre in its right hand; a purple pall covering the rest; the couch itself resting on a bier of gold, set with a great display of the most precious stones. Herod's sons and a multitude of his kindred walked on each side, and followed. Next came Herod's favourite regiments: the body guard given him by Augustus at Cleopatra's death; the Thracian corps; the German regiment; and the regiment of Gauls, all with their arms, standards, and full equipments; then the whole army, horse and foot, in long succession, in their proudest bravery. Five hundred slaves and freedmen of the court carried sweet spices for the burial, and so they swept on, amidst wailings of martial music, and, doubtless, of hired mourners, by slow stages,²² to the new fortress Herodium, ten miles south of Jerusalem, where the dead king had built a grand tomb for himself. But if there were pomp and pageantry to do him honour, there was little love on the part either of the nation or of his family, for Archelaus, who had prepared all this magnificence, quarrelled with his relations about the succession on the way, and scarcely had the corpse reached the first half-hour's stage, before disturbances broke out in Jerusalem.²³

²² Ant. xvii. 8. 3.
Bell. Jud. I.
33. 9.

²³ Kelm, *Art.*
"Herodes," in
Schenkel's
Bibel Lexicon.

Archelaus paid the customary reverence of a seven days' mourning after the burial, closing them with a magnificent funeral feast^a to the people. He then laid aside his robes of mourning and put on white, and having gone up to the Temple, harangued the multitude from a throne of gold, thanking them for their ready submission to him, and making great promises for the future, when he should be confirmed in the kingdom by Augustus. The crowds heard him peaceably till he ended, but he had no sooner done so, than some began to clamour for a lightening of the taxes, and others for the liberation of those in prison on account of the late religious insurrection. All this he readily promised, and retired to the palace. Towards evening, however, crowds gathered at the gates, and began lamenting the Rabbis and the young men, put to death by Herod for cutting down the golden eagle over the Temple, in the late tumult, and demanding that the officials who had executed Herod's commands should be punished; clamouring, besides, for the deposition of Joazar, of the house of Boëthos, whom Herod, in compliment for having married into the family, had appointed high priest in the place of Mattathias, a friend of the national cause.²⁴ More dangerous still, they demanded that Archelaus should at once rise against the Romans, and drive them out of the country.²⁵ His utmost efforts to appease them were vain. Each day saw a greater tumult, and, to make matters worse, the city was filling with countless multitudes coming to the Passover, now at hand. Force alone could restore order, and this he was at last compelled, most reluctantly, to use. A bloody street battle followed, in which 3,000 were slain, and the Passover guests were shut out of the city, and returned home without having been able to keep the feast. The winds, long chained by Herod, had broken loose.^b

²⁴ Ant. xii. 6. 5.²⁵ Nixed. Dam. in Müller. Fragm. iii. 353.

Archelaus forthwith set off for Rome, leaving Philip regent in his absence. Doris, Herod's wife, Salome, his sister, and other members of the family, went with him, ostensibly to support his claims, but in reality to oppose him, for the family hated him as the son of a Samaritan, and, even more, as a second Herod. Antipas, also, started for Rome, to plead

CHAP. XVIII. his own claims to the kingdom, on the strength of a former will, and, as the elder, was secretly supported in his enterprise, with refined treachery, even by those who escorted Archelaus.

The family would have liked an oligarchy, in which all could share, better than any king, but preferred a Roman governor to either Archelaus or Antipas; but if one of these two must be chosen, they wished Antipas rather than his brother, whom they all hated. At Rome the two claimants canvassed eagerly among the Senators, in favour of their rival causes, and lowered their dignity by unseemly disputes. Meanwhile, a deputation of fifty Jews arrived from Jerusalem to protest against Archelaus being made king, and to ask the incorporation of Judea with Syria, as part of a Roman province, under a Roman governor, in the idea that Rome would be content with their submission and tribute, and leave the nation independent in its religious affairs. The embassy was received with great enthusiasm by the Jews of Rome, eight thousand of whom escorted them to the Temple of Apollo, where Augustus gave them audience.²⁶ All possible charges against Herod, though now dead, were detailed at length—his wholesale proscriptions and confiscations; his adorning foreign cities, and neglecting those of his own kingdom; his excessive taxation, and much more; the petitioners adding that they had hoped for milder treatment from Archelaus, but had had to lament 3,000 of their countrymen slain by him at the Temple, at his very entrance on power. The people, they said, wished only one thing, deliverance from the Herods, and annexation to Syria. The whole scene of the audience was, ere long, widely reported in Judea, and stamped itself deeply on the national memory, especially the fact that Archelaus, adding the last touch to the humiliation to which both brothers had stooped, threw himself at Cæsar's feet to implore his favour.²⁷ Many years after, Jesus needed to use no names, in His parable of the pounds,²⁸ to tell whom He meant, when He spoke of a king, against whom his people clamoured before a foreign throne—"We will not have this man to rule over us."

²⁶ Ant. xvii. 11.
1, 2.

²⁷ Ant. xvii. 9, 7.

²⁸ Luke 19. 12.

Archelaus was only in part successful. A few days after the pleadings, from respect to Herod's will,²⁹ and, doubtless, influenced by a bequest of ten millions of drachmæ in it to himself, a gift equal to about £375,000, besides jewels of gold and silver and very costly garments, to Julia, his wife, Cæsar raised the suppliant from his feet, and appointed him ethnarch of the part of the kingdom left him by Herod; promising to make him king hereafter, if he were found worthy. Idumæa, Judea, and Samaria, with the great cities, Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, and Joppa, were assigned him; but Gaza, Gadara, and Hippos, as Greek cities, were incorporated with the province of Syria.³⁰ His revenue was the largest, for it amounted to 600 talents, or about £120,000. Antipas had only a third part as much, and Philip only a sixth.³¹ The immense sum of money left him by Herod, Cæsar returned to the sons, reserving only a few costly vessels, as mementoes.

CHAP. XVIII.
Ant. xviii. 8. 1.

Ant. xviii. 11.
4.

Ant. xviii. 11.
4.

While these strange scenes were enacting at Rome, things were going on very badly in Palestine. As soon as Archelaus had sailed, the whole nation was in uproar. The massacre at his accession had been like a spark in explosive air, and the flame of revolt burst out at once. The moment seemed auspicious for the re-creation of the theocracy, with God for the only king, as in early days. The rich, and such as had no higher wish than the material advantages of trade and commerce, which it would bring, desired government by a Roman procurator. They regarded religion, government, law, and constitution, with equal indifference, setting their personal ease and gain before anything else. But for generations, there had been a growing party in the land, whose ideas and aims were very different. From Ezra's time, the dream of a restored theocracy had been cherished, through all the vicissitudes of the nation, with undying tenacity, by a portion of the people. The political system of the Pentateuch was their sacred ideal. Kings over Israel were, in their eyes, usurpers of the rights of Jehovah, against whom Samuel, the great prophet, had, in His name, protested. The heathen could no more be tolerated now than the Canaanites of old, whom God had commanded their fathers to

CHAP. XVIII. drive out. The land was to be sacred to Jehovah and His people, under a high priesthood only, to the exclusion of all foreign or kingly rule. The impossibility of restoring such a state of things, after the changes of so many centuries, may have been felt, but was not acknowledged. It stood commanded in the Holy Books, and that was enough. Their fathers had murmured under Persian domination, and had eagerly grasped at the promises of the Greek conqueror, demanding, however, that they should include the safety of their special institutions. When Grecian supremacy, in its turn, became corrupt, and threatened the destruction of the "Law," the "pious"³² revolted, and fought, under the Maccabees, for the true religion, but still in the form of a theocracy. They continued faithful to the great patriot family, as long as it maintained the high priesthood as the highest dignity of the state, but they had taken up arms only to defend the faith, and as soon as they were able once more to practise its rites, and to give themselves up again to religious study, they forsook the ranks of the Maccabæans, unwilling to take any part in the consolidation of a political power to which they attached no value.³³ In the end, Judas had been well-nigh deserted, and could gather only a handful of 3,000 followers, and his brother, who succeeded him, had to flee, with a remnant of their adherents, to the fens and reed beds of Lake Merom, or the wilds of Gilead. The long peace which prevailed in the reign of John Hyrcanus, after his wars were ended, was devoted by the Rabbis to the creation of the famous "hedge" round the Law, to prevent for ever the religious apostasy and decay which had almost ruined Judaism under the Syro-Greek dynasty. From this time, we hear of the "unsociability" of the Jews towards other nations.³⁴ Pharisaism, or separation, was erected into a system, and was pushed to its ultimate and most rigorous consequences with a zeal and fanaticism that excite wonder. The extreme party became known as the "Separation,"³⁵ while the courtly party round the king, who were contented to follow the Law as written, conscientiously and rigorously, were called in irony the Saddouk³⁶ or righteous, or as we call them, the Sadducees.

³² The סֹדֵקִים
Has'dim.

³³ Derenbourg,
68.

³⁴ Derenbourg,
76.

³⁵ פְּרִישִׁי
Pharish.

³⁶ See page 68.

The indifference of the Pharisaic, or ultra, party to political affairs, and their concentration on the observance and elaboration of the Law, became, in the end, the characteristic of the people at large. During the civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the two Asmonean brothers, they stood, as much as possible, aloof. The Jew is democratic by nature, and seeks equality, whether under a foreign or native government. "The holy nation," "the kingdom of priests," recognized no other distinction than that of superior piety and knowledge of the Law, which are only personal virtues, and cannot be transmitted. The Asmonean family, once on the throne, lost much of the popular sympathy, and the priestly aristocracy which formed the court, became objects of aversion. From the last years of John Hyrcanus to the death of Jannæus, the Rabbis, living in retirement, attracted to themselves more and more the vital force of the nation; and during the nine sunny years of royal patronage, under Alexandra, instead of busying themselves in heaping up wealth and increasing their power, they laboured to found a legal system which should secure the triumph of their ideas. Disinterestedness is always attractive, and it had its reward in creating a fanatical devotion to the Rabbis, which knew no limits. "Love work, keep apart from politics, and have nothing to do with office," was the maxim of Schemaiah, the successor of Simeon Ben Schetach. The struggle between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus had no interest to the Pharisees. The Talmud, which embodies Rabbinical feeling, never mentions even the names of any of the five Maccabees—not even that of Judas,—and the spelling and meaning of the word Maccabee were alike unknown to its compilers.³⁷ The history of the nation was utterly ignored by these dreamy transcendentalists, who recognized no earthly power whatever.

³⁷ Derenbourg, 88.

But even among the Rabbis, and the blindly fanatical people, there was an ultra party of Irreconcilables. From the first, even Rabbinical sternness and strictness were not stern and strict enough for some, and there appeared, at times within the circle of the Rabbis, at others, outside, men of extreme views, who would tolerate no compromises

CHAP. XVIII. such as the Pharisees were willing to accept. They would acknowledge neither prince nor king, far less any foreign heathen power. Already, in the days of John Hyrcanus, they had begun to mutter discontentedly, and their voices rose louder under Alexander Jannæus, who tried to crush them by the fiercest persecution. But when Pompey came, as conqueror, and arbiter of the national destiny, they once more, by their earnest protests, showed that their party was still vigorous. In the civil wars, many of them fought for the Asmonean princes; but, under Herod, they were so mercilessly held down, that no political action on their part was possible, and they had to devote themselves to the eager study of the Law, which made his reign the Augustan age of Rabbinism. But in their schools they could at least kindle the zeal of the rising youth, and this some of them did only too effectively. Even in the sternest days of Herod's reign, moreover, some had not been wanting to maintain a fierce protest against his usurpation of the throne, which they believed belonged only to God. The so-called robbers crushed by him at Arbela, seem to have been rather patriotic bands, wrong, it may be, in the means pursued, but noble in their aims, who sought to carry out the theocratic dream. The foremost leader of these fierce zealots had been that Hezekiah whom Herod, with much difficulty, had secured and put to death. His son Judas, the Galilæan, was now, in his turn, to raise the standard of national liberty and institutions.

Quintilius Varus, the future victim, with his legions, of Arminius, in Germany—now governor of Syria—had come to Jerusalem, on account of the disturbances at the accession of Archelaus. After some executions, supposing that he had restored order, he returned to Antioch, leaving behind him in Jerusalem, under Sabinus, a whole legion, instead of the garrison that, in peaceful times, would have been thought sufficient. He could hardly have done worse than put such a man as Sabinus in command, for, like Roman governors in general, in that day, he was a man of no principle, bent only on making a fortune, even by the vilest means, while he had opportunity. He infuriated the Jews, by forcing

the surrender of the castles of Jerusalem into his hands, to get possession of Herod's treasures, which he at once appropriated to his own use. Plunder was his one thought, and, to secure it, no act of lawless violence was too audacious. Extortion and robbery drove the people to fury. Not only the city, but the country everywhere, seethed with excitement. It seemed a fitting moment to strike for their long, lost national liberty, and to set up the theocracy again, under the Rabbis, after having driven out the heathen. Their fanaticism knew no caution or prudence, nor any calculation of the odds against them. Miracles would be wrought, if needed, to secure their triumph, and was not the Messiah at hand? It was, moreover, the time of Pentecost,³⁸ and an immense body of men from Galilee,³⁹ Idumea, Jericho, and Perea, but, above all, from Judea, taking advantage of the feast, hurried up to Jerusalem to join issue with the greedy robber^c plundering the city. Dividing themselves into three camps, they forthwith invested the city, and Sabinus, in terror, withdrew to the fort Phasaelis. But the storm soon burst on him. Crowding the roofs of the Temple cloisters, the Jews rained down a storm of missiles on the Roman soldiers sent to dislodge them, till at last these, finding other means useless, fired and nearly destroyed the cloisters,—the dry cedar of the roofs, and the wax in which the plates of gold that covered them were bedded, feeding the flames only too readily. The Temple itself was now at the mercy of the assailants, who avenged themselves by plundering its treasures,^d Sabinus himself securing 400 talents—about £83,000—for his share.³⁹ But this only infuriated the people still more, and even Herod's army was so outraged by it, that all the troops, except the Samaritan regiments—numbering 3,000 men—went over to the popular side. Meanwhile, the flame of revolt spread over the whole country. The discharged soldiers of Herod began plundering in Judea, and 2,000 of them got together in Idumea, and fought stoutly against the new king's party, driving Herod's cousin, Achiab, who was sent against them, to take refuge in the fortresses, while they held the open country. Across the Jordan, in Perea, one Simon, who had

CHAP. XVIII.

³⁸ A.C. 4.³⁹ Bell. Jud. ii. 3.
2, 3, 4.

CHAP. XVIII. been a slave of Herod, put himself at the head of a great band, who acknowledged him as king, and doubtless hoped, by his means, to deliver their country, and restore its religious freedom. Betaking themselves to the defile between Jerusalem and Jericho, they burned Herod's palace at the latter city, and carried flame and sword to the homes of all who did not favour them. A corps of Roman soldiers, sent out against Simon, soon, however, scattered his followers, and he himself was slain.

Further north, Athronges, a shepherd of the wild pastures beyond the Jordan, put himself at the head of the popular excitement. He was a man of great size and strength, and with four brothers, all, like him, of lofty stature, strove in his own wild way to avenge his country. Gathering a vast multitude of followers, he kept up a fierce guerilla warfare against the troops sent out to put him down, and was able to keep the field for years, so well was he supported by the people.

But the most alarming insurrection broke out in Galilee, the old head-quarters of the zealots, under Hezekiah, in the last generation. Judas, his son, born on the other side of the Jordan, but known as the Galilean, had grown to manhood full of the spirit of his father. The same lofty ideal, of restoring the land to God as its rightful king, had become the dream of his life. The time seemed to favour his rising for "God and the Law," as his father, and the heroes of his nation, had done in the past. The brave true-hearted Galileans, ever ready to fight at the cry that the Law was in danger, rallied round him in great numbers, and at their head he ventured on an enterprise which made him the hero of the day, in every town and village of the land. Sepphoris, a walled hill city, over the hills from Nazareth, was the capital of Galilee, and the great arsenal in the north.⁴⁰ This fortress, sitting like a bird, as its name hints, on its height, Judas took by storm, and its capture put in his hands arms of all kinds for thousands, and a large sum of money.

How long he was able to keep the field is not known. The Romans lost no time in taking steps to crush him and

⁴⁰ See page 163.

the other rebels. Varus, afraid of the safety of the legion he had left in Jerusalem, set off southward from Antioch with two more legions, and four regiments of cavalry, in addition to the auxiliary forces supplied, as was required of them, by the local princes round. As he passed through Berytus, that city added its quota of 1,500 men, and Aretas, king of Arabia Petræa, sent him a large contingent of irregulars, in the shape of wild Arab horsemen and foot soldiers. The whole force rendezvoused at Ptolemais,⁴¹ and ⁴¹ Acre. from this point Varus sent his son, with a strong division, into Galilee, while he himself marched, by way of Esdraelon and Samaria, to Jerusalem. Samaria had been loyal, for it would have been the last thing its citizens would have done to join the hated Jews in a war for their Law, and was left untouched, Varus pitching his camp at a village called Arus, which the Arab auxiliaries set on fire as they left, out of hatred to Herod. As they approached Jerusalem, Emmaus, at which a company of Roman soldiers had been attacked and partly massacred by Athronges, was found deserted, and was burned to the ground, in revenge for the insult that had been offered to the army of Rome. Reaching the neighbourhood of the capital, the besieging force of the Jews at once dispersed, and Varus marched in without a blow. With keen dissimulation, the Jerusalem Jews forthwith laid all the blame of the troubles on the Passover crowds, asserting that they had been as much besieged as Sabinus. Meanwhile, the troops scoured the country for fugitives, 2,000 of whom were crucified along the roadsides near Jerusalem. A Jewish force of 10,000 men, still afoot, disbanded itself, and the revolt in Judea was for the moment suppressed. Several of the relations of Herod who had taken part in the rising, and had been sent prisoners to Rome, were the last victims for the time.

The force under the son of Varus had meanwhile been busy in the north. Sepphoris was retaken, its inhabitants sold as slaves, and the town itself burned to the ground, but Judas escaped for the present, to begin a still more terrible insurrection a few years later.

Peace was thus, at length, restored, and the young princes

CHAP. XVIII. entered on their inheritances, thanks, once more, to Rome. But the land had been desolated: the bravest of its youth had died on the battle-field: cities and villages lay smouldering in their ashes. Samaria alone profited by the attempted revolution, for not only did it suffer nothing, a third of its taxes were remitted and laid on Judea—a new ground of hatred towards the “foolish people” of Shechem.

The sensual, lawless, cruel nature of Archelaus, with his want of tact, which, together, had turned both his family and his father’s wisest counsellors against him, leave us little doubt of the character of his reign. The general estimate of him was that he was most like his father of all his brothers. He returned from Rome degraded in his own eyes by having had to beg his kingdom on his knees, and by the people, and all his relations, except the just and honourable Philip, having tried to prevent his success with Augustus. His one thought was revenge. Jesus, though an infant when Archelaus began his reign, must have often heard in later years of his journey to Rome and its humiliations, and of the fierce reprisals on his return, for, as I have said, He paints the story unmistakably in the parable of the great man who went into a far country, to receive a kingdom; whose citizens hated him, and sent after him, protesting that they would not have him to reign over them. The fierce revenge of Archelaus could not fail to rise in the minds of those who heard, in the parable, how the lord, on his return, commanded his servants to be called, and rewarded the faithful richly, but stripped the doubtful of everything, and put to death those who had plotted against him.⁴²

⁴² Luke 19.
11—27.

Archelaus began his reign by such a reckoning with his servants and enemies. When he took possession of his monarchy, says Josephus, he used, not the Jews only, but the Samaritans, barbarously.⁴³ In Jerusalem he deposed the high priest of the Boëthos family, on the charge of having conspired against him. But though this might have pleased the Pharisees and the people, who counted the Boëthos high priest unclean,⁴⁴ he only roused their indignation by filling the office with two of his own creatures

⁴³ Bell. Jud. 11.
7. 3.

⁴⁴ Ant. xvii. 9. 1.

in succession.⁴⁵ His treatment of his people generally was so harsh, that Jews and Samaritans forgot their mutual hatred in efforts to get him dethroned. His crowning offence, however, was marrying Glaphyra, the widow of his half-brother Alexander, to whom she had borne children. She had gone back to her father, the friend of Herod and Antony, after the death of her second husband, King Juba, of Libya, when Archelaus met her on his way back from Rome, and falling violently in love with her, married her after divorcing his wife. Her former career in Jerusalem might have made him hesitate to bring her back again, for her haughtiness, keen tongue, and affected contempt of Salome, and Herod's family generally, had been one great cause of her first husband's death,⁴⁶ while her training her children, as she did, in heathen manners, had made her hateful to the people.⁴⁷ Her incestuous marriage, now, involved both her and Archelaus in the bitterest unpopularity. But she did not live long to trouble any one. It seemed as if the return to the scene of her early marriage life had waked only too vivid recollections of her murdered husband. Soon after it she dreamed that he came to her and accused her of her infidelity to him in marrying Archelaus, and the dream so affected her that she sickened, and in a few days died.⁴⁸

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⁴⁵ Ant. xvii. 6. 4;
9. 1; 13. 1.⁴⁶ Bell. Jud. I.
24. 2.⁴⁷ Ant. xviii. 5. 4.⁴⁸ Ant. xvii. 13. 4.

Archelaus had not the same taste for heathen architecture and public games as his father, and, perhaps to his own hurt, was much less an adept at public flattery of the Emperor and his ministers, and he was wise or timid enough to put no heathen or objectionable impress on his coins.⁴⁹ At Jericho he rebuilt, with great magnificence, the palace burned down by Simon, and he founded a town on the western hill-slopes of the Jordan valley, in Samaria, calling it Archelais, after himself, and embellishing it with fine conduits, to water the palm groves in his gardens,⁵⁰ but beyond this he left no monuments of his reign. His time and heart were too much engrossed with vice and drunkenness to leave much interest for anything else.

⁴⁹ De Saulcy, Recherches sur la Numism. Judaïque, Paris, 1854, p. 138.⁵⁰ Ant. xvii. 13. 1.

The hatred of the people and of their leaders, the Pharisees, which had striven to prevent his getting the throne at

CHAP. XVIII. first, grew only fiercer with time. The struggle continued, with true Jewish pertinacity, for nine years, fanned more or less openly by the ethnarch's relations, and their factions at court. At last, in the beginning of the year 6, things came to a crisis.⁵¹ Judea and Samaria, whom common oppression had, for the moment, made friendly, sent a joint embassy to Rome, to accuse the tyrant, before his master, of having affronted the imperial majesty, by not observing the moderation commanded him. Archelaus was thoroughly alarmed. Superstitious, like his dead wife, he dreamed that he saw ten ears of wheat, perfectly ripe, presently eaten by oxen,⁵² and at once taking the dream as an omen, was told by one Simon, an Essene, that the ten heads of wheat were ten years, and marked the length of his reign.⁵³ Such a forecast was only too easy. The embassy to Rome had done its work. Cæsar was indignant, and ordered the agent of Archelaus at Rome, a man of the same name, to sail at once for Palestine, and summon his master to appear at Rome.⁵⁴ Five days after the dream the messenger reached Jerusalem, and found Archelaus feasting with his friends. The imperative summons brooked no delay, and the vassal instantly set out for Italy. There his fate was speedily decided. Accusers and accused were brought face to face, and Archelaus was sentenced to perpetual banishment, and the confiscation of all his property to the Emperor. The place of his exile was fixed at Vienna, in Gaul, a town on the Rhone, a little south of the modern Lyons, in what, long afterwards, became the province of Dauphiné.⁵⁵ Here he lived in obscurity till his death, amid the vines of southern France, perhaps a wiser and happier man than in the evil years of his greatness. His reign was the beginning of the end of Herod's kingdom, his dominions being forthwith incorporated with Syria, as part of that Roman province.⁵⁶ The wish of the Jews was at last gratified, but they were soon to feel how bitterly they had deceived themselves in supposing that incorporation with Rome meant religious independence. The castle at Jericho, and the palm groves and buildings of Archelaüs, were the only memorials of the ethnarch, except the bitter-

⁵¹ A.D. 6. Jesus about 10 or 12.

⁵² Ant. xvii. 13. 3.

⁵³ Autumn, A.D. 6.

⁵⁴ Ant. xvii. 13. 2.

⁵⁵ Age of Archelaus 28.

⁵⁶ Ant. xvii. 13. 5.

ness written on every heart by his cruelties and oppress- CHAP. XVIII.
sions.

A man of unspeakably greater importance in his influence on the nation—Hillel, the gentle, the godly, the scholar of Ezra,⁵⁷ appears to have passed away in these last months of excitement, at the age, it is said, of 120. Born among the Dispersion, in Babylon, he had come to Jerusalem, long years before,⁵⁸ to attend the famous schools of Abtalion and Schemaiah, which Herod's proscriptions would have well-nigh crushed in later years, destroying Rabbinism with them, but for the genius who had been trained in their spirit. Already a married man, he had no income but the daily pittance of half a denarius,⁵⁹ earned as a light porter⁶⁰ or day labourer,⁶⁰ though his one brother was a great Rabbi and president of the school at Babylon, and his other was growing to be a wealthy man in Jerusalem. But the rich one did not trouble himself about him, and affected to despise him,⁶¹ and the other, though eminent, was, very likely, himself poor. Unable, one day, to pay the trifling fee for entrance, to the doorkeeper of the school, Hillel was yet determined to get the knowledge for which his soul thirsted. It was a Sabbath eve in winter, and the classes met on the Friday evening, continuing through the night, till the Sabbath morning. To catch the instruction from which he was shut out, Hillel climbed into a window outside, and sat there, in the cold, for it was bitter weather, and snow was falling heavily. In the morning, says the tradition, Schemaiah said to Abtalion: "Brother Abtalion, it is usually light in our school by day; it must be cloudy this morning to be so dark." As he spoke he looked up, and saw a form in the window outside. It was Hillel, buried in the snow and almost dead. Carrying him in, bathing and rubbing him with oil, and setting him near the hearth, he gradually revived. "It was right even to profane the Sabbath for such an one," said the teachers and students.⁶²

Five or six years after the beginning of Herod's reign, Hillel rose to be the head of the Rabbinism of Jerusalem, as the only man to be found who had studied under Abtalion and Schemaiah. After a time a rival school

⁵⁷ Sota 9, 6.

⁵⁸ Cir. B.C. 50.
Deltzsch,
Hillel u. Jesus,
10.

⁵⁹ Arnold's *Art.*
"Hillel" in
Herzog.
⁶⁰ Deltzsch, 11.
Hauserath, I.
290. Jost, I.
254.

⁶¹ Arnold, as
above.

⁶² b. Joma 25 b;
quoted by
Deltzsch.

CHAP. XVIII. rose under Schammai. Hillel, though a strict Jew, had still a leaning to charitable and liberal ideas in some directions; Schammai was the embodiment of the narrow ultra-Pharisaic spirit, and, as such, much more numerous followed than his milder rival. Hillel's weakness, as well as strength, lay in his love of peace, for he too often gave up principle to maintain quiet. Many of his sayings are preserved, but most of them are inferior to those left by

⁶³ See the collection of them in Keim's *Jesna von Nazara*, i. 258. Epictetus or Seneca.⁶³ His summary of the Law, to a heathen, is the best known,—“What you would yourself dislike, never do to your neighbour—that is the whole Law, all else is only its application.” But, like all the Rabbis, his religious system was radically unsound. Its central principle was the belief in strict retaliation or recompense, for

⁶⁴ See Matt. 5. 38. every act.⁶⁴ Like for like was the sum of his morality. Seeing a human skull floating on a stream, Hillel cried out, “Because thou hast drowned (some one), thou thyself art drowned, and he who has drowned thee will himself some day also be drowned.”⁶⁵ The same way, he believed, would it be at the final judgment. “He who has gained (the knowledge of) the Law,” said he, “has also gained the life to come.”⁶⁶ Service and payment, his fundamental motive to right action, inevitably led to formalism and selfish calculation, fatal to all real merit.

The banishment of Archelaus found Jesus a growing boy of about ten or twelve,⁶⁷ living quietly in the Galilæan Nazareth, among the hills. It was a momentous event in the declining fortunes of the nation, for its results presently filled the land with terror, and paved the way for the final crisis, sixty years later, which destroyed Israel as a nation.

The troubles of Herod's time, and the dreams of the Rabbis, had excited a very general desire, at his death, for direct government by Rome, under the proconsul of Syria. The deputation sent to Augustus, when Archelaus was seeking the throne, had prayed for such an arrangement, thinking they would be left under their high priests, to manage their national affairs after their own customs, as the Phenician cities were allowed to do under their Archons, and that Rome would only interfere in taxation and military

⁶⁷ A.D. 6.

matters. Their wish, however, was the only ground of their expectation, for Rome never left large communities like the Jewish nation thus virtually independent, though they might indulge towns or cities with such a privilege. CHAP. XVIII.

When Archelaus, at the entreaty of the people, had been banished, their hopes revived of the restoration of the theocracy under the high priests and the Rabbis, with a nominal supremacy on the part of Rome. The exile of the tyrant, therefore, was greeted with universal joy; but the news that a procurator,^f or lieutenant-governor, as he might be called, had been appointed in his stead, and that Judea was henceforth to be incorporated into the province of Syria, with its proconsul, or governor-general, as supreme head, under the Emperor, soon dispelled their dreams of theocratic liberty.

The proconsul,⁶⁸ or governor-general, of Syria, at the time, was Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, a brave soldier, and faithful servant of the Emperor, accustomed to command and to be obeyed. Ordered to incorporate Judea with his province, no thought of consulting Jewish feelings in doing so crossed his mind. From comparative obscurity he had risen, through military and diplomatic service, till Augustus had him made consul.⁶⁹ He had made a successful campaign in Asia Minor, against some tribes of savage mountaineers, whom he succeeded in subduing, by blockading the mountain passes, and after starving them into submission, had secured their future quiet by carrying off all the men able to bear arms, banishing some, and drafting the rest into his legions. For this he had gained the honour of a triumph. When Caius, the young grandson of Augustus, was treacherously wounded in Armenia, he had managed affairs for him so much to the satisfaction of the Emperor, that he got the province of Syria as a reward. With all this, he bore a bad character with those who knew him, or were any way under him, as not only malignant and grasping, but mean and revengeful. As a proof of this it was instanced, that he kept a charge of attempted poisoning over his wife's head, for twenty years after he had divorced her.

The procurator, or lieutenant-governor, appointed over

⁶⁸ P. Sulpicius Quirinius, A.D. 6 or 7 —11.

⁶⁹ B.C. 12.

CHAP. XVIII. Judea by Quirinius, was Coponius, a Roman knight, unknown except from this office. He and Quirinius made their appearance in Jerusalem together, as soon as Archelaus had been condemned, to take possession of his effects for Augustus. They lodged in the palace of Herod, which, henceforth, was called the Prætorium, and became the residence of the procurators when they were in Jerusalem at the time of the feasts, for, except then, they lived in Cæsarea. The Herod family had to content themselves with the old castle of the Maccabæan kings, near the Xystus.

Any golden dreams of a restored theocracy were soon dispelled. Hardly had the inventory of the possessions of the crown been finished, than Quirinius announced that his next duty was to take a census of the people, and a return of their property and incomes, as the basis for introducing the Roman taxation common to all subject provinces of the empire. There could be no clearer proof that the nation had deceived itself. Rich and poor alike resented a measure which announced slavery instead of freedom, and ruinous extortion instead of prosperity. In every country the introduction of a new fiscal system, with its intrusion into private affairs, its vexatious interferences with life and commerce, its new and untried burdens, and the general disturbance of the order of things which custom has made familiar, is always unpopular. But in this case patriotic and religious feeling intensified the dislike. It was at once the direct and formal subjection of the country to heathen government, the abrogation of laws with which religious ideas were blended, and the fancied profanation of the word of Jehovah and of His prophets, that Israel would be as the sand on the sea-shore, *which cannot be numbered*.⁷⁰ It was recalled to mind, moreover, that when the wrath of God turned against Israel, He moved David to give the command, "Go number Israel and Judah."⁷¹ It ran also from mouth to mouth that old prophecies foretold that the numbering of the people would be the sign of their approaching fall as a nation. To the fanaticism of the Jew the census was a matter of life and death; to Quirinius, who could not

⁷⁰ Gen. 32. 12.
Hosea 1. 10.

⁷¹ 2 Sam. 24. 1.

comprehend such a state of feeling, it was the simplest matter in the world. The very first step in the Roman government of Judea brought it into conflict with the people. CHAP. XVIII.

The systematic and direct taxation of the country by Rome was, from this time, an inextinguishable subject of hatred and strife between the rulers and the ruled. The Romans smiled at the political economy of the Rabbis, who gravely levied a tax of half a shekel a head to the Temple, to avert a national pestilence,⁷² and proposed that a census of the people, calculated by the number of the lambs slaughtered in Jerusalem at the last Passover, should be the basis of the imperial fiscal registration. But if this was ridiculous to the Roman, it was a matter so sacred to the Jew, that it led to ever-fresh revolts, after thousands of patriots had died to maintain it. The Jewish law recognized taxes and free gifts only for religious objects, and, according to the Rabbis, the very holiness of the land rested on every field and tree contributing its tithe, or gift of wood, to the Temple. How, it was asked, could this sacredness be maintained, if a heathen emperor received taxes from the sources consecrated by these tithes and gifts to Jehovah? Hence the question rose, "whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?"—a question to be solved only by the sword, but rising ever again, after each new despairing attempt at resistance. Every "receipt of custom" at the gate of a town, or at the end of a bridge, was a rock against which the Jew who honoured the Law felt his conscience wrecked, or a battle-field marked by a deadly strife.

This sullen antipathy to imperial taxation was, moreover, intensified by the evils of the Roman system. The chief imposts demanded were two—a poll and a land tax, the former an income tax on all not embraced by the latter.⁷³ The income tax was fixed by a special census, and was rated, in Syria and Cilicia, at one per cent. All landed property of private individuals was subject to the ground tax, while the Jewish crown possessions were confiscated entirely to the imperial exchequer. The tax amounted to a tenth of all grain, and a fifth part of wine and fruit, and was thus very

⁷² Exo l. 30. 13.

⁷³ Ant. viii. 4. 3.
Tac. Ann. i.
78; xlii. 60.—72.
Liv. xxv. 3.

oppressive. Both imposts were in the hands of "publicans,"⁷⁴ who bought the right of collecting the taxes for five years, from the censors, at Rome. These publicani farmed the revenue from the State, giving security for the payment of a fixed sum for the province whose taxes they bought. There were, however, extraordinary taxes and local imposts, besides the two great ones. If corn ran short in Italy the provinces had to supply it at fixed prices, and the procurator at Cæsarea had the right to demand for himself and his attendants what supplies he required.

The customs and excise duties, moreover, were levied for the imperial government,—and the tolls on bridges, and roads, the octroi at the gates of towns, and the custom-houses at the boundaries of districts or provinces, which, also, were farmed by the publicani, gave additional room for arbitrary oppression. The whole system was radically bad, like its counterparts under the Ancien Régime in France, and in Turkey, now. The Roman knights who took contracts for provinces, sub-let them, by districts, to others, and these again had sub-contractors to smaller and smaller amounts. The worst result was inevitable where self-interest was so deeply involved. Each farmer and sub-farmer of the revenue required a profit, which the helpless provincials had, in the end, to pay. The amount assessed by Rome was thus no measure of the ultimate extortion. The greed and opportunity of the collectors, in each descending grade, alone determined the demand from the taxpayer.⁷⁵

Nor was there a remedy. The publicani were mostly Roman knights, the order from which the judges were chosen. They were the capitalists of the empire, and formed companies to take up the larger contracts, and these companies, like some even in the present day, were more concerned about the amount of their dividends than the means of obtaining them. Complaints could only be laid before an official who might himself intend to farm the same taxes at a future time, or who was a partner in the company that farmed them at the moment. Thus safe from the law, the oppression and extortion practised by the collectors were intolerable. The rural population were especially ground down by their exactions. A favourite

plan was to advance money to those unable to pay demands, and thus make the borrowers private debtors, whose whole property was ere long confiscated by the usurious interest required. CHAP. XVIII.

Cæsar has left us a vivid picture of the fate of a Roman province in matters of taxation. Speaking of Pius Scipio, the proconsul of Syria in B.C. 48, he tells us that he made large requisitions of money on the towns, and exacted from the farmers of the taxes the amount of two years' payment, then due to the Roman treasury, and also demanded as a loan the sum which would be due for the next year. All this extortion, we may be sure, would have to be more than made up by the unfortunate provincials. Having brought his troops to Pergamum, one of the chief cities of the province of Asia, he quartered them for the winter in the richest cities, and quieted their discontent by great bounties, and by giving up the towns to them to plunder.

The money requisitions levied by him on the province were exacted with the utmost severity, and many devices were invented to satisfy the proconsul's rapacity. A head tax was imposed on all, both slave and free: taxes were laid on columns and doors; corn, soldiers, arms, rowers, military engines and conveyances, were taken by requisition. If anything could be thought of as a pretext for a new tax, the tax was imposed. Men with military authority were set over cities, and even over small villages and petty fortified places; and he who used his power most harshly and remorselessly, was thought the best man and the best citizen. The province was full of lictors and bailiffs; it swarmed with officials and extortioners, who demanded more than was due for the taxes, as gain for themselves. In addition to all this, enormous interest was asked, as is usual in time of war, from all who had to borrow, which many needed to do, as the taxes were levied on all. Nor did these exactions save the Roman citizens of the province, for additional fixed sums were levied on the several communes, and on the separate towns.⁷⁵ Cicero, on his entry on the proconsulate of Cilicia, found things equally sad in that province. He tells us that he freed many cities from the most crushing taxation, and from

⁷⁵ Bell. Civ. iii. 31, 32.

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ruinous usury, and even from debts charged against them falsely. The province had been nearly ruined by the oppressions and rapacity of his predecessor, whose conduct, he says, had been monstrous, and more like that of a savage wild beast than a man.⁷⁶ Such pictures, by Romans themselves, leave us to imagine the misery of the wretched provincials under proconsuls and procurators, and account in no small degree for the recklessness of Judea under the Roman yoke.

⁷⁶ Cic. ad Fam.
xv. 4. 2.

Jesus grew up to manhood amidst universal murmurs against such a system, the discontent becoming more serious year by year.¹ At last the Senate, on the recommendation of the Emperor Tiberius, sent Germanicus, the Emperor's nephew, to Syria, as a necessary step towards calming the popular excitement.⁷⁷ The Jews had already sent a deputation to Rome, to represent the ruin brought on their country by the crushing weight of the taxes. The deepening exhaustion of Palestine by the fiscal oppression of the Romans, and of Herod's family, is incidentally implied in many passages of the Gospels. One of the most frequent allusions in Christ's discourses is to the debtor, the creditor, and the prison. The blind misrule that was slowly destroying the empire fell with special weight on an agricultural people like the Jews. In one parable, Jesus represents every one but the king as bankrupt. The steward owes the king, and the servant owes the steward.⁷⁸ The question what they should eat and what they should drink is assumed as the most pressing, with the common man. The creditor meets the debtor in the street, and straightway commits him to prison, till he pay the uttermost farthing, and, if that fails, sells him, his wife, his children, and all that he has, to make up his debt.⁷⁹ Oil and wheat, the first necessities of life, are largely claimed by the rich man's steward.⁸⁰ Buildings have to be left unfinished for want of means.⁸¹ The merchant invests his money, to make it safe, in a single pearl, which he can easily hide.⁸² Many bury their money in the ground, to save it from the oppressor.⁸³ Speculators keep back their grain from the market, and enlarge their barns.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ A.D. 19.

⁷⁸ Luke 7. 41.
Matt. 18. 23.

⁷⁹ Luke 12. 58.
Matt. 5. 23.
Matt. 18. 25.

⁸⁰ Luke 16. 6.

⁸¹ Luke 14. 29.

⁸² Matt. 13. 46.

⁸³ Matt. 13. 44.

⁸⁴ Luke 12. 16.

Instead of a field which needed the plough, the spade

suffices. "What shall I do?" says the ruined householder, CHAP. XVIII.
"I cannot dig, I am ashamed to beg."⁸⁵ In the train of 85 Luke 16. 3.
scarcity of money comes the usurer, who alone is prosperous,⁸⁶ speedily increasing his capital five or even ten 86 Luke 19. 23.
times. This state of things is constantly assumed in the Gospels, and it grew worse and worse through the whole life of our Lord, culminating in a great financial crisis, throughout the empire, a few years after the Crucifixion.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ROMAN PROCURATORS.

CHAP. XIX.

THE material ruin which Rome had brought on the land, naturally increased the prevailing excitement, and the bands of fierce religionists which lurked in the hill-country constantly received additions from those whom the evil times had beggared.¹ The popular mind was kept in permanent agitation by some tale of insult to the Law on the part of the Romans. At one time they had "defiled the feasts," at another, a military standard had been shown in Jerusalem, or a heathen emblem brought into the Temple, or a votive tablet set up on Mount Zion, or a heathen sculpture had been discovered on some new public building. Real or imagined offences were never wanting. Now, it was heard, with horror, that a procurator had plundered the Temple treasures; then, a Roman soldier had torn a copy of the Law; or a heathen had passed into the forbidden court of the Temple, or some Gentile child, in his boyish sport,² had mocked some Jew. The most trifling rumours or incidents became grave from the passion they excited, and the hundreds or thousands of lives lost in the tumults they kindled. The heart of the whole country glowed at white heat, and ominous flashes continually warned Cæsar of the catastrophe approaching.

The excitement caused by the inquisitorial census of persons and property by Quirinius was intense. Herod and Archelaus had been careful to avoid direct similarity to the Temple tenth in their taxation, and possibly it was because the revenue had to be raised in any circuitous way, to prevent collision with the popular prejudices, that the imposts these princes had levied—tolls, house tax, excise,

¹ Bell. Jud. ii. 12.
5; 14. 1; iv.
8. 2.

² Bell. Jud. ii. 9.
4; 14. 6; 12. 2.
Acts 21. 28.
Bell. Jud. ii. 12.
1; 14. 5.

market tax, head tax, salt tax, crown tax, and custom dues, —had pressed on the nation so heavily. Augustus had waived the introduction of the Roman modes of taxation, from similar motives of prudence,³ and Herod, while he had taxed produce, took care to avoid requiring a tenth.⁴ But Quirinius had no such scruples, and at once kindled the fiercest resistance. The whole nation saw in the tithe on grain, and the two tenths on wine and fruit, an encroachment on the rights of Jehovah. A leading Rabbi—Zadok—headed the opposition in his class, and joined Judas, the Galilaean, who again appeared in the field, calling on all to take arms. The Rabbis inveighed against the proposals of Quirinius, but he cared nothing for their theology, and as he had broken the mountaineers of Cilicia by starvation, he felt no doubt that he could keep order, in spite of resistance, among the Jews. Ambition, love of money, and military rule, were the only thought of the rough, coarse soldier.

At first it seemed as if he would succeed. The high priest, Joazer, a Herodian of the house of Boëthos, openly took his side, and persuaded the people in Jerusalem to let the census and registration go on quietly. The Rabbis temporized, and seemed inclined to take the safer side. But this did not content the whole body. The more determined were weary of the endless discussions and trifling of the Synagogue, and broke away from their brethren, to found a new school—that of the “Zealots”—which henceforth carried in its hand the fate of the nation. The fanatics of Judaism—their one sleepless thought was war with Rome.^a They were the counterparts and representatives of the stern puritans of the Maccabæan times, and took their name, as well as their inspiration, from the words of the dying Mattathias—“Be ZEALOTS, my sons, for the Law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers.”⁵ The exhortations of their brethren, to submit quietly to the government, were answered in the words of the early patriots—“Whoever takes on him the yoke of the Law is no longer under that of man, but he who casts off the Law, has man’s yoke laid on him.”⁶ Thus, the foreboding that this numbering of the people, like that of David, would bring death in its

CHAP. XIX.

Ant. xiv. 10.
1—6.

Ant. xv. 9. 1

1 Macc. 2. 50.

2 Macc. 4. 2.

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train, was not unaccomplished. The fierce ruin broke forth from Gamala, on the Sea of Gennesareth, a district in which the census was not to be taken; and the destroying angel who passed through the land was Judas the Galilaean.

Judas is one of those ideal forms which have an abiding influence on the imagination: an enthusiast, raised above all calculations of prudence or possibility, but so grand in his enthusiasm, that, while he failed utterly in his immediate aim, he more than triumphed in the imperishable influence of his example. He was the first of the stern Irreconcilables of his nation, and from his initiative sprang the fierce and pitiless fanatics whose violence led, two generations later, to the frightful excesses of the great revolt, and to the ruin of the nation. The cry which drew round him the youth of the country, had been, in part, the inarticulate longing of countless noble souls, though mingled with a spirit of proscription they would have repudiated. "No Lord but Jehovah: no tax but to the Temple: no friend but a Zealot." It was idolatry to pay homage to Cæsar; idolatry to pay dues to a heathen government; it was defilement of what was pure, to give tithes or custom from it to the Unclean, and he who demanded them was the enemy of God, and of Israel, worthy of double punishment if a Jew. War with Rome, and with their brethren willing to live at peace with it,⁷ were alike proclaimed. Fire and sword wasted the land. The country house of the rich Sadducee, and the ricks and barns of the well-to-do friend of Rome, everywhere went up in flames, at the first conflict of the rude but fiercely brave patriots with the Roman soldiery. Like our own Fifth Monarchy men, they believed that the kingdom of God could be set up only by the sword. In the stern spirit of the Old Testament, they thought only of hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord, believing themselves God's instruments to rid the land of His enemies, who were, in effect, in their view, all but themselves and their supporters. He was a jealous God, who would suffer no other lords in His inheritance, and His will was a war of extermination on the heathen invaders, like that of Joshua against the Canaanites.

⁷ Ant. xx. 8. 10.

From the Nazareth hills, Jêsus, as a growing boy, saw, daily, the smoke of burning villages, and in Joseph's cottage, as in all others in the land, every heart beat thick, for long weeks, at the hourly news of some fresh story of blood. But the insurrection was, ere long, suppressed: Judas dying in the struggle. The terrible story, however, was never forgotten. Many years after, Gamaliel could remind the authorities⁸ how "the Galilæan drew away much people after him, but perished, and as many as obeyed him were dispersed." Even the Romans learned a lesson, and never attempted another census; the proconsul, Cestius Gallus, even so late as the reign of Nero, being content to reckon in the Jewish manner, by the number of Passover lambs.⁹

To the people at large, Judas and his sons were a new race of Maccabæan heroes, for the sons—Jacobus, Simon, Menahem, and Eleazar, in after years, carried out the work of their father with a splendid devotion. None of the four died in bed. They either fell in battle against Rome, or by their own hand, to prevent their being taken alive. When all Judea had been lost but the rock of Masada, it was a grandson of Judas who was in command of that last citidel of his race, and boasted to his comrades that as his family were the first who rose against the heathen, so they were the last who continued to fight against them, and it was he, who, when all hope had perished, slew, by their own consent, the 900 men who were shut up with him, and set the fortress in flames, that Rome might find nothing over which to triumph but ashes and corpses. The grand self-immolation of Judas became a deathless example, and kept Rome uneasy for seventy years, nor is Josephus wrong in saying that though the insurrection lasted hardly two months, it kindled a spirit which reduced Palestine to a desert, destroyed the Temple, and scattered Israel over the earth. Galilee and Judea never showed their lofty idealism more strikingly than in producing such leaders, or in continuing to believe in them after their disastrous end.

Meanwhile Quirinius had gained his point in a measure, and the poll and ground taxes were imposed on the Roman

⁸ Acts 5. 37.⁹ Bell. Jud. vi. 9. 3.

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¹⁰ A.D. 7.

plan, by the close of the year.¹⁰ But nothing was done to lighten the previous burdens, of which the house and market taxes, especially, were hateful to the people. The fiscal result, however, was far below Roman expectations. Although Herod had been regarded as the richest king of the East, the estimate forwarded by Quirinius to the Emperor, of the value of all the taxes, amounted to less than a twelfth part of the sum derived from Egypt. The computation was sent for each tax, that Augustus might sanction it, and let it be put up for sale to the publicani.

The opposition to this heathen taxation, though thus outwardly suppressed, was only nursed the more closely in the hearts of all. The Rabbis still taught that the land was defiled by dues paid to a heathen emperor, and attributed every real or fancied natural calamity to the displeasure of the Almighty for their being so. "Since the purity of the land was destroyed," said they, "even the flavour and smell of the fruit are gone." The Roman tithe soon told fatally on that which had hitherto been paid to the Temple, and this the Rabbis especially resented. "Since the tithes are no longer regularly paid," said they, "the yield of the fields has grown less."¹¹ Hence the question constantly passed from mouth to mouth, not whether the Roman tax should be paid, but whether it was lawful at all to pay it.¹²

¹¹ Mischna Sota,
ix. 12, 13.

¹² Matt. 22, 17.
Luke 20, 22.

The hatred and contempt for those of their countrymen who, under such circumstances, took service under the associations of publicani farming the odious taxes, as collectors, may be imagined. The bitter relentless contempt and loathing towards them knew no bounds. As the Greeks spoke of "tax-gatherers and sycophants," the Jews had always ready a similarly odious association of terms, such as "tax-gatherers and sinners," "tax-gatherers and heathen," "tax-gatherers and prostitutes," "tax-gatherers, murderers, and highway robbers,"¹³ in speaking of them. Driven from society, the local publicans became more and more the Pariahs of the Jewish world. The Pharisee stepped aside with pious horror, to avoid breathing the air poisoned with the breath of the lost son of the House of

¹³ Matt. 9, 10;
11, 19; 18, 17;
21, 31.
Mischna Nedar
iii. 4.

Israel, who had sold himself to a calling so infamous. The testimony of a publican was not taken in a Jewish court. It was forbidden to sit at table with him, or to eat his bread. The gains of the class were the ideal of uncleanness, and were especially shunned, every piece of their money serving to mark a religious offence. To change coin for them, or to accept alms from them, defiled a whole household, and demanded special purifications.¹⁴ Only the dregs of the people would connect themselves with a calling so hated. Cast out by the community, they too often justified the bad repute of their order, and lived in reckless dissipation and profligacy.¹⁵ To revenge themselves for the hatred shown them, their only thought, not seldom, was to make as much as they could from their office. The most shameless imposition at the "receipts of custom," and the most hardened recklessness in the collection of excessive or fraudulent charges, became a daily occurrence. They repaid the war against themselves by a war against the community.¹⁶

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¹⁴ Mishna baba Kama, x. 1.

¹⁵ Matt. 11. 19. 21. 31.

¹⁶ Luke 9. 12; 12. 58; 19. 8.

Amidst such a state of feeling between rulers and ruled, Jesus grew up to manhood and spent His life. The sleepy East could not endure the systematic and restless ways of the West, now forced upon it, and, still less, the regular visit of the tax-gatherer, especially under such a vicious system as that of Rome. War, as far as possible, became the chronic state of things, if not in the open field, yet in never-ending, ever-beginning resistance, all over the land. Even the mild school of Hillel justified the use of any means of escape from the robbery of the "publicans," and the Rabbis at large made the subject a standing topic in their schools. Controversies sprang up in connection with it. The Irreconcilables, as I may call the Zealots, could not brook even the slight concessions to Rome of the hitherto popular Pharisees. It was made a matter of reproach to them that they put the name of the Emperor along with that of Moses in letters of divorce, and the dispute was ended only by Hillel's party reminding its opponents that this was already sanctioned by Scripture itself, which allowed the name of Pharoah to stand beside that of Jehovah.¹⁷

¹⁷ Exod. 8. 1.

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- Before Quirinius left Jerusalem,^{18 b} he made one concession to the people, by sacrificing to their hatred the instrument of his tyranny—the High Priest, Joazar. After helping to get the census carried out, and thus losing all popular respect, the time-serving priest was stripped of his dignity by the master who had despised even while he made use of him, and it was given to Annas, the son of Seth,¹⁹ in whose family it was held, at intervals, for over fifty years. But though his house was thus permanently ennobled, its taking office under the Romans, no less than its belonging to the party of the Sadducees, made it, henceforth, of no weight in the destiny of the nation. The Zealots were steadily rising to be a great party in the land. The noblest spirits flocked to their banner most readily, as we may judge when we remember that one of the Apostles had been a Zealot, and that the young Saul also joined them.²⁰ The young men, especially, swelled their numbers. “Our youth,” laments Josephus, “brought the State to ruin, by their fanatical devotion to the ferocious creed this party adopted.”²¹ Its principles were, indeed, destructive of all government, as things were. “He who was under the Law,” it was held, “was free from all other authority.” Its members were pledged to honour Jehovah alone as King of Israel, and neither to shrink from death for themselves nor from the murder of their nearest kin, if it promised to serve the cause of liberty, as they understood it.²² The family of the fallen Judas remained at the head of these fierce patriots. Two of his sons were afterwards crucified for raising an insurrection,²³ and while his third son, Menahem, by the taking of Masada, was the first to begin the final war against Florus,²⁴ his grandson, Eleazar, was the last who fought against the Romans, burying himself, as has been told, and the wreck of the Zealots, beneath the ruins of the fortress, rather than surrender.²⁵ It is noteworthy, moreover, that from the date of the census,²⁶ no part of Palestine was less safe than that which was directly under Roman authority. If the traveller between Jericho and Jerusalem fell among robbers,²⁷ what must have been the danger in the lonely and desolate valleys beyond Hebron?

¹⁸ A.D. 6. Age of Jesus about 10. Assuming B.C. 4 as His birth-year.

¹⁹ A.D. 6—15. Age of Jesus from about 10 to 19.

²⁰ Matt. 10. 4. Mark 9. 18. Acts 22. 3.

²¹ Ant. xviii. 1. 1.

²² Ant. xviii. 1. 6.

²³ Ant. xx. 5. 2.

²⁴ Bell. Jud. ii. 17. 8.

²⁵ Bell. Jud. vii. 8. 1; ii. 17. 9.

²⁶ A.D. 7. Age of Jesus about 11.

²⁷ Luke 10. 30. Bell. Jud. iv. 8. 2. Ant. xx. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4; 6. 1, &c.

The first seven years after the annexation were, notwithstanding, comparatively happy times for the Jews.²⁸ Augustus made it his maxim to spare rather than destroy the provinces, so far as he could safely do so; and he furthered this policy by frequent change of the procurators. As to the burning religious questions raised by the decay of heathenism, and the spread of Eastern religions in the empire, he took, by advice of Mæcenas, a middle course. He supported the Roman religion, but, at the same time, protected the special faith of each country. Hence, although he personally despised foreign religions, and offered no sacrifices when in Jerusalem,²⁹ even while asking with interest about the Jewish God, and though he praised his grandson, the young Caius Cæsar, for passing through Jerusalem³⁰ like a Roman, without making an offering, yet, like Cæsar and Cicero, elsewhere, he would by no means do any violence to the Jewish religion. On the contrary, he yielded to the wish of Herod by taking the Jews of the Dispersion under his protection, as Cæsar had done, and sanctioned the remittance of the Temple money from all parts. Besides this, he acted with the greatest consideration towards the Jews in Rome; for since the campaigns of Pompey and Gabinius,³¹ they had been so numerous in the capital that they formed a great "quarter" on the farther side of the river. Treating them as clients of Cæsar, he acted with marked thoughtfulness in all connected with their religion, their morals, or their prosperity. He formally sanctioned the Jewish Council in Alexandria, and, after the annexation of Judea, he ordered a permanent daily sacrifice of an ox and two lambs to be offered at his expense, and, in conjunction with the Empress Livia, and other members of his house, sent gifts of precious jars and vessels for the use of the drink-offering.

This policy was not without its effect. Augustus got the fame in Rome of being the patron of the Jews, and in the provinces, even among the Jews themselves, of being the magnanimous protector of their religion. His tolerance, moreover, served an end which he did not contemplate. It secured the slow but certain conquest of the West, first by

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²⁸ Mommsen's
Monum.
Ancyrr. iii. 14.

²⁹ B.C. 20.

³⁰ About the
date of the
birth of Christ.

³¹ B.C. 63, and
B.C. 57—55.

CHAP. XIX. Judaism, the pioneer of a new and higher faith, and then by Christianity—the faith for which it had prepared the way.

But, in spite of every desire on the part of Augustus to humour their peculiarities, the Jews were still in a state of chronic excitement. The Samaritans seeing their opportunity, raised their heads more boldly. They were no longer dependent on Jerusalem, since the banishment of Archelaus. Their elders rejoiced in political consequence long denied them. But the light and giddy people under them could not make a right use of liberty. Under Coponius, the first procurator after Archelaus was deposed,³² it was discovered that they had defiled the Temple at Jerusalem on the night before the Passover. The Temple doors, as was the custom, had been opened at midnight, before the feast, and some Samaritans, knowing this, and having previously smuggled themselves into Jerusalem, had crept up to the Temple in the darkness, and strewed human bones in the courts, so that the high priest Hannas had to turn away from the polluted sanctuary the worshippers who in the morning thronged the gates. Nothing remained for the vast multitudes but to go back embittered to their homes, leaving the Temple to be purified, but nothing is said of any punishment of the Samaritans. The procurator seems only to have told the Jews that they

³² A.D. 6—9. Age of Jesus about 10 to 13.

³³ Ant. xviii. 2.2. should have kept a better watch.³³

Little is known of the two procurators—Marcus Ambivius and Annus Rufus,³⁴ who followed Coponius—except that Judea, exhausted by its burdens, implored their diminution, and that, under the first, Salome,³⁵ Herod's sister, died, while Augustus, himself, died³⁶ under the second.

The new emperor, Tiberius, on his accession, sent a fresh procurator, Valerius Gratus, whom, with his dislike of change, he retained in office for eleven years.³⁷ Under him things went from bad to worse. During his period of office he changed the high priests five times, deposing Hannas, and giving the office alternately to one of his family, and to a rival house of the small band of Sadducean Temple nobility. Large sums no doubt filled his coffers at each transaction, but such a degradation of their highest dignitaries must

³⁴ Marcus Ambivius A.D. 9—12. Annus Rufus A.D. 12—15. Tac. Annal. ii. 42. Age of Jesus about 13 to 19.

³⁵ Between A.D. 10 and 13.

³⁶ A.D. 14. Age of Jesus about 13.

³⁷ A.D. 15—26. Age of Jesus about 19 to 30.

have exasperated the Jews to the quick. After the crafty Hannas came, as his successor, one Ismael, but his reign was only one year long. Hannas' son, Eleazer, next won the pontifical mitre for a year, then came Simon, but he, too, had to make way for a successor, Caiaphas, son-in-law of Hannas, afterwards the judge of Jesus. Simon is famous in Rabbinical annals for a misfortune that befell him in the night, before the Day of Atonement. To while away the long hours, during which he was not permitted to sleep, he amused himself by conversation with an Arab sheikh, but, to his dismay, the heathen, in his hasty utterance, let a speck of spittle fall on the priestly robe, and thus made its wearer unclean, so that his brother had to take his place in the rites of the approaching day.³⁸ Changes so violent and corrupt had at last degraded the high priesthood so much, in the eyes of all, that the deposed Hannas, rather than his successors, was still regarded as the true high priest.

³⁸ Derenbourg, 197.

Meanwhile, the load of the public taxes became so unendurable that a deputation was sent to Rome in the year 17,³⁹ to entreat some alleviation of the misery. Syria as a whole, indeed, seemed on the brink of an insurrection, from the oppression of the publicans. Germanicus, the Emperor's nephew, one of the noblest men of his day, was sent to the East to quiet the troubles; but, unfortunately, with him was sent, as Governor-General of Syria, Cneius Piso, his deadly enemy, who soon involved him in personal disputes that well-nigh excited a war between them.⁴⁰ Tiberius, able and cautious, and not yet fallen to the hatefulness of his later years, saw no remedy for the state of things but in prolonging the reign of the procurators. "Every office," he was wont to say, "induces greed, and if the holder enjoy it only for a short time, without knowing at what moment he may have to surrender it, he will naturally plunder his subjects to the utmost, while he can. If, on the other hand, he hold it for a lengthened term, he will grow weary of oppression, and become moderate as soon as he has extorted for himself what he thinks enough." "On one of my campaigns," he would add, by way of illustration, "I came upon a wounded soldier, lying on the road, with swarms of

³⁹ Age of Jesus about 21.

⁴⁰ Tac. Annal. ii. 42, 43;

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flies in his bleeding flesh. A comrade, pitying him, was about to drive them off, thinking him too weak to do it himself. But the wounded man begged him rather to let them alone, 'for,' said he, 'if you drive these flies away you will do me harm instead of good. They are already full, and do not bite me as they did, but if you frighten them off, hungry ones will come in their stead, and suck the last drop

- of blood from me.'"⁴¹ The heartless cynic in the purple had no pity, and was far enough from a thought of playing the Good Samaritan, by binding up the wounds of any of the races under him, far less those of the hated Jews. In Rome itself he treated them with the bitterest harshness, and his example reacted on those in Palestine. In the year 19 he drove the Jews out of Rome.⁴² "Four thousand freedmen infected with this superstition" (Judaism), says Tacitus, "being able to carry arms, were shipped off to the island of Sardinia to put down the robber hordes. If they perished from the climate it was little loss. The rest were required to leave Italy, if they did not forswear their unholy customs by a certain day."⁴³ Suetonius says that Tiberius even compelled them to burn their sacred robes and utensils,⁴⁴ but Josephus boasts that those drafted into the legions preferred dying as martyrs, to breaking the Law.⁴⁵

In Judea, these measures were attributed to the influence of the hated favourite of Tiberius, Sejanus. It was, doubtless, with no little alarm that the news came in the year 26, when the influence of Sejanus was at its height, that Valerius Gratus had at length been recalled, and Pontius Pilate appointed in his stead.⁴⁶ The client was worthy of the patron. Venal, covetous, cruel, even to delighting in blood, without principle or remorse, and yet wanting decision at critical moments, his name soon became specially infamous in Judea. He bore himself in the most offensive way towards the people of Jerusalem. The garrison of Antonia had hitherto always left the ornaments of their military standards at the head-quarters in Cæsarea, since the Jews would not suffer the Holy City to be profaned by the presence of the eagles and the busts of the emperors, of which they mainly consisted. But Pilate, apparently on

⁴² Age of Jesus about 23.

⁴³ Tac. Annal. ii. 85.

⁴⁴ Tib. 36.

⁴⁵ Ant. xviii. 3. 5.

⁴⁶ Age of Jesus about 30.

the first change of the garrison, ordered the new regiments to enter the city by night with the offensive emblems on their standards, and Jerusalem awoke to see idolatrous symbols planted within sight of the Temple. Universal excitement spread through the city, and the Rabbis and people took mutual counsel how the outrage could be removed. The country soon began to pour in its multitudes. The violent party counselled force, but the more sensible prevailed as yet, and a multitude of the citizens hurried off to Pilate at Cæsarea, to entreat him to take away the cause of such bitter offence. But Pilate would not listen, and treated the request as an affront to the Emperor. Still the crowds continued their appeal. For five days and five nights they beset the palace of Herod in which Pilate resided, raising continually the same cry, that the standards might be removed. Determined to end the matter, he at last summoned them to meet him on the seventh day in the circus. Meanwhile, he had filled the spaces round the arena with soldiers, and when the Jews began to raise their mutinous cries again, on his refusing to yield, he ordered the troops to enter with drawn swords. But he had miscounted their fanatical earnestness. Baring their throats, and kneeling as if to meet the sword, the multitude cried out that they would rather part with their life than their law. Pilate, dreading the anger of the Emperor if he commanded a wholesale massacre, had to yield, and the standards were withdrawn from Jerusalem.

The power of Pilate over the people was henceforth broken. They had conquered his will by stronger wills of their own. From this time they knew how to extort concessions from him. Persistent clamour, that would take no refusal, was, henceforward, their most trusted reliance, as we see only too strikingly in the last hours of Jesus. But Pilate could not learn by any lesson, however severe. Furious at his defeat, he resolved to hide it by a fresh innovation, which he fancied he could carry out. The Rabbis had contended that their law did not allow the setting up of images, but there seemed nothing to prevent votive tablets being set up in Jerusalem, like those

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dedicated to the Emperor by other officials. He, therefore, hung up golden shields of this kind on the palace on Mount Zion, where he lived, inscribed simply with his own name and that of Tiberius. A terrible commotion was the result. At the next feast, the Jews, with the four sons of Herod, Philip, Antipas, Herod Boëthos, and Phasael, at their head, declared that such symbols, which were equivalent to altars, were less endurable than the emblems on the standards. "Cease," cried they, as he fiercely dismissed them, "to stir up war and commotion. The Emperor is not honoured by insults offered to the Law. It is the will of Tiberius that our laws shall be respected, but if not, show us the edict, or new rescript, which says otherwise, that we may send an embassy respecting it to him."⁴⁷ Pilate trembled when he heard of a

⁴⁷ Philo. Leg. ad
Caium.
1003—1035.
Ant. xviii. 5. 1;
xvii. 1. 9.

complaint to Tiberius, for he was afraid, as Philo tells us, that a deputation to Rome would reveal all his crimes, "the venality of his sentences, his rapacity, his having ruined whole families, and all the shameless deeds he had done, the numerous executions he had ordered, of persons who had not been condemned by any tribunal, and the excess of cruelties of every kind committed by him." He had gone too far, however, to retreat, and had to leave matters to the decision of the Emperor, but as Herod Antipas had the ear of Tiberius, and willingly sided with the people, the procurator was defeated once more. The command of Tiberius was directly against him, and he was ordered to take away the shields, and hang them up in the temple of Augustus, at Cæsarea. The Jews consoled themselves that the Emperor was gravely offended at Pilate's folly. Henceforth, the clamour of the multitude nearly always succeeded.

Before long he found himself involved in another conflict with the people, in carrying out a work which was unquestionably of the highest value to Jerusalem, and for which he had already obtained the sanction of the Jewish authorities. The conduit which supplied the city and the Temple with water, had grown ruinous from age, and Pilate undertook to build a grand new aqueduct, twenty-five miles in length,⁴⁸ which should bring a full and pure supply for the Temple and the citizens. As the Temple was to be

⁴⁸ Ant. xviii. 3. 2.
Bell. Jud. ii.
9. 4.

benefited, he naturally thought that he might defray the expense from its treasury, forgetting that the money was Corban, or consecrated to God. Hardly had the news of his intention spread, than, at the next feast, a frantic cry rose that the Temple was to be plundered, and thousands streamed to the palace, to repeat the tactics of Cæsarea. But the procurator had this time prepared himself beforehand. He had scattered numbers of his soldiers, dressed as Jews, among the crowds, and no sooner had the tumultuous cries begun, than these assailed those round them with clubs, and speedily drove them off in wild terror, leaving many of their number, severely wounded, behind. Perhaps it was about this time, when the works had been pushed almost to the Pool of Siloam, that the tower, there, fell and killed eighteen men; a calamity attributed by the Rabbis to the wrath of God at the secularization of the Temple treasures.⁴⁹ * Luke 13. 1. Pilate's aqueduct suffered no more hindrance in its completion.

CHAPTER XX.

HEROD ANTIPAS AND CHRIST'S OWN COUNTRY.

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¹ B.C. 4 to A.D. 39.
Antipas was
born,
apparently,
about the
year B.C. 20.

ON the death of his father Herod, Galilee fell to the lot of Herod Antipas, who ruled over it during nearly all the lifetime of our Lord, and for six years after His death.¹ His mother was the Samaritan, Malthace, so that he was a full brother of Archelaus, who was about a year older. He had been sent to Rome, for his education, with Archelaus and his half-brother Philip, when a boy of about thirteen, and the three had been entrusted there to the care of a private guardian. The evil genius of their house, their half-brother Antipater, who was much their senior, was already living in the imperial city. He had always hated Archelaus and Philip, as rivals in his hopes of the throne, and now took every opportunity to slander them to their father, so that, perhaps in consequence of this, they were recalled to Judea in the year B.C. 5. But this only made Antipater the more deadly in his hatred, and he succeeded in so poisoning their father's mind against them, that they almost dreaded sharing the fate of the two sons of Mariamne, who had fallen through the same fatal influence. Antipas, who had escaped Antipater's wiles, seemed likely to profit most by the misfortune, for, in his second will, made after the execution of Antipater, Herod, unable to clear his mind of the prejudice against them, had passed over both Archelaus and Philip, and named Antipas, the youngest, as his successor. Kinder thoughts, however, returned before he actually died, and a third will was made, in which Archelaus was named king, and Antipas and Philip tetrarchs, their father's dominions being divided between them.

Antipas had received his name in honour of his paternal

great-grandfather, as Antipater, his half-brother, had received that of his grandfather. In Rome, by a strange fortune, he had for a companion and fellow-scholar, one whose after-life was very different from his own—a lad named Menahem,² who afterwards became a Christian teacher in Antioch. Antipas staid at school, in Rome, after Archelaus and Philip had been recalled to Judea, his quiet, peace-loving disposition having protected him, in some measure, from the slanders of Antipater, and from the distrust of his father. He was, however, by no means wanting in ability, else so shrewd a man as Herod would never have thought of making him his sole successor; nor could he, otherwise, have been supported, as he was, before Augustus, by Salome and the family, and by the leading men of Herod's government, in his suit for the crown, in preference to Archelaus. That prince, hated by nearly every one, found himself vigorously opposed by Antipas, and gained his cause only with mortifying abasements. Salome and Herod's counsellors may have put Antipas forward to serve their own ends, but he had, himself, shown in the management of his claim, that, if quiet, he was none the less ambitious in a peaceful way.

When he entered on his government, in the year B.C. 4, he was about seventeen years old.³ His provinces were wide apart, for Galilee was in the north-west, and Perea in the south-east of the country, the territory of the free towns, known as Decapolis, separating them completely.⁴ They were both, however, so rich, especially Galilee, that they ranked as second in the paternal inheritance.

Under the wise guidance of his father's counsellors, Irenæus and Ptolemy, the care of Antipas was first turned to the repair of his kingdom, which had been sadly injured by the Romans and Arabs in the wars, and to the necessary security of his throne. In the south of Galilee he rebuilt and strongly fortified the town of Sepphoris,—which lay on an isolated hill, only two hours north of Nazareth,—and made it his capital, and at once the ornament of his kingdom, and its protection against Syro-Phenician, or even Roman attack. It had been taken and burned to the ground by the son of the proconsul Varus, who had marched against it from

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² Acts 12. 1.³ Jesus was then an infant.⁴ Menke's Bibel Atlas.

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⁵ Aere.

the neighbouring garrison town, Ptolemais,⁵ in the summer of the year B.C. 4, on occasion of the insurrection of Judas, the son of that Hezekiah whom Herod had put to death when he routed his band in the caverns of the 800 feet high cliffs of Arbela, on the Sea of Gennesareth. Varus had sold the inhabitants as slaves, but Antipas brought others and re-peopled it.⁶ Jesus, in His early childhood, must have seen the town building, for it lay, full in view, at a short distance from the hill-top behind Nazareth, to which He often wandered.

⁶ Ant. xviii. 10.
9; xviii. 2. 1

Having thus secured his northern frontier, he turned to the opposite, outlying, extremity, where Perea bordered the Nabatean kingdom and was exposed to the Arabs, about half-way down the eastern edge of the Dead Sea. Among the precipitous volcanic cliffs and peaks of that region, he strengthened the fortress of Machaerus by high walls and towers, adding a residence for himself within its circuit. The defences, built at first by Alexander Jannæus, but destroyed by the Romans in the old Asmonean wars, were now made almost impregnable, and Antipas could boast of having secured his kingdom at another of its weakest points. He little thought that he himself was to earn his darkest stain by the execution of a lonely prisoner within its walls. But he did not trust to strong walls alone. He dreaded the neighbouring Arab prince Aretas as his most probable enemy, and allied himself with him by marrying his daughter. To flatter the empress-mother, Livia, whom Salome, at her death, A.D. about 10—13, had made her heir, and his neighbour, he built a town which he called Livias, on the site of the old Beth Harum, at the upper end of the Dead Sea. From Salome Livia had obtained, besides, the town of Jamnia and its district, in the Philistine plain, and Phasaelis and Archelaïs in the valley of the Jordan, close to his own borders, so that he wished to be on good terms with her.⁷ Besides, Julia was at the time in favour with the Jews, for having given golden jars and dishes, and other costly offering to the Temple.⁸

⁷ Ant. xviii. 2. 1,
2.⁸ Philo, ad
Caium.

In the first part of his reign, under Augustus, from the year A.D. 4 to 14, Antipas maintained a prudent restraint,

for he had had no success in the single attempt he ventured towards a more intimate relation with the Emperor. On the banishment of Archelaus he had sought to become his heir, and to get his father's dominions as a whole, as had been intended in the second will, and seemingly had made himself chief accuser of his fallen brother, and of his government.⁹ But the answer of Augustus was the annexation of Judea to Syria, leaving Antipas, as his one consolation, the thought that as he was now the only Herod, he might assume the name, as he seems by his coins to have done, from this date.¹⁰

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⁹ Ant. xviii. 8. 2.
Dio Cassius,
lv. 27.

¹⁰ Keim in *Bibel
Lexicon*, Art.
"Herodes
Söhne."

His relations with Tiberius were more flattering. By countless proofs of dependence and obedient fidelity, shown, doubtless, in part, as later, in reports and espionage on the proconsuls, such as the suspicious and despotic emperor loved, he succeeded at last, after a probation of a good many years, in gaining great favour with him.¹¹ To show his gratitude, Antipas, who had grown tired of Sepphoris for his capital, far off among the hills of Galilee, on the borders of his tetrarchy, and among a proud and independent people, determined to build a new one on the Sea of Gennesareth, near the hot springs of Emmaus. It was the finest part of his territory, alike for richness of soil, and beauty of landscape.¹² The city was, of course, planned in the Roman style, and as, under the former emperor, every third town was called Caesarea or Sebaste, the Greek equivalent of Augustus, the new metropolis was to be called Tiberias. The site chosen was one of the most beautiful on the lake, on a southerly bend of the shore, washed on its eastern side by the waves.¹³ Yet it was not, for the time, a fortunate one, for the reedy^a strand made it unhealthy, and, still worse, traces of an old burial-place were found as the streets were being laid out—a discovery which at once brought forward the Rabbis with entreaties that the spot might be abandoned, as thus at once unclean and unholy. But Herod paid no attention to the clamour, and, as soon as some streets were ready, filled the houses with whatever strangers were willing to take them. Erelong, however, he had to use force to get inhabitants, for no strict Jew would

¹¹ Ant. xviii. 2. 3.

¹² Ant. xviii. 2. 3.

¹³ Ant. xviii. 2. 3.
Bell. Jud. iii.
10. 1. Farrer,
Wanderungen
314.

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settle of his own accord in a place known to be polluted. He was even driven to give slaves and beggars building and garden ground, and to raise houses for them, and grant them special privileges, before he got his capital peopled. But a prejudice clung to it, which, even in after years, made all unclean for seven days after visiting it, and required rites of purification before the defilement could be removed.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ant. xviii. 2. 3.

¹⁵ John 6. 2.

Tiberias is only once mentioned in the Gospels,¹⁵ and there is no trace of Jesus having ever entered it. But, in spite of all opposition, Herod transferred his residence to it from Sepphoris, and lavishly decorated his palace, to the grief of the people, with heathen ornaments. The façade, which was adorned by sculptures of animals, was especially offensive to the Rabbis. The interior was furnished with almost imperial splendour, and it was long reported how the ceilings were gilded, and what wonderful candelabra and furniture of precious metal dazzled the eyes. When the palace and castle were stormed by the people, at the outbreak of the final war, lustres of Corinthian brass, splendid tables, and whole table-services of solid silver, were carried off as plunder.¹⁶

¹⁶ Vita, 12, 13.

¹⁷ Bell. Jud. ii. 21. 6.

¹⁸ Vita, 12, 13.

Close to this castle-palace, to the additional horror of the Jews, he built an amphitheatre, still to be traced, spacious enough for the greatest assemblies.¹⁷ The city was adorned, besides, with Grecian colonnades and marble statues,¹⁸ and, even at this day, ruins of fine buildings strew the beach—granite columns and blocks of costly marble, porphyry, and syenite, the wreck of the splendid villas of the great ones of Herod's day, when no heathen luxury had been wanting.¹⁹

¹⁹ Farrer, 316.

Still, with all this Roman magnificence, the Jews were not quite forgotten. A synagogue large enough for the greatest congregation, was built, apparently by Herod, in the spacious hall of which, two generations later, the wild revolutionary gatherings of the Galileans were held during the great war with Rome. The archives of the province were transferred, with the seat of government, to Tiberias, and a castle in whose arsenals arms were stored for 70,000 men, was built for the garrison.²⁰

²⁰ Ant. xviii. 7. 2.

For the next fifty years, Tiberias was the undisputed capital of Galilee, and, Cæsarea

excepted, the finest city of Palestine. Its building was the great theme of local curiosity and interest in the north, for the five years after Jesus had reached His majority, for it was begun between A.D. 16 and 19, and was ready for inhabitants, at latest, by the year 22, and it lay only fifteen or eighteen miles from Nazareth. Sepphoris was henceforth, till Nero's days, only the second town of the province.

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Galilee has a surpassing interest as the special scene of the ministry of Jesus, and the district in which He spent nearly all His life. It was through its cities and villages that He is recorded to have passed, once and again, teaching and preaching,²¹ and it was in Galilee that He had most popular support. To know something of a land whose air He thus breathed so long, amongst whose people He was wont to mingle, and by whose best characteristics He must have been affected, almost unconsciously, is essential to a vivid realization of His life.

²¹ Matt. 4. 23 ;
9. 35.

The province lay wholly inland, with Phenicia as its western, and partly its northern neighbour, the small state of Ulatha reaching, from where Phenicia ended, to the Sea of Merom, on the north-eastern border. The Jordan marked its eastern limit, and Decapolis, with the territory of Samaria, defined its southern border. Its whole extent was inconsiderable, for it measured little more than seven-and-twenty miles from east to west, and five-and-twenty from north to south,²² its whole area being nearly the same as that of Bedfordshire, one of the smallest of our English counties.^b Its boundaries varied, indeed, at different times, but, at the largest, it was rather like a moderate county than a province. The Talmud includes Cæsarea Philippi, twelve and a half miles north of the Sea of Merom, in it,²³ which would bring it in a line with the precipitous mountain bed of the swift Leontes, where that river turns westward, at a right angle to its former course, and rushes straight to the ocean. In Christ's day, however, Cæsarea Philippi seems to have belonged to the dominions of Philip, rather than those of Antipas, and this was the case, also, with the neighbouring district of Ulatha, though both form the natural boundary of the Galilean region.

²² Menke's Bibel
Atlas, plate 5.²³ Neubauer, La
Géographie
du Talmud,
178, 200, 242.

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Under these steep northern slopes extends a marshy plain, overgrown with tall reeds and swamp grass, and left uninhabited, from its pestilential air. South of this the waters gather to form Lake Merom, or el Huleh, overgrown with thick reeds, through which the Jordan slowly makes its way. The people of Galilee came to this district at all, only to hunt the wild boar and the buffalo, which roamed through the reed beds, in troops. It was shunned on account of the robbers and fugitives, who were wont to hide among its inaccessible morasses, and reed forests. Population recommences only when this region is passed, increasing as the point is reached where the caravan road between Damascus and Acre crosses the Jordan, near the spot now called Jacob's bridge, and stretches southward towards Tiberias.

The Sea of Tiberias, on which that city stood, was rightly called the Eye of Galilee. In the days of Christ, even more than now, all the splendour of nature in southern lands was poured on its shores. Culture, which left no spot unproductive, encircled the blue waters, even yet so enchanting a contrast to the yellow chalk hills that mostly fringe them. The western shore is still bright with many-coloured vegetation, while, on the east, the steep hills that sink to the water's edge are bare and gloomy volcanic rocks. The richest spot on the lake is the plain of Gennesareth, where, in our Lord's day, all the fruits of Palestine abounded. Even the hills were then covered with trees. Cypressess, oaks, almonds, firs, figs, cedars, citrons, olives, myrtles, palms, and balsams, are enumerated by a contemporary of Jesus²⁴ as adorning the valleys or hills. The now bare landscape was then a splendid garden.²⁵ Oleander bushes, with flowers of the loveliest colours, figs, vines, grain-fields, and soft meadows fringed the banks, and, while fruit-trees and olives covered the hills, the shores were dotted with

²⁴ Book of
Jubilees, 19.
²⁵ Bell. Jud. i.
15. 5.

²⁶ Bell. Jud. iii. waving palms.²⁶
10. 7, 8.

The lake is shaped almost like a pear, the broad end towards the north. Its greatest width is six and three-quarter miles, and its extreme length twelve and a quarter. In Christ's day, the western shore was thickly dotted with towns and villages, which the Gospels will, hereafter, bring

repeatedly before us. The eastern side has always been less populous, but even it had towns at every opening of the dark basaltic hills, the outworks of the Gaulonitish range, which press close to the water's edge.

East of the Jordan, and half-way down the eastern side of the Lake, a strip of upland plateau, about four miles in width, and thirteen long, was included in Galilee, but it was of little value. South-west of the Lake, between the northern uplands and the range of Carmel, stretched out the plain of Esdraelon, the market of Galilee. Beyond other parts of the province, this great plain was crowded with life, and covered with fruitful fields, vineyards, and orchards, in the days of our Lord. Jewish writers are never tired of praising Galilee as a whole. Its climate, they said, was a well-nigh perpetual spring, its soil the most fertile in Palestine,²⁷ its fruits renowned for their sweetness.²⁸ For sixteen miles round Sepphoris, and, therefore, round Nazareth, its near neighbour, the land, it was boasted, flowed with milk and honey.²⁹ The whole province, in fact, was, and is, even still, full of verdure, and rich in shade and pleasantness, the true country of the Song of Songs, and of the lays of the well-beloved.³⁰ It was in a region where rich woods crowned the higher hills and mountains; where the uplands, gentle slopes, and broader valleys, were rich in pastures, cultivated fields, vineyards, olive groves, and orchards, and the palm groves of whose warmer parts were praised even by foreigners,³¹ that Jesus spent His life.

The main products of this delightful province, in the days of Christ, were the fish of Gennesareth, and the wheat, wine, and olive oil, which the whole land yielded so richly. Gischala, a town in northern Galilee, owed its name to the "fat soil"³² of its district, and the plain of Esdraelon, on part of which Nazareth looked down, was famous for its heavy crops of wheat. Jesus, indeed, lived in the centre of a part famous for its grain and oil. Farmers, and grape, and olive growers formed the richer classes around Him, and He was familiar with noisy market days, when buyers came from all parts to the towns and villages, to trade for the teeming rural

²⁷ Ritter's Geog. of Palest. ii. 240. Jost, Gesch. d. Israel. i. 34.

²⁸ Neubauer, 180.

²⁹ Neubauer, 183.

³⁰ Renan's Vie de Jésus, 96. See also the testimony of Josephus, Bell. Jud. iii. 2. 3.

³¹ Tac. Hist. v. 6.

³² גִּישְׁחָלָה, Gisch Chaleh, fat soil—Buxtorf. It is equivalent etymologically to Homer's figure—The Udder of the Land.

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wealth. Magdala, on the Lake of Gennesareth, drove a flourishing trade in doves, for the sacrifices; no fewer than three hundred shops, it is said, being devoted to their sale.³³ There were indigo planters also in its neighbourhood, then, as still. Woollen clothmaking and dyeing thrived in it, for it had eighty clothmakers, and a part of the town was known as that of the dyers.³⁴ Arbela, not far off, beside the hill caves, was no less noted for its clothmaking.³⁵ Flax was grown widely, and woven by women into the finest kinds of linen.³⁶ Kefr Hananiah—the village of Hananiah—in the centre of Galilee,³⁷ was the pottery district of the province, and was famous for its earthenware, and especially for its jars for olive oil, which were necessarily in great demand in so rich an oil country.

Shut in from the sea-coast, as the Jewish territory had been in all ages, the Galilæan looked down from his hills, towards the sea, on the home of another and a very different race. The glittering white sand on the shore, and the smoking chimneys of the glass manufactories rising from many points; the dingy buildings of Tyre, a contrast to the white walls of his own mountain home, and a sign of the busy industries, the weaving, dyeing, and much else which there flourished; the ceaseless traffic, both by sea and land, to and from this great centre of commerce, reminded him that the Hebrew world ended with his hills, and that on the sea-coast plain beneath them that of the Græco-Phœnician race began. Yet, there were many cities, and market towns, and villages, in his own hills and valleys—Gischala on the northern slopes of the 4,000 feet high Djebel Djerma, and Rama on the southern; Sepphoris crowning its hill of 900 feet; the strong hill fortress of Jotapata, overlooking the plain of Battauf on the north side of the Nazareth ridge; with Cana of Galilee on its northern edge, and Rimmon on its southern. All these, or the heights under which they nestled, were every-day sights of Jesus from the round summit behind His own highland Nazareth, and they were only a few that might be named. Looking south, over the plain of Esdraelon, on its further edge lay Legio, the old Megiddo, where the good king Josiah fell in battle,³⁸ amidst such slaughter and

³³ Neubauer, 218.³⁴ Neubauer, 218.³⁵ Neubauer, 213.³⁶ Neubauer, 181.³⁷ Lightfoot, l. 127.³⁸ 2 Chron. 35. 22—23.

lamentation, that Zechariah, more than a hundred years later, could find no better picture of "the land mourning, every family apart," than the "mourning in the valley of Megiddon,"³⁹ and that even the Apocalypse places the great final conflict, in Armageddon,—the Hill of Megiddo.⁴⁰ The windings of the torrent Kishon carried with it the memories of another great historical battle, when the host of Sisera, thrown helpless by a sudden flood, perished before Barak and Deborah.⁴¹ In the east of the plain rose, on its slope, the pleasant Jezreel,⁴² once Ahab's capital, where Naboth had his vineyard, and the dogs licked the blood of the haughty Jezebel. Clustered round a spur of the hills of Gilboa, which rose 1,800 feet above the sea-level, half-way between Jezreel and Tabor, lay, on the different sides, the village of Sunem, where Elisha lived with the Shunamite widow,⁴³ and the birthplace of Abishag, the fairest maiden in the kingdom of David—Nain, where the young man was one day to rise up again, alive, from his bier—and Endor—"the fountain of the people round"—where Saul saw the shade of Samuel. Close to the hill, on its southern side, bubbling up in a hollow of the rock, was the Spring of Trembling,⁴⁴ where Gideon's test sent away all but the stout-hearted three hundred who won the great "day of Midian,"⁴⁵ the prophetic prototype of the triumph of the "Prince of Peace." On the south side of the ravine down which the spring flowed, rose the hills of Gilboa,⁴⁶ where Saul and his three sons fell in battle.⁴⁷ Where the rocky gorge, sinking steeply, opens a few miles beyond, to the east, into a pleasant mountain valley, watered by Harod, now swollen to a brook, lay the town of Bethshean or Scythopolis, to the walls of which the bodies of Saul and of his three sons, Jonathan among them, were hung up in triumph by the victorious Philistines.

The view from the Nazareth hills swept over all this landscape, but it embraced much more. Josephus says that there were two hundred and forty towns and villages in Galilee, and fifteen fortresses. Tabor, Sepphoris, and Jotapata, were among them, in Christ's own district, and Safed and Cæsarea Philippi within the sweep of His view. St.

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³⁹ Zech. 12. 11.
⁴⁰ 12.
 4227 מִגְדּוֹ
 Har Megiddo.
 Rev. 16. 16.

⁴¹ Judges 5. 15.

⁴² 429 feet above the sea-level.

⁴³ 2 Kings 4. 8.
 1 Kings 1. 3.

⁴⁴ Judges 7. 1.
 Harod, from
 777
 to tremble.
⁴⁵ Isaiah 9. 3.

⁴⁶ 1,700 feet above the sea-level.
⁴⁷ 1 Sam. 31. 8.
 12.

CHAP. XX. Mark speaks of towns, villages, and farmhouses on the Galilæan hill-sides.⁴⁸ Not a spot of ground was left idle,⁴⁹ and the minute division of the soil, from the dense population, had caused the plough often to give way to the spade.⁵⁰ Pasture land was turned into fields, as more profitable than cattle or even flocks, which were left to graze the mountains of Syria, and the barren hills of Judea.⁵¹ The rich dark soil of Esdraelon bore magnificent Indian corn and wheat, and the hill-slopes on its sides were noted for their wine, and the rich yield of their olive gardens and vineyards.⁵² The Rabbis, in their hyperbolical way, say that one waded in oil in Galilee. "It never suffers from want of people," says Josephus, "for its soil is rich, with trees of all kinds on it, and its surpassing fertility yields a splendid return to the farmer. The ground is worked with the greatest skill, and not a spot left idle. The ease with which life is supported in it, moreover, has overspread it with towns and well-peopled villages, many of them strongly fortified. The smallest has over fifteen thousand inhabitants."⁵³ The ease with which Josephus levied 100,000 Galilæan troops seems to indicate a population of, perhaps, two millions,⁵⁴ and the general prosperity is shown in the readiness with which Herod raised a Roman contribution of 100 talents in Galilee, as compared with Judea.

The pictures in the Gospels support this description. Everywhere the scene is full of life. Busy labour enlivens the vineyard, or ploughs the field, or digs the garden.⁵⁵ In the towns, building is going on vigorously: the extra millstone lies ready beside the mill: the barns are filled and new ones about to be built: vineyards stretch along the terraced hill-sides, and outside the town are seen the whitewashed stones of the cemeteries.⁵⁶ On the roads, and beside the hedges, the blind and cripple await the gifts of passers by: labourers are being hired in the market-places, and the farm servant wends homewards in the evening with his plough: the songs and dance of light-hearted youth on the village green, are heard from a distance: the children play and strive in open places of the towns: visitors knock at closed doors even late in the night: and the drunken upper servant storms at and

⁴⁸ e.g. Mark 4. 3; 1. 35, 45; 12. 9; 2. 23; 6. 6, 36, 56.

⁴⁹ Bell. Jud. III. 3. 2.

⁵⁰ Luke 16. 3.

⁵¹ Talmud; quoted by Hausrath, I. 8.

⁵² Bell. Jud. II. 21. 2.

⁵³ Bell. Jud. III. 3. 2. Vita. 45. Read 1,500 for 15,000.

⁵⁴ Bell. Jud. II. 20. 6.

⁵⁵ Matt. 20. 8. Luke 9. 62. Mark 4. 4. Matt. 21. 28.

⁵⁶ Matt. 7. 25. Luke 14. 30. Mark 9. 42. Luke 12. 17, 18. Matt. 23. 27.

maltreats the maids.⁵⁷ From morning to night the hum of many-coloured lusty life everywhere rises: the busy crowds have no time to think about higher things. One has bought a field and must go to see it, another has to prove a new yoke of oxen, and a third has some other business—a feast, a marriage, or a funeral.⁵⁸ To use our Lord's words, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married wives and were given in marriage,⁵⁹ as full of the world in its ambitions, cares, labours and pleasures, as if the little moment of their lives were to last for ever.

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⁵⁷ Luke 14. 23.
 Matt. 20. 3.
 Luke 17. 7;
 15. 25.
 Matt. 11. 16.
 Luke 13. 25.

⁵⁸ Luke 14. 18.

⁵⁹ Luke 17. 29.
 On this whole
 subject see
 Hausrath,
 i. 8. ff.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GALILÆANS AND THE BORDER LANDS.

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GALILEE got its name^a as the circle or region of the heathen nations, and hence, to the southern Jews of Isaiah's days, it was "the heathen country." It included the districts assigned to Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar. But these tribes never obtained entire possession of their territories, and contented themselves with settling among the Canaanite population, whom they, in some cases, made tributary,—the Jewish colonies remaining centres of Judaism in places which retained their old heathen names. Kedesh in Naphtali, near Lake Merom, the birthplace of Barak, with twenty small cities lying round it, was, originally, "the land of Galilee" in Joshua's time, and in the days of the kings,¹ from the population mainly belonging to the neighbouring Phenicia, but the mixed character of the people, which was a necessary consequence of Galilee being a border-land, extended the name, in the end, to the whole of the province. Even in Solomon's time the population was mixed. The hilly district, called Cabul—"dry, sandy, unfruitful"—which he gave to Hiram, king of Tyre, as a niggardly return for service rendered in the building of the Temple, contained twenty towns,² inhabited chiefly by Phenicians, but was so worthless that Hiram, in contemptuous ridicule, playing on the name of the district, called it, in Phenician, Chabalon³—"good for nothing." The separation from the House of David, and from Jerusalem, under the king of Israel,⁴ and the Assyrian captivity at a later date, further affected the northern population. To the prophet Isaiah they were the people "that walked in darkness and dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,"⁵ alike from their separa-

¹ Josh. 20. 7: 21.
32. ² Kings
15. 29.

² 1 Kings 9. 11.
13.

³ חָבֶלֶן

⁴ B.C. 975.

⁵ Isa'iah 9. 1.

tion from Jerusalem, their living among the heathen, and their national calamities, though he anticipates a bright future for them in the light of the Messiah. After the exile two great changes took place. Jewish colonists gradually spread over the land once more, and the name Galilee was extended to the whole north on this side of the Jordan, so that the territory of the tribe of Issachar, with the plain of Esdraclon; Zebulon, with the southern part of the Sea of Genesareth; and Naphtali, and Asher, were included in it. The new Jewish settlers had no longer any political jealousy of Jerusalem, and once more frequented the Temple, while the fact that they were surrounded by heathen races, made them, perhaps, more loyal to Judaism than they otherwise would have been; just as the Protestants of Ireland are more intensely Protestant because surrounded by Romanism. Still, though faithful, their land was "defiled" by heathen citizens and neighbours, and the narrow bigotry of Judea looked askance at it from this cause.⁶ Besides Jews, it had not a few Phenicians, Syrians, Arabs, and Greeks settled over it.⁷ Carmel had become almost a Syrian colony, and Kedesh retained the mixed population it had had for ages,⁸ while the eastern end of the Esdraclon valley was barred to the Jew by the heathen town of Scythopolis,^b—the ancient Betshean.⁹ Moreover, the great caravan road, from Damascus to Ptolemais, which ran over the hills from Capernaum, through the heart of Galilee, brought many heathen into the country.¹⁰ The great transport of goods employed such numbers of heathen, as camel drivers, hostlers, labourers, conductors, and the like, that the towns facing the sea were little different from those of Phenicia. Thus Zebulon is described as "a town with many very fine houses, as good as those of Tyre, or Sidon, or Berytus."¹¹ The places created or beautified by the Herods, in Roman style, could hardly have been so if the population had been strict Jews.¹² The attempt to build heathen cities like Tiberias, or the restored Sepphoris,^c would have excited an insurrection in Judea, but the less narrow people of Galilee let Antipas please his fancy; nor was there ever, apparently, such a state of feeling caused by all his Roman

⁶ Matt. 26. 73.
John 1. 47; 7.
41, 52. Acts 2.
7, 8.

⁷ Matt. 4. 15.
Jos. Vita, 12.
⁸ Bell. Jud. II.
18. 1.

⁹ Jos. Vita, 6.
Bell. Jud. III.
8. 1.

¹⁰ Matt. 4. 15;
10. 5.

¹¹ Bell. Jud. II.
18. 5.

¹² Ant. xviii. 2. 1.
Vit. 22.

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But though less bigoted than their southern brethren, the Galilæan Jews were none the less faithful to the Law. They frequented the feasts at Jerusalem in great numbers,¹³ and were true to their synagogues, and to the hopes of Israel. Pharisees, and "doctors of the Law" were settled in every town,¹⁴ and their presence implies an equally wide existence of synagogues. In the south, tradition was held in supreme honour, but in Galilee the people kept by the law.¹⁵ In Jerusalem the Rabbis introduced refinements and changes, but the Galilæans would not tolerate novelties.¹⁶ Our Lord's wide knowledge of Scripture, His reverence for the Law, and His scorn of tradition, were traits of His countrymen as a race.

Nor did their forbearance, in the presence of heathen fashions and ways of thought, affect their morals for evil, any more than their religion. In many respects these were stricter than those of Judea: much, for example, was forbidden in Galilee, in the intercourse of the sexes, which was allowed at Jerusalem.¹⁷ Their religion was freer, but it was also deeper; they had less of the form, but more of the life.

"Cowardice," says Josephus, "was never the fault of the Galilæans. They are inured to war from their infancy, nor has the country ever been wanting in great numbers of brave men." The mountain air they breathed made them patriots,¹⁸ but their patriotism was guided by zeal for their faith. While warmly loyal to Herod, in gratitude for his subduing the lawless bands who had wasted their country, after the civil wars,—and quiet and well-disposed to Antipas, during the forty-three years of his reign, they were none the

¹³ Mark 3. 22.

¹⁴ Luke 5. 17.

¹⁵ Geiger, *Urschrift* 155.

¹⁶ Neubauer, *184*, 186.

¹⁷ Lightfoot, i. 169. *Delitzsch Handwerkerleben*, 40.

¹⁸ *Bell. Jud.* iii. 3. 2.

less fixed in their abhorrence of Rome, the heathen tyrant of their race. In revolt after revolt they were the first to breast the Roman armies, and they were the last to defend the ruins of Jerusalem, stone by stone, like worthy sons of those ancestors who "jeopardised their lives unto the death in the high places of the field."¹⁹ There were families like that of the Zealot, Hezekiah, and Judas, the Galilæan, in whom the hatred of Rome was handed down from generation to generation, and which, in each generation, furnished martyrs to the national cause.²⁰ A hundred and fifty thousand of the youth of Galilee fell in the last struggle with Rome, and few narratives are more stirring than the defence of the Galilæan fortresses, one after another, in the face of all odds. Even Titus appealed to the magnificent heroism of these defenders of their freedom and their country, to rouse the ardour of his own army.²¹ Nor was their devotion to their leaders less admirable. Josephus boasts of the heartiness and trust the Galilæans reposed in him. Though their towns were destroyed in the war, and their wives and children carried off, they were more concerned for the safety of their general than for their own troubles.²²

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¹⁹ Judges 5. 18.²⁰ Ant. xx. 5. 2; xvii. 10. 5. Bell. Jud. ii. 17. 8.²¹ Bell. Jud. iii. 7. 33; iii. 10. 2.²² Vita, 8.

The Jew of the south, wrapped in self-importance, as living in or near the holy city, amidst the schools of the Rabbis, and under the shadow of the Temple, and full of religious pride in his assumed superior knowledge of the Law, and greater purity as a member of a community nearly wholly Jewish, looked down on his Galilæan brethren. The very ground he trod was more holy than the soil of Galilee, and the repugnance of the North to adopt the prescriptions of the Rabbis was, itself, a ground of estrangement and self-exaltation. He could not believe that the Messiah could come²³ from a part so inferior, for "the Law was to go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."²⁴ Jesus found willing hearers and many disciples in the cities and towns of Galilee, but He made little impression on Judea.

²³ John 1. 47.²⁴ Isaiah 2. 2.

Yet, Galilee, from the earliest times, had vindicated its claims to honour for the intellectual vigour of its people. Not only physically and morally, but even in mental freshness

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and force, it was before the narrow and morbid south, which had given itself up to the childish trifling of Rabbinism. The earliest poetry of Israel rose among the Galilæan hills, when Barak of Naphtali had triumphed over the Canaanites. The Song of Songs was composed in Galilee by a poet of nature, whose heart and eyes drank in the inspiration of the bright sky and the opening flowers, and who could tell how the fig-tree put forth its leaves, and the vine sprouted, and the pomegranate opened its blossoms.²⁵ Hosea, the prophet, belonged to Issachar; Jonah to Zebulon, Nahum came from Elkosh in Galilee, and in the Gospels a noble band of Galilæans group themselves round the central figure, Peter, the brave and tender-hearted—James and John—Andrew and Philip—and Nathanael, of Cana, not to speak of others, or of the women of Galilee, who honoured themselves by ministering to Christ of their substance.²⁶ It was from Galilee, moreover, that the family of the great Apostle of the heathen emigrated to Tarsus, in Cilicia, for they belonged to Gischala, a Galilæan town, though their stock originally was of the tribe of Benjamin.

The Talmud sketches, in a few words, the contrast between the two provinces—"The Galilæan loves honour, and the Jew money."²⁷ The Rabbis admit that the Galilæans, in their comparative poverty, were temperate, pure, and religious. Their fidelity to their faith was shown by their fond and constant visits to the Temple, in spite of the hostile Samaritan territory between, and it was through their zeal that the Passover was celebrated for eight days instead of seven. When Christ appeared, they threw the same ardour and fidelity into His service. In their midst the Saviour, persecuted elsewhere, took constant refuge. They threw open their land to Him, as a safe shelter from the rage of the Jews, almost to the last. He went forth from among them, and gathered the first-fruits of His kingdom from them, and it was to a band of Galilæans that He delivered the commission to spread the Gospel, after His death, through the world.

The district of Perea, on the east of the Jordan, was in-

²⁵ Hausrath, I. 12.²⁶ Luke 8. 3.²⁷ Quoted by Sepp, *Leben Jesu*, II. 20.

cluded, with Galilee, in the section ruled over by Herod Antipas, and was the scene, in part, of the ministry, first of John the Baptist, and then of Jesus.²⁸ It was larger than Galilee, extending, north and south, from the city of Pella, to the fortress of Machaerus—that is, from opposite Scythopolis, half-way down the Dead Sea, and, east and west, from the Jordan to Philadelphia, the ancient Rabbath Ammon. It was, thus, about seventy-five miles in length, by, perhaps, thirty in breadth, though the boundaries seem to have varied at different times.²⁹ It was much less fruitful than Galilee. “The greater part of it,” says Josephus, “is a desert, rough, and much less suitable for the finer kinds of fruits than Galilee.”³ In other parts, however, it has a moist soil, and produces all kinds of fruits, and its plains are planted with trees of all sorts, though the olive, the vine, and the palm-tree are cultivated most. It is well watered in these parts with torrents, which flow from the mountains, and are never dry, even in summer.” Towards the deserts, which hemmed it in along its eastern edge, lay the hill fortress and town Gerasa, 1,800 feet above the sea-level.³⁰ It was on the caravan road through the mountains, from Bozra, a place of considerable trade; while its magnificent ruins still show that, in Christ’s day, it was the finest city of the Decapolis. Two hundred and thirty pillars, still standing, and the wreck of its public buildings,—baths, theatres, temples, circus, and forum, and of a triumphal arch, make it easy to recall its former splendour. The line of the outer walls can be easily traced. From the triumphal arch, outside the city, a long street passes through the city gate to the forum, still skirted by fifty-seven Ionic columns. Colonnades adorned mile after mile of the streets, which crossed, at right angles, like those of an American town.

It must have been a gay, as well as a busy and splendid, scene, when Jesus passed through the country on His Perea journeys.³¹

But the tide of civilized life has ebbed, and left Gerasa without an inhabitant for many centuries.

About twenty-five miles south of Gerasa, and, like it,

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²⁸ Bell. Jud. iii. 3. 3.²⁹ Mencke’s Bibel Atlas, v.³⁰ Kiepert’s Hand Karte. Capt. Warren, Rep. Pal. Fund, No. vi. 309, 1870;³¹ Rev. A. E. Northey, Pal. Fund Reports, April, 1872, p. 69.

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³² Kiepert's
Hand Karte.³³ Capt. Warren,
Pal. Fund
Rep. vi. 309.

between twenty and thirty miles east of the Jordan,³² lay Philadelphia. It was the old capital of Ammon, and in Christ's day, the southern frontier post against the Arabs. Though two thousand five hundred feet above the sea,³³ it sheltered itself in two narrow valleys, each brightened by flowing streams; the upland "city of the waters," with hills rising on all sides round it. The main stream, faced with a long stone quay; terraces rising above it, lined with rows of pillars; the citadel, seen far and near, on a height between the two valleys, give us a glimpse of it. The old city which Joab besieged, and where Uriah fell, had given place to a Roman one. Fine temples, theatres, and public and private buildings, long ruined, were then alive with motley throngs, but the whole scene has been utterly deserted, now, for ages, and rank vegetation rises in its long silent streets, and in the courts of its temples and mansions.

²⁴ Kiepert and
Warren,
Karte and
Report.³⁵ Solomon's
Song 7. 4.

Hesbon, about fifteen miles nearly south of Ammon, on the Roman road which ran from Damascus, through Bozra and Ammon,—branching from Hesbon, west, to Jericho, and south, to Edom, was the third and last frontier town of Perea. It lay among the Pisgah mountains, three thousand feet above the level of the sea, amidst brown hills, fretted with bright green lines along the course of numerous streamlets, oozing from the limestone rocks.³⁴ Its ruins lie in great confusion, and serve only to tell of wealth and prosperity long since passed away. In the valley below, a great volume of water gushing from the rock, once filled the famous pools of Hesbon,—to the writer of the Song of Songs, like the laughing eyes of his beloved.³⁵ From Hesbon, the eye ranges over a wide table-land of undulating downs, bright with flowers, or rough with prickly shrubs, seamed with gorges sinking abruptly towards the Jordan, and noisy with foaming streams which leap from ledge to ledge in their swift descent, between banks hidden by rank vegetation.

These three towns lie on the outer edge of the lofty plateau, east of the Jordan, where the long wall of the limestone hills of Gilead and Ammon begins to sink towards

the desert.³⁶ On the western edge of the plateau itself, nearer the Jordan, and at the north of the district, lay Pella, on a low flat hill, only 250 feet above the sea-level, rich in living waters, and embosomed in other higher hills. Built as a military post, by veterans of Alexander's army, it bore the name of their own Macedonian capital. It was afterwards famous as the retreat of the Christians before the fall of Jerusalem; among others, of the relations of Christ, the last of whom died as fifteenth bishop of the local church.³⁷ The storm of the great war,³⁸ which wasted Perea on every side, passed harmlessly by Pella, leaving it and the infant Church untouched. With what fond regards must Jesus have often looked from across the Jordan, on the spot which one day was to shelter His servants.

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³⁶ Capt. Warren,
Pal. Fund
Rep. vi. 310.

³⁷ Euseb. H. E.
iii. 5.

³⁸ Revel. 12. 6, 11.

North of Pella, twelve hundred feet above the sea-level, on the edge of the deep cleft through which the Hieromax flows to the Sea of Tiberias, stood Gadara, a place famous in Christ's day for its hot sulphurous baths. It had been rebuilt by Pompey, after having lain for a time in ruins, and gloried in its streets paved with basalt, its colonnades of Corinthian pillars, and its massive buildings in Roman style, amidst which Jesus may have walked,—for it was in the neighbourhood of this town that He cured the two men possessed with devils.³⁹ Numerous tombs hewn in the hills around, still illustrate a striking feature of the Gospel narratives.

³⁹ Matt. 8. 28.
Mark 5. 1.

Gadara and Pella are both on the western side of the long range of the mountains of Gilead—the old territory of Reuben and Gad—which stretch along the eastern side of the Jordan valley, till they merge in the Pisgah range at the north of the Dead Sea. Rocky glens and valleys, whose lower slopes are often terraced for vines; rolling highlands, for the most part clothed with forests of ilex, oak, and terebinth; open plains and meadows; rushing streams, fringed with rich vegetation; still justify the choice of the two tribes. The limestone hills are identical with those of western Palestine, but the abundance of water makes the whole region much richer. Jesus must often have wandered amidst its wheat fields, olive grounds, vineyards, and fig

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and pomegranate orchards, and under its leafy forests,—for He once and again visited these districts. The road stretches north from the ford of the Jordan, near Jericho, up the green Wady Scha'ib to Ramoth Gilead, 2,700 feet above the sea, past Djebel Oscha, the hill of the prophet Hosea, 800 feet higher, to Wady Zerka, the ancient river Jabbok—thence to the heights of Kala'at er Robod, where Saladin in after days built a castle. Resting here, Christ's eye would range over Palestine far and near, from the north end of the Dead Sea, along the whole Jordan valley, the river gleaming occasionally in its windings. Part of the Sea of Galilee would be before Him to the north, and, to the west, Ebal and Gerizim, with Mount Tabor, and the ridge of Carmel stretching into the far distance, and the wide plain of Esdraelon. Farther north, He would see the hills of Safed, beyond the Sea of Galilee, and far away, in the blue haze, the snow-sprinkled peaks of Hermon. From this point His road would lie through Pella, across the Jordan, on the farther side of which the steep gorge of the Wady Farrah led up to the plain of Esdraelon and His own district.

With the mountains of Pisgah, on the east of the Dead Sea, a wild inaccessible region begins, counting among its peaks Beth Peor, from which Balaam once blessed Israel, as it lay encamped below in the open meadows opposite Jericho, where Antipas, in Christ's day, built the town of Livias, in honour of the Empress-mother. Mount Nebo, where Moses was buried in an unknown grave, and the summit from which he surveyed the land he was not to enter, are in this range, and it was in a cave in their secluded valleys that Jewish tradition believed Jeremiah to have hidden the ark, and the sacred vessels of the Temple, till the coming of the Messiah, in a secrecy known only to God and the angels.

The Jewish population in Perea was only small, the heathen element greatly prevailing. In the northern parts, the Syrian races were in the majority; in the southern, the people were largely Arab.

The cities were in most cases independent, with a district

belonging to each of them, and thus, though in the territories of Antipas, were not part of his dominions. Under the name of the Decapolis,—“the ten cities,”⁴⁰—Philadelphia, Gadara, Hippos, Damascus, Raphana, Dio, Pella, Gerasa, and Kanatha, were confederated, under direct Roman government, with Scythopolis, on the west side of the Jordan, in a league of peace and war against native robber bands and the Bedonin hordes; and this made them virtually a distinct state. Antipas, apparently, had only so much of the district as did not belong to these cities.⁴¹

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⁴⁰ δέκα (ten),
πόλεις (a city).

Above Perea, in Christ's day, the Tetrarchy of Philip reached to the slopes of Hermon on the north, and away to the desert on the east. It included the provinces of Gaulonitis, Iturea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batanea.

⁴¹ Holtzmann
in Bibel Lex.
Art. “Dekapolis.”

Gaulonitis—still known as Golân,⁴² reached from Cæsarea Philippi, or Panias, on the slopes of Mount Hermon, to the Hieromax, at the south of the Sea of Galilee, stretching back twenty to thirty miles in barren uplands of volcanic origin, to the green pastures of Batanea or Bashan, the oasis of the region, with the district of Iturea on its north—the lava plateau of Trachonitis⁴³ on its east, and the equally waste tract of Auranitis, or the Hauran,⁴⁴ on the south. Gaulonitis, which we know Jesus to have visited, looked over towards Galilee from a range of hills running parallel with the Jordan, north and south; a second and third ridge rising behind, in their highest peaks, to the height of 4,000 feet. Besides Cæsarea Philippi, at its extreme north, the province boasted the town of Bethsaida, rebuilt by Philip, and called Livias, after the daughter of Augustus. It lay in a green opening at the upper end of the Lake of Galilee. On the hills overlooking the lake, towards its southern end, lay the town of Gamala, and in the valley at the south extremity was Hippos, one of the cities of the Decapolis.

⁴² From the
ancient city of
Golân, in
Bashan, גֹּלָן
an exile (Ges.).
a district
(Fürst).

⁴³ הַרְכֵּק (oll
region), Fürst.
⁴⁴ הַרְכֵּק (the
cave region).

Iturea⁴⁵—north of Gaulonitis, on the lower slopes of Hermon—was a region of inaccessible mountain fastnesses, and intricate defiles, which favoured and helped to perpetuate the lawlessness which the first settlers may have derived from their Arab ancestor. In the south it has a

⁴⁵ יִטְרוֹ (Jetur, a
son of Ishmael).
Gen. 25. 15, 16.

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rich soil, watered by numerous streams from Hermon, but the north is a wild region of jagged rocks, heaped up in uttermost confusion, or yawning in rents and chasms. The Itureans, fonder of plunder than industry, had, till Herod tamed them, an evil name, as mere robbers, issuing from their savage retreats to prey upon the caravans passing from Damascus to the Sea. "The hills," says Strabo, "are inhabited by Itureans and Arabs, who are mere hordes of robbers; the plains by a farming population, who are constantly plundered by the hill people,"⁴⁶ and thus always need help from outside.⁴⁷ Gathering in the recesses of Lebanon and Hermon, the mountain banditti organized raids as far as Sidon and Berytus on the coast, and to the gates of Damascus on the east. Famous as archers and bold riders, they were largely enrolled in the Roman army, in which their skill became proverbial; but the legions, nevertheless, looked askance at them as the worst set in the service. Their boundaries varied, like their fortune in war, and hence are seldom described alike.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Strabo, xvi. 2. (753—756).

⁴⁷ Cic. Philipp. ii. 8, 44; xiii. 8. Lucan. Pharsal. vii. 230, 514.

⁴⁸ Kiepert's Hand Karte. Menke's Bibel Atlas, v.

Trachonitis was the name given to the district east and south of Iturea, though the two seem, at times, to be interchangeable names for nearly the same region. Iturea often embraces the tract usually known as Trachonitis,⁴⁹ the "Argob," or "Stony," of the Bible, Trachonitis being apparently a mere translation of this older name. It was part of the kingdom of Og, conquered by the Israelites before they entered Canaan, and was assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It is about twenty-two miles from north to south, and fourteen from east to west, and marks the focus of ancient volcanic energy in the district. It is a vast ocean of basalt, cracked and rent into innumerable fissures in cooling, and offering in its countless chasms an almost impenetrable shelter to whole armies. "In its rough, and almost inaccessible rocks," says Strabo, "are hidden spaces from which a thousand men could assemble for a foray against the merchants of Damascus."⁵⁰ The chief town, Kanatha, on the caravan route, belonged to the Decapolis, and was protected from the robber population around by strong Roman fortifications. As a whole, it was a terribly

⁴⁹ Strabo, xvi. 2.

⁵⁰ Ant. xv. 10. 1.

wild region. "The inhabitants of the country," says Josephus,⁵¹ "live in a mad way, and pillage the district of the Damascenes, their rulers at times sharing the plunder. It is hard to restrain them, for robbery has long been their profession, and they have no other way of living, for they have neither any city of their own, nor any lands, but only some holes or dens of the earth, where they and their cattle live together. They contrive, however, to secure water, and store corn in granaries, and are able to make a great resistance by sudden sallies, for the entrances of their caves are so narrow, that only one person can enter at a time, though they are incredibly large within. The ground over their habitations is not very high, but rather a plain, while the rocks are very difficult of entrance without a guide." Herod did his utmost against them, but his success was only passing,⁵² till at last he settled several military colonies in the district, and by their incessant patrols managed to keep the robbers in check.⁵³

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Ant. xvi. 9. 1.

Ant. xvi. 9. 2;
xvii. 2. 1.Pal. Fund
Rep. Oct.
1872, 1883.

South of this fierce and lawless region lay Auranitis, now known as the Hauran, a high plateau of treeless downs, of the richest soil, stretching from Gilead to the Desert, and from the Ledja to the uplands of Moab on the south. Not a stone is to be seen, and the great caravans of well-fed camels, laden with corn and barley, constantly met with on the way to Damascus,⁵⁴ show what it must have been in the days of Christ. Even yet, however, no one can travel through it safely, unarmed, and the fellahin, except close to towns, have to plough and sow with a musket slung at their back. It is the granary of Damascus, and the ruins of numerous towns, all of basalt, even to the doors of the houses, show that the population must have been great.

Bell, Jud. ii.
18. 1-6.
Ant. xvii. 11. 4.

Batanea, the ancient Bashan, was a mountainous district of the richest type, abounding in forests of evergreen oaks, and extremely rich in its soil. The hills, which, in some cases, reach a height of 6,000 feet, and the cattle which fed in the rich meadows, are often alluded to in the Old Testament. Desolate now, it was densely peopled eighteen hundred years ago, as the ruins of towns and cities of basalt, thickly

CHAP. XXI. strewn over its surface, and still almost as perfect as when they were built, strikingly prove.

In the lifetime of Christ, a large Jewish population lived in all these districts, in the midst of much larger numbers of Syrians, Arabs, Greeks, and Pheniciâns,⁵⁵ under the rule of Philip, the son of Herod and of Cleopatra of Jerusalem. He was between Archelaus and Antipas in age, and had been educated with them in Rome, but kept entirely aloof from family intrigues, and was true-hearted enough to plead the cause of Archelaus before Augustus. The best of Herod's sons, he retained not only the good-will of his family, but was held in high esteem by the Romans, and the Jews especially honoured him as no son of a Samaritan, but sprung from a daughter of Zion. During a reign of thirty-seven years, he was no less gentle to his subjects than peaceful towards his neighbours. "He showed himself," says Josephus, "moderate and quiet in his life and government. He constantly lived in the country subject to him, and used to travel through it, continually, to administer justice; his official seat—the sella curulis—accompanying him everywhere; always ready to be set down in the market place, or the road, to hear complaints, without any one suffering from delay."⁵⁶ His court was formed by only a few friends, whom he seldom changed, and it is recorded of him that in his care for his people he levied almost fewer taxes than he needed. Modest in his ambitions, he cared more for the peaceful triumph of discovering the sources of the Jordan than for noisy fame.⁵⁷ The neighbourhood of the romantic city he built on the edge of Hermon was the scene of the Transfiguration; but he is not mentioned in the Gospels, though it is a noble tribute to him that Jesus once and again took refuge in his territories, from the craft of His own ruler, Antipas, and the hate of the Galilæan Pharisees. He married his niece Salome, daughter of Herod-Philip, his uncrowned brother, and of the too well-known Herodias. His reign continued through the whole life of our Lord, and he died childless, at last, a year or so after the Crucifixion, in Bethsaida, or Livias, on the Lake of Galilee, and was laid in a tomb which he himself had built as his final resting-place.

⁵⁵ Vita, 65.
Ant. xvii. 11.
4. Bell. Jud.
ii. 18, 1, 6.

⁵⁶ Ant. xviii. 4, 6.

⁵⁷ Ant. xvii. 10. 7.

On the southern side of the Plain of Esdraelon, the country rises again into rounded hills, which extend from the great coast plain, across the deep chasm of the Jordan, till they sink away in the east, while towards the south they end only in the wilderness of el Tih, or the Wanderings. The northern part of these hills, on the west of the Jordan, was the land of the Samaritans. Their country began at En Gannim—the fountain of gardens—at the south end of Esdraelon, and ended, in the south, at the mountain pass of Akrabbi—or, the “Scorpions,” north of Shiloh. The whole region is a network of countless valleys running in every direction, but mainly east and west.

In these valleys lived the descendants of the Assyrian tribes, whom Esarhaddon had sent to fill the room left by the ten tribes whom he had carried away, and the children of such of the ten tribes themselves as escaped deportation, or had found their way back, and of Jews who had fled thither from time to time, from any cause, from Judea. The growth of the new Jewish kingdom on the south had encroached greatly on the Samaritan territory, but it was still a desirable land, and far more fruitful than Judea itself.

The soft limestone or chalky hills of Samaria, unlike those farther south, are not without many springs. Fertile bottoms of black earth are not infrequent, and rich fields, gardens, and orchards, alternate in the valleys, while vineyards and trees of different kinds spread up the slopes, and woods of olives and walnuts crown the soft outline of many of the hills. The meadows and pasture land of Samaria were famous in Israel.

Such was the territory which lay between Christ, in Galilee, and the hills of Judea. Of the people, I shall have occasion to speak at a future time.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEFORE THE DAWN.

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NO power ever showed so great a genius for assimilating conquered nations to itself as Rome. Its tributary provinces habitually merged their national life, ere long, in that of their conqueror. Her laws, language, and religion, more or less completely took root wherever her eagles were permanently planted, and have left the records of their triumphs in the wide extent of the so-called Latin race, even at this day. But it was very different in Palestine. There, Rome met a state of things unknown elsewhere; which she neither cared, nor was able to comprehend. The Spaniard or Gaul had given no trouble after he was once subdued, but readily accepted her arts, civilisation, and laws. It was reserved for the mountaineers of Judea to refuse any peaceable relations to the mistress of the world; to treat her proudest sons with haughty contempt, and to regard their very presence in the country as a defilement.

The discipline of the centuries before the Roman conquest of Palestine by Pompey, had formed a nation every way unique. The religious institutions of its ancestors had become the object of a passionate idolatry, which claimed, and willingly received, the whole of life for its service. The tragedy of the Exile, the teaching of the leaders of the Return, and of their successors, and the fierce puritanism kindled by the Syrian persecutions, and deepened by the Maccabæan struggle, had formed a people whose existence was woven into one with their law; who would endure any torture, or let themselves be thrown to beasts in the circus, rather than alter a word which their law forbade¹—whose women would bear the agonies of martyrdom rather than eat unclean food,

¹ c. Apion l. 8;
II. 31, 32; 33, 38.

and whose men would let themselves be cut down, without an attempt at resistance, rather than touch the sword on a Sabbath.² Their whole life was a succession of rites and observances, as sacred in their eyes as the details of his caste to a Brahmin. Intercourse with other nations was possible only to the most limited extent. They shrank from all other races as from foulness or leprosy. The common Jew shunned a heathen or Samaritan; the Pharisee shrank from the common Jew; the Essene ascetic withdrew from mankind, into the desert. The dread of ceremonial defilement made solitude the only security, till the desire for it became morbid, like that of the Samaritan settlers of the islands of the Red Sea, who implored any stranger to keep at a distance.³ The very country consecrated by so many purifications was sacred, and hence there could be no greater shock to the feelings of the nation, than that any who were ceremonially unclean should pollute it by their presence. Even among themselves constant care was required to maintain or restore their purity, but the presence of heathen among them, made daily defilement almost inevitable. What, then, must have been the horror of the nation, when even the Holy of Holies, which the High Priest alone could enter, and that only once a year, after endless purifications, was polluted by Pompey, and when, as in the days of the Prophet,⁴ that Name which a Jew dared not even utter, was blasphemed every day by the heathen soldiery? The cry of the Psalmist, in times long past, was once more that of every Jew, "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance: Thy Holy Temple have they defiled."⁵

² 1 Macc. 2.
27—38.
Ant. xii. 6. 2.

³ Jost i. 74.

⁴ Isaiah 52. 5.

⁵ Ps. 79. 1.

Such a calamity could be regarded only as a judgment from Jehovah on the nation. In words which were constantly read in the synagogues, they sighed to hear that "The wrath of Jehovah was so kindled against His people, because they were defiled with their own works, that He abhorred His inheritance, and had given it into the hand of the heathen, and let them that hated them rule over Israel."⁶ The very land seemed under a curse. It appeared as if the dew of blessing no longer fell; as if the fruits had lost their fragrance and taste, and the fields refused their harvests.⁷

⁶ Ps. 106. 40, 41.

⁷ Mishna; quoted by
Gfrörer, ii. 184.

CHAP. XXII. The practical Roman could not understand such an idealistic race; with him law was no less supreme than it was with the Jew, but his law was that of the Empire, the Jew's the law of an unseen God; his had for its aim external order, and material civilization, the Jew's ignored material progress, and was at war with the first conditions of political submission. Like the Jew, the Roman started from the idea of duty, but it was the duty owed to the State: the Jew repudiated any earthly authority, and owned allegiance only to a theocracy. The Roman cared only for the present life; to the Jew the present was indifferent. The one worshipped the Visible; the other the Unseen. To the Jew, the Roman was unclean and accursed; to the Roman, the Jews were ridiculous for their religion, and hateful for their pride. Each despised the other. Pompey had begun by treating their most sacred prejudices with contempt, and his successors followed in his steps. The murderer of their royal house, and the friend of the hated Samaritans, was made King in Jerusalem, and at a later day, Roman Procurators sucked the very marrow from the land, oppressed the people to the uttermost, and paid no regard to their tenderest sensibilities. The government was as ruthless as that of England in India would be if it trampled under foot, in the pride of strength, every Hindoo prejudice it found in its way. Roman religion was faith in the magic of the Roman name, and the irresistibility of the Roman arms; a worship only of brute force, hard, unfeeling, coarse; which could not understand anything transcendental like the creed of the Jew, or the possibility of men caring for an idea, far less of their dying for it.

It was no wonder that the Rabbis saw, in such a power, the fourth beast of the Book of Daniel—"a beast diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron and his nails of brass, which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the remnant of God's people with its feet."^s "Thou madest the world for our sakes," says one of the latest Jewish seers, who himself had seen the miseries of these times; "As for the other people"—the Romans and all mankind besides—"who also come from Adam, Thou hast said they are nothing, but are like spittle, or the droppings

^s Dan. 7. 19.

from a cask. And now, O Lord, behold these heathen, who have ever been counted as nothing, have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us. But we, Thy people, whom Thou hast called Thy first born, Thy only begotten, and the object of Thy fervent love, are given into their hands. If the world now be made for our sakes, why do we not possess our inheritance over the world? How long shall this endure?"⁹ "Hear, thou, I will talk with thee," He makes¹⁰ the Messiah say to the Roman Eagle, "Art thou not the last of the four beasts which I made to reign in my world, who hast overcome all the beasts that were past, and hast power over the world with great fearfulness, and much wicked oppression? For thou hast afflicted the meek, thou hast hurt the peaceable, thou hast loved the Faithless, and hated the Faithful, and destroyed the towns of those who brought forth fruit, and the walls of those who did thee no harm. Thy wrongful dealings have gone up to the Highest, and thy pride to the Mighty one. Therefore, O eagle, thou shalt perish, with thy fearful wings, thy baleful winglets, thy ferocious heads, thy tearing claws, and all thy foul body; that the earth may be refreshed, and be delivered from thy violence, and that she may hope in the justice and mercy of Him that made her."¹⁰

⁹ 2 Esdras 6. 35, 58.¹⁰ 2 Esdras 2. 38-46.

Such concentrated hatred and bitter contemptuous scorn from a people so feeble and, in many ways, to a Roman, so ridiculous, was naturally met by equal dislike, and, if possible, greater contempt. The Jews of Rome had been originally, for the most part, slaves, and their numbers were increased yearly by the sales of the slave market. But buyers had found that Jew slaves were more trouble in a household, about their law, than they were worth, and hence they were allowed to buy their own freedom at a very low price. A vast number of Jewish freedmen had thus gradually accumulated in Rome, to the horror of the Romans at large, by whom they were reckoned one of the greatest plagues of the city. The Acts of the Apostles¹¹ show how frequent must have been the tumults they caused. Squalid, dirty, troublesome, repulsive, yet sneering at the gods and temples of their masters, and constantly aggressive in the

¹¹ 9. 29; 13. 45, 50; 14. 1; 16. 19; 17. 5; 18. 12; 21. 30.

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hope of making proselytes, they were the special objects, by turns, of the ridicule, loathing, and hatred of the haughty Romans,¹² and this hatred was intensified by the favour their religion had found with some of their own wives and daughters. The officials who went from Rome to Judea to rule the nation, carried with them, already, a scorn and abhorrence for the nation, which found its expression in a ready belief of reports so revolting and incredible as that they worshipped the head of an ass, as God, in their Temple.¹³ What treatment they might expect from Roman governors is shadowed in many utterances of different classes. Speaking of the Jews sent to the pestilent climate of Sardinia, to put down the robbers there, Tacitus adds,¹⁴ "If they perished by the climate it was no loss." Apollonius, of Tyana, is made to say to Vespasian, in Alexandria—"When one came from the scene of war and told of 30,000 Jews whom you had killed in one battle, and of 50,000 in another, I took the speaker aside, and asked him, 'What are you talking about; have you nothing more worth telling than that?'"¹⁵ Even the calm and lofty Marcus Aurelius, at a later day, is credited with an expression of the common hatred of the Jews, which, in its biting contempt, surpasses all others. "O Marcomanni! O Quadi! O Sarmatians!" cried the Emperor, when he passed from Egypt into Palestine, and found himself among the Jews, "I have found a people, at last, who are lower than you!"¹⁶

The feelings of the Jews towards the Romans had originally been those of admiration and respect, for their bravery and great deeds. Judas Maccabæus had sought their alliance, and, even so late as the reign of Johannes Hyrcanus,¹⁷ the nation retained kindly feelings towards them.

It was the fault of Pompey that so great and sudden a revulsion took place. The treachery by which he got possession of the country and the capital; the insolent contempt with which he defiled the Holy of Holies, and the vanity which led him to carry off the royal family, who had put themselves confidently under his protection, to grace his triumph, filled the race with an abiding hatred of the very name of Rome. A writer of the times has left us the

¹² See page 66.¹³ Tacit. Hist. 54.¹⁴ Annal. ii. 85.¹⁵ Philost. Ap. v. 83.¹⁶ Amm. Marcell. 23. 2.¹⁷ B. C. 135—106.

impressions made by such acts :—"My ear heard the sound of war, the clang of the trumpet which called to murder and ruin ! The noise of a great army, as of a mighty rushing wind, like a great pillar of fire, rolling hitherward over the plains ! Jehovah brings up hither a mighty warrior from the ends of the earth. He has determined war against Jerusalem and against His land ! The princes of the land went out to him with joy, and said, 'Thou art welcome, come in peace.' They have made smooth the rough ways before the march of the stranger ; they opened the gates of Jerusalem. They crowned the walls with garlands. He entered, as a father enters the house of his sons, in peace. He walked abroad in perfect security. Then he took possession of the towers and the walls of Jerusalem, for God had led him in safety, through her folly. He destroyed her princes, and every one wise in counsel, and poured out the blood of Jerusalem like unclean water. He led her sons and daughters into captivity.¹⁸ The strange people have gone up to the altar, and, in their pride, have not taken off their shoes in the holy places."¹⁹

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¹⁸ Ps. Sal. s. 1—21.
Fritzsche, Lib.
Apoc. Vet.
Test.

¹⁹ Ps. Sal. 2. 2.

"In his haughty pride," cries the singer in his second psalm, which throws light on the corruption of Israel in the half century before Christ, and on Jewish thought at large, "the sinner has broken down the strong walls with the ram, and Thou hast not hindered."^{20a} Heathen aliens have gone up into Thy holy place ; they have walked up and down in it, with their shoes, in contempt.^{21b} Because the sons of Jerusalem have defiled the holy things of the Lord, and have profaned the gifts consecrated to God, by their transgressions of the Law. For this, He has said, 'Cast forth these things from me, I have no pleasure in them.' The beauty of holiness have they made vile ; it has been profaned before God for ever !

²⁰ Psalmi Salomonis, 2. 2—5.

²¹ 4 Esdras 2. 1.

"Your sons and your daughters are sold into woeful slavery ;²² they are branded, as slaves, on their necks,^c in the sight of the heathen. For your sins hath He done this ! Therefore gave He them up into the hands of those that were stronger than they, for He turned away His face from pitying them,—youth, and old man, and child together,

²² Bell. Jnd. i. 7.
6. Ant. xiv.
6. 4. Ps. Sal.
2. 6—35.

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“God has made the sons of Jerusalem a derision. Every one gave himself up to the sin of Sodom.²³ They flaunted their wickedness before the sun. They committed their evil deeds before it. They made a show of their guilt. Even the daughters of Jerusalem are profane, according to Thy judgment, for they have defiled themselves shamelessly with the heathen. For all these things my heart mourns.

“I will justify Thee, O God, in uprightness of heart, for in Thy judgments, O God, is seen Thy righteousness. For Thou givest to the wicked according to their works, according to the great evil of their doings. Thou hast revealed their sins, that Thy judgment may be seen. Thou blottest out their memory from the earth. The Lord is a righteous judge, and regardeth no man’s countenance. He has dragged down her beauty from the throne of glory. For Jerusalem has been put to shame by the heathen, when they trampled it under foot. Put on sackcloth for robes of beauty, a wreath of twisted rushes instead of a crown. God has taken away her mitre of glory, which He put on her brow. Her pride is cast down in dishonour on the earth.

“And I looked, and prayed before the face of the Lord, and said, Let it suffice Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast made heavy Thy hand upon Jerusalem, in the coming against her of the heathen. Because they have treated her with scorn, and have not spared in their wrath and fury, and they will not bring this to an end, unless Thou, O Lord, reprovest them in Thy wrath. For they have not done it in zeal for Thee, but from the wish of their heart, to pour out their rage against us like furies. Delay not, O God, to smite them on the head, that the haughtiness of the dragon may sink down in dishonour.

“I had waited but a little till God showed me his haughty pride brought low, on the shores of Egypt, and his body set at nought by the least, alike on land and sea,—rotting upon the waves in pitiful contempt, and having no one to bury it. Because he had set God at nought and

dishonoured Him. He forgot that he was only a man : he did not think of what might be to come. He said, 'I shall be Lord of sea and land,' and he did not remember that God is great and resistless in His great might. He is King of Heaven, and the judge of kings and rulers, exalting His servant, and stilling the proud in eternal dishonour and ruin because they have not acknowledged Him."²⁴ d

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²⁴ Ps. Salom.
2. 35.

Herod's flattery of Rome, and his treachery, to what the patriots thought the national cause, only intensified the bitterness of such recollections.

Amidst all the troubles of the nation, however, their hopes were still kept alive by a belief which, like much else among the Jews, is unique in history. Their sacred books had from the earliest days predicted the appearance of a great deliverer, who should redeem Israel out of all his troubles."²⁵ "All the prophets," says the Talmud, "prophesied only of the days of the Messiah."²⁶ In later days this hope was inten-

²⁵ Ps. 25. 22.

²⁶ B. Berach.
xxxiv. 2. 4.
See also
Gfrörer, ii. 198.

sified by a new development of the national literature. In the second century before Christ, the Book of Daniel had created a profound sensation by its predictions, universally current, of the destruction of the heathen, and the elevation of the chosen people to supreme glory, under the Messiah. These were, at that time, interpreted as applying to the disastrous period of religious persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes,²⁷ which provoked the Maccabæan revolt, and ultimately led to the temporary independence of the nation, with its short, bright glimpse of prosperity, as if heralding the Messianic reign. The heathen were to "devour the whole earth for a time, and tread it down and break it in pieces."²⁸ But "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the rule under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." In such words, Israel read its future political glory, as the seat of a universal theocracy, which was to replace the kings of the heathen, and flourish in perpetual supremacy over all mankind.²⁹ The head of this world-wide empire they saw in "the Son of Man," who was to "come in the clouds of heaven ;" dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that

²⁷ B.C. 175—164.

²⁸ Dan. 7. 23; 11.
36.

²⁹ Ch. 7. 18, 22,
27.

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 30 Ch. 7. 13, 14. being given Him by the Ancient of Days.³⁰ *

With the paling of the Maccabæan glory, after its short brightness, and the decay of religious enthusiasm under the corrupting influence of its later kings,—a reaction not unlike the license of the Restoration as contrasted with the severe Puritanism of the Commonwealth,—a copious literature sprang up, based on the model, which, in the Book of Daniel, had so profoundly affected the spirit of the age. With the independence of the nation, prophecy had, long ago, gradually ceased, for the sphere of the prophet was incompatible with the loss of the freedom of the nation. Zechariah and Malachi had appeared after the return from exile, but, with the latter, it was universally acknowledged, the grand roll of prophets had ended. The last of the order had, indeed, himself, virtually announced its suspension, in pointing to the coming of Elijah, before the great and dreadful day of Jehovah,³¹ as its next appearance. From that time, it became fixed in the popular mind that Elijah, and perhaps, also, a “prophet like unto Moses,”³² would herald the Messiah and his kingdom. The peculiar constitution of the nation inevitably gave this glorious future a political, rather than a spiritual character, for their conception of the kingdom of God was that of a theocracy, such as God Himself had founded amongst them, under Moses—an earthly state, with God as king, and His “anointed” as vicegerent, to carry out His written law.³³ Their only idea of an “anointed one,” that is, a Messiah, must have been derived from the illustrations offered by the earlier history of the nation.³⁴ They knew of Moses, Joshua, the judges, and the kings. The patriarchs were spoken of in the Scriptures as the anointed of Jehovah, or His Messiahs, and so, also, were high priests and prophets, and their kings, and even the Persian monarch, Cyrus.¹ Among the later Jews, of the ages immediately before Christ, “The Messiah” had become the usual name of the Deliverer predicted by the prophets,² and was almost exclusively restricted to Him. But at no time had the spiritual been separated from the political, in its use. Indeed, the whole theory of their national

³¹ Mal. 4. 5.

³² Deut. 18. 15.

³³ Langen. Judenthum. 392.

³⁴ Schleiermacher, Leben Jesu, 80.

government, inevitably joined the political and the religious. The State and the Church were, with it, identical, the former being only the outward embodiment of the latter. Jewish politics were only Jewish religion in its public relations, for God was the political as well as religious Head of the nation. It was, hence, all but impossible for a Jew to conceive of the Messiah, except as the divinely commissioned vicegerent of God, in his double sphere³⁵ of earthly and heavenly kingship in Israel.

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³⁵ See on this
Langen,
Judenthum.
392.

The long silence of prophets, and the keen politico-religious enthusiasm with which the advent of a Messiah was expected—an enthusiasm resting on Scripture throughout, but rekindled to a passionate and abiding fervour by the Book of Daniel—incited some nobler spirits to break the stillness, and keep alive the national faith and hope, by compositions conceived in the same spirit. To give them greater weight, they were ascribed to the most famous men of past ages, and sent abroad in their names. A Revelation of the future glory of Israel appeared in the name of the antediluvian Enoch, as one, of all men, worthy to have been favoured with divine communications. Another consisted of psalms ascribed to Solomon, and a third was said to have been written by the great Scribe, the second Moses—Ezra. Others are still preserved in the collection of "Apocrypha" till recently bound up with our English Bibles. Of the whole, the first Book of the Maccabees, illustrates the fervent patriotism and stern puritanism of the war of liberty. The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach sets in a striking light the saying of Esdras,³⁶ that, even in these dark days, though many "walked feignedly before God, others feared His name according to His will, and taught His law nobly."^h No better key to the religious spirit of an age can be had than its religious literature. That of Israel, as the age of Christ drew near, was more and more concentrated on the expected Messiah, and the preparation needed for his coming. The Book of Enoch, the Psalms of Solomon, and the Fourth Book of Esdras,³⁷ successively reveal the white heat of the national hopes of which they were the expression.

³⁶ Chap. 8. 27, 28.
Ed. Hilgenfeld,
148.

³⁷ In our Apo-
crypha, the
2nd Book of
Esdras.

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Nothing could be more fitted to influence the excitable imagination of an Oriental people, accustomed to such a style in their sacred writings—nothing more fitted to intensify a fanatical spiritual pride in themselves as the favourites of heaven, or to deepen their hatred of all other nations, than the mystic chapters of the Book of ENOCH, of which the earlier date, perhaps forty years before the entrance of the Romans into Palestine, while the whole are as old as the reign of Herod. In one, Israel is painted under the figure of a flock of white sheep, while the nations round are the Egyptian wolf, the Phenician dog, the black wild boar, Edom, the Arabian vulture, the Syrian raven, and the Grecian eagle; or are branded as jackals, kites, foxes, and swine. Hyrcanus, the sheep with the great horn, drives away the Grecian eagles, the Syrian ravens, the Egyptian kites, the Arabian vulture, and the Philistine dogs, who were tearing the flesh of the sheep of the House of Israel.³⁸ The Lord of the sheep comes to His flock, the rod of His wrath in His hand, and strikes the earth till it quakes, and all the beasts and birds flee from the sheep, and sink in the earth, which closes over them. A great throne is then set up in the beloved land, and the Lord of the sheep sits on it, and opens the sealed books.³⁹ He will then drive the kings from their thrones and kingdoms, and will break the teeth of sinners, and, finally, chase out the heathen from the congregation of His people,⁴⁰ and cast down the oppressors of Israel into a deep place, “full of fire, flaming, and full of pillars of fire.”⁴¹ A “great everlasting heaven” will spring forth from the midst of the angels, and the day of judgment will begin, “when the blood of the sinners will be as high as a horse’s breast, and as a chariot axle,” and when legions of angels shall appear in the skies, and the righteous be raised from the grave. The days of the Messiah—“the Elect,” “the Anointed One,” “the Son of Man,” who is also “Son of God”—will then begin.⁴²

“The plants of righteousness” (the Jewish nation) will flourish for ever and ever⁴³ under His reign, for He is to come forth from the “throne of the majesty of God,” and rule over all, as the object of universal adoration.⁴⁴

³⁸ Das Buch
Enoch, ch.
90. 13.

³⁹ Ch. 90. 20.

⁴⁰ Ch. 45.

⁴¹ Ch. 45. 24.

⁴² Ch. 100.

⁴³ Ch. 98. 2.

⁴⁴ 46. 1; 55. 4;
68. 29; 48. 6;
62. 6.

The pictures given of the blessedness of Israel in its world-wide empire, throw light on the nobler side of the Jewish nature, for we may seek in vain for anything so pure and lofty in the conceptions of any other people. "Blessed be ye, O ye righteous and elect ones, for glorious will be your lot! The righteous shall dwell in the light of the Sun, and the elect in the light of the Life Eternal; the days of their life shall have no end, and the days of the holy ones shall be countless. And they shall seek the light, and find righteousness beside the Lord of Spirits. The righteous shall have peace with the Lord of the World,⁴⁵ ⁴⁵ Ch. 5. 8. They will dwell beside the Water of Life,⁴⁶ in the gardens ⁴⁶ Ch. 17. of righteousness,⁴⁷ and shine like the light for ever and ⁴⁷ Ch. 32. ever.⁴⁸ Their hearts will rejoice, because the number of ⁴⁸ Ch. 38. the righteous is fulfilled, and the blood of the righteous avenged.⁴⁹ ⁴⁹ Ch. 45.

THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON, written at the time of Pompey's invasion, look forward confidently to the coming of the Messiah, and the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God, when the sons and daughters of Jerusalem will be brought back again from the east and the west, because Jehovah has had compassion on her affliction.⁵⁰ The 17th ⁵⁰ and 18th Psalms, especially, bring before us, with equal vividness and beauty, the hopes that glowed in the national breast in the days of Christ, and broke out into wild violence in the religious revolt of Judas, the Galilean. Joseph, in his cottage at Nazareth, may often have listened to them, or read them, for they were familiar to every Jew, and many a group of Galilean villagers gathered, from time to time, to hear them repeated, in Eastern fashion, by some reader or reciter. They ran thus:—

⁵⁰ Psalmi Solomonis, ed. Fritzsche: Pa. II. 17.

"Lord, Thou alone art our King for ever and ever, and in Thee shall our souls make their boast. What is the span of man's life upon earth? According to the time fixed by the Lord, and man's hope upon Him! But we hope in God our Saviour, because the power of our God is with mercy, for ever, and the kingdom of our God is over the heathen, for judgment, for ever.

"Thou, O Lord, didst choose for Thyself David, to be king

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⁵¹ Ps. 132. 11, 12.
Jer. 33. 17.

over Israel, and didst swear to him,⁵¹ respecting his seed for ever, that there would never fail a prince of his house before Thee, for ever. But for our sins, the wicked have risen up against us; they (the Asmonean party), whom Thou hast not sent forth,^k have done violence against us, and have gotten the power over us. They have put away Thy name with violence, and have not glorified it, though it be above all in majesty; they have set up a king over them.^l They have laid waste the throne of David,^m with a haughty shout of triumph. But Thou, O Lord, wilt cast them down, Thou wilt take away their seed from the earth, raising up against them an alien, who is not of our race.ⁿ After their sins shalt Thou recompense them, O God; they will receive according to their works. According to their works will God show pity on them! He will hunt out their seed, and will not let them go.^o Faithful is the Lord, in all His judgments which He performs in the earth.

"He who has not the Law^p has desolated our land of its inhabitants. He has made the youth, and the old man, and the child disappear together. In his fury he has sent away our sons to the west;^q and our princes he has made an open show, and has not spared.^r Our enemy has done haughtily in his alien pride, and his heart is a stranger to our God. And he did all things, in Jerusalem, as the heathen do with their idols, in their cities. And the sons of the covenant have been made to serve them, and have been mingled among heathen nations.^s There was not one among them who shewed pity or truth in Jerusalem. Those who loved the synagogues of the saints fled from them; they were driven away as sparrows from their nest. They wandered in deserts, that their souls might be saved from defilement, and the wilderness was lovely in their sight, in saving their souls. They were scattered over the whole earth, by those who have not the Law.

"Behold, O Lord, and raise up to Israel, their king, the Son of David, at the time Thou, O God, knowest, to rule Israel, Thy child. And gird him, O Lord, with strength, that he may break in pieces the unjust rulers. Cleanse Jerusalem, in wisdom and righteousness, from the heathen

who tread it under foot. Thrust out the sinners from Thine inheritance; grind to dust the haughtiness of the transgressors; shatter in pieces all their strength, as a potter's vessel is shattered by a rod of iron.⁵² Destroy utterly, with the word of Thy mouth,⁵³ the heathen that have broken Thy Law; at His coming let the heathen flee before His face, and confound Thou the sinners in the thoughts of their hearts. And He shall bring together the holy race, and shall lead them in righteousness, and He shall judge the tribes of the holy people, for the Lord, His God. And He will not suffer unrighteousness to dwell in the midst of them, nor will any wicked man be let dwell among them. For He will take knowledge that they are all sons of God, and He will portion them out in their tribes, over the land. And the stranger and the foreigner will dwell among them no more. He will judge the people and the heathen, in the wisdom of His righteousness.

⁵² Rev. 2. 27; 12. 5; 19. 15.
Ps. 2. 9.
⁵³ Isaiah 11. 4.

“And He will bring the peoples of the heathen under His yoke, to serve Him, and He will exalt the Lord exceedingly, in all the earth. And He will cleanse Jerusalem in righteousness, so that, as it was in the beginning, the heathen shall come from the uttermost parts of the earth, to see His glory, and her weary, wasted sons shall return, bearing gifts, to see the glory of the Lord, with which God has glorified her. And He shall be a righteous king over them, taught of God. And there shall be no unrighteousness in their midst in His days, because they are all holy, and their king is the Christ, the Lord.^t For He shall not trust in the horse, or the chariot, or in the bow; neither shall He gather to Himself silver and gold for war, and He shall not trust in numbers, in the day of battle. The Lord, Himself, is His king, and His trust, in the Mighty God, and HE shall set all the heathen in terror before Him. For He shall rule all the earth, by the word of His mouth, for ever. He shall make the people of the Lord blessed, in wisdom and in joy. And He, being pure from sin, for the ruling of a great people, will rebuke kings, and will cut off transgressors by the might of His word. And He shall not want help from God, in His days. For the Lord

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shall make Him mighty in the Holy Spirit, and wise in counsel, and strong, and righteous. And the favour of the Lord shall be His strength, and He shall not be weak. His hope is in the Lord, and who can do anything against Him? Mighty in His doings, and strong in the fear of God; feeding, as a shepherd, the flock of the Lord, in faith and righteousness, He will let no one among them fail in the Law. He will lead them all in holiness, and there will be no haughty oppressing of them in His rule.

"This is the glorious excellence of the King of Israel, which is known to God. He shall raise Him over the house of Israel, to instruct it. His words are purer than the most pure gold. He will judge the people in the synagogues—the tribes of the saints. His words will be like words of the holy ones, in the midst of the holy multitudes. Blessed are those who shall live in those days, to see the good things which God shall do for Israel, in the gathering together of her tribes. God shall hasten his mercy towards Israel. He shall purge us from the defilement of the presence of our enemies, the profane. The Lord, He is King, for ever and ever!⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Psalmi Salomonis xvii. ed. Hilgenfeld.

"O Lord, Thy mercy is on the works of Thy hands for ever and ever! Thy goodness to Israel is a gift beyond price. Thine eyes look on, and nothing will fail of Thy promises. Thine ears will attend to the supplication of the needy who trusts in Thee. Thy judgments are in all the earth, in mercy, and Thy love is towards the seed of Abraham, the sons of Israel. Thou hast Thyself taught us, as Thy Son, Thine only begotten, Thy first-born,⁵⁵ so that we may turn an obedient heart away from ignorance and sin.

⁵⁵ Ex 4. 22.

"God shall purify Israel, against the day of mercy and blessing, against the day of the calling forth of His Christ (Anointed) to rule. Blessed are those who shall live in those days!"⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Psalmi Salomonis xviii. ed. Hilgenfeld (Messias Judaeorum, 24).

In the FOURTH BOOK OF ESDRAS, which was circulating among the people at the birth of Christ, the nation found its strength and weakness, alike, reflected, and all its religious hopes flattered to the utmost. "If Thou for us hast

created the world, wherefore is it that we do not possess our world?" asks the supposed Ezra. In the fifth of a series of "Visions of the Night," for which he had prepared by long fasting, he sees an angel rise from the sea, with twelve wings and three heads, the mystic symbol of the triumphant heathen power of the Syro- and Egypto-Macedonian kings, and oft hat of Rome, under Cæsar, Antony, and Octavian, with whom remained final victory, and universal monarchy. After a time, he, Octavian (Augustus) alone, as the one-headed eagle, remains. But now appears a mighty Lion⁵⁷—the Messiah—who calls to the eagle, with a human voice, "Art thou not he who remainest of the four beasts (the four heathen world-empires of Daniel), which I created that they might rule in my world, that the end of times might come through them? Thou hast judged the earth, but not in truth, for thou hast troubled the peaceful, and wronged the unoffending; thou hast loved liars, and hast overthrown the cities of the industrious, and hast razed their walls, though they did thee no harm. Thy wrongful dealing has risen to the Highest, and thy pride to the Mighty One. The Most High, also, has remembered His times, and, behold, they are closed, and the ages are ended. Therefore, begone, O thou eagle, and be seen no more—with thy fearful wings, thy baleful winglets,⁵⁸ thy ferocious heads, thy tearing claws, and all thy foul body, that the earth may be refreshed, and may recover itself, when freed from thy violence, and that she may hope in the justice and pity of Him who made her!" "And I looked, and, behold, the eagle was no more seen, and all its body was burned up, and the earth grew pale with fear." Rome, then just entering on its long imperial history, and in the height of its greatness, was to be blotted out from the earth by the Messiah. Past generations had thought the Syrian persecutions must be the tribulation which was to herald the coming of the Messiah, and to end heathen domination on the earth; then the persecutions and wars of the later Maccabees; then the huge world-turmoil of the Roman civil wars, in succession, seemed to proclaim His approach. But, now, the supposed Ezra looked for it in the

⁵⁷ Ch. 11. 37; 12. 32; 8. 37.

⁵⁸ The dependent kingdoms.

CHAP. XXII. reign of Augustus, as men, a little later, expected it on the death of Herod. The Lion, rising from the forest, would rebuke the haughty Roman eagle, and would sit in judgment on the heathen, free His holy people, and bless them till the coming of the end.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Cf. 12, 34.

Nor was this the only vision of the Messiah, presented by the supposed Ezra. "Behold," says he, "a wind rose from the heart of the sea, and in it the form of a man" (the Son of God), "and all its waves were troubled. And I saw, and behold the man came on the clouds of heaven, and wheresoever he turned his face and looked, all things trembled before him, and all that heard His voice melted like wax in the flame. But a countless host from all parts of the earth came up to make war against Him. And He cut out for Himself, by His word, a great mountain—which is Mount Zion—and stood on the top of it, and when the multitude pressed with trembling against Him, He lifted against them neither hand nor weapon, but consumed them utterly with a flood of fire from His mouth, and the lightning flashes of the storm from His lips,⁶⁰ and nothing remained of them but smoke and ashes. Then He rose and came down from the mountain, and called to Him a peaceful multitude, some glad and some sorry, some bound as captives, some bearing gifts, and these were the ten tribes, whom He had brought from their hiding-place in a land beyond Assyria, where never man else dwelt, cleaving the Euphrates to let them pass over, and gathering them to their own land again, that their brethren there, and they from afar, might rejoice evermore together."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Compare Isaiah 11. 4.

⁶¹ Lat. version, ch. 13. 47, 48.

⁶² Lat. version, ch. 5. 9.

To Esdras the reign of the Idumean Herod over the Jewish people, seems a second note of the culmination of heathen rule and its speedy overthrow. "The end of this age," says he, "is Esau, and Jacob is the beginning of that which is to come;"⁶² the death of the Edomite was to mark the opening of the reign of the sons of Jacob. "During his life, or at his death," says another vision, "the Messiah (or Son of God) will descend from heaven with those men who have not tasted of death,⁶³ and the books will be opened before the face of the sky, and all shall see them, and the trumpet shall sound, and

⁶³ Ch. 6. 26.

every cheek will grow pale at the hearing it. And friends will fight at that time against friends, and the earth shall tremble and all who dwell on it, and the springs and fountains shall cease running for three hours. And the hearts of the people shall be changed, and they will be turned into other men. For all sin and wickedness will be destroyed, and faith will flourish, and corruption shall be rooted out, and truth, which had been lost for a long time, will reign." Regions hitherto unknown and barren will be planted, to shame the heathen, by showing the greater glory of the kingdom of the Messiah than of theirs. Yet, this golden age is to last only 400 years, at the end of which the Messiah will die.⁶⁴ The earth will then pass away. The dead will be raised, and the great judgment held, after which "the righteous shall go into the presence of God, and shine like the sun, and dwell in the midst of His everlasting light, and die no more,"⁶⁵ and a single day shall be as seventy years, and they shall live for ever and ever. But the wicked shall go to everlasting fire."⁶⁶

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⁶⁴ Lat. version, ch. 7. 29.⁶⁵ Ethiopic version, ch. 6. 69—72.⁶⁶ Ethiopic version, ch. 6. 1.

Such a literature, widely diffused, penetrated the nation with its spirit, and coloured its destiny. Nor were the books quoted the only writings of a similar tone that everywhere formed the reading, and fired the soul of the contemporaries of Jesus. A succession of these heralds of the Messiah perpetuated the theme. After the Psalms of Solomon and the Book of Esdras, we have the anticipations of the Targums, and of Philo, and the pictures of the Book of Jubilees. In the Messiah's time we read in the latter, "the days will begin to lengthen, and the children of men will live longer, from generation to generation, and from day to day, till their lives come nigh to a thousand years. And there will be no more any old, or any weary of life, but they will all be like children and boys, and will fulfil all their days in peace and joy, and there will be no accuser amongst them, or any corrupter. For all their days will be days of blessing."^{67x}

⁶⁷ Ch. 23.

The result of influences so unique, was almost beyond imagination, in an age so cold and practical as our own. A parallel may, perhaps, be found in the universal excitement

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⁶⁸ Rev. 20. 2-4

which pervaded Christendom at the end of the tenth century, when the 1,000 years of the Book of Revelation ⁶⁸ were thought to be closing, and the end of the world was believed at hand. The consternation that then seized mankind made men give up everything to be ready for the descent of the judge. It was the one thought. Countless pilgrims sold all, and set off to the Holy Land to await the expected Saviour. ⁶⁹ Not less deep or universal was the expectation of the Messiah in the days of Christ, rousing men, even against hope, once and again, in the literal use of the words of the Maccabæan psalm⁷⁰—to take a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the heathen, and punishments on the nations; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with links of iron: to execute upon them the judgments written. This was an honour granted to all the Saints.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Robertson's
State of
Europe, 213.

⁷⁰ Ps. 149. 6-9.

⁷¹ Hasidim.
The very word
used to design-
ate the ultra-
puritans of
the Maccæ-
bean times.

The effect of the long reign of Herod on Jewish parties was immense. Sprung from a race which the Jews detested, and the son of a hated father, he had owed it to the Roman Senate that he was able to crush the national liberties under foot, and usurp the title of King of Judea, which no stranger before him had borne. His instincts were cruel and harsh; his life and tastes pagan and sensual; his whole nature opposed to everything Jewish. He had murdered member after member of his family, and among others the last of the native royal race, which the people venerated: he had put to death most of the leading Rabbis; he had filled the land with heathen architecture; he had defiled Jerusalem by a circus and theatre; he had degraded the pontificate by putting two high priests to death, after deposing them; he had violated the tomb of David, in search of treasure; he had burned the national registers, so essential to a people among whom so much in their priesthood and common life turned on their descent; he had burned alive, in his old age, two famous Rabbis, and slain many of the youth of Jerusalem, for their zeal for the Law; and, when dying, he had left a command, to murder, in cold blood, the collected elders of the nation, to fill the land with sorrow for themselves, if not for him, when he was gone.

Against such a master the two great parties, Pharisees and Sadducees,—notwithstanding their differences, above all things Jews,—felt for the time drawn closer together. Except the high priests, who were Herod's creatures, the courtiers who worshipped the power of the day, and the soldiers loyal to a warlike king, few were for Herod. The Sadducees forsook the Court; the High Priesthood was for the time taken from their party. An Alexandrian family into which Herod had married, received it to ennoble them,—men suspected of foreign views, royalists by alliance, and opposed to the people by their origin.⁷² For the first time we hear of preachers. The last martyrs under Herod—Judas, son of Saripheus, and Mattathias, son of Margalouth,—were in reality tribunes of the people, to whose stirring addresses, the great riot, in which the golden eagle in the Temple was thrown down, was due. They were burned alive, but men of the same mould took their place, allies and friends of the multitudes who fled to the hills, to emerge from time to time from their hiding places, to harass the troops of Herod. Revolutionary times always produce such men, whom time servers of their day have been wont to denounce as brigands or robbers. They were, however, in reality the Maccabees of their age. "The followers of Judas, the Galilæan," says Josephus,⁷³ "in all their opinions are at one with the Pharisees,—that is, with the nation,—but they have an inextinguishable passion for liberty, and will own none but God as Master; they count any tortures that they may endure, however dreadful, as nothing, nor do they heed the sufferings their parents or friends may bear for their sakes"—for they were punished if the offenders themselves were not caught,—"but nothing will make them call any man Master." It was for putting Hezekiah, the father of Judas, to death, in the beginning of his reign, that the Sanhedrim, then still extant, tried to bring Herod to trial, which they never would have done had he been a mere "robber."⁷⁴ What the nation thought of his son Judas is shown in the words of a Rabbi,⁷⁵ "In the world to come, God will gather round Judas a multitude like him, and will set them before His face." Men of the same type had appeared before Pompey at Damascus,

⁷² Derenbourg, 156.⁷³ Ant. xviii. 1.6.⁷⁴ Derenbourg, 160.⁷⁵ Midrash on Ecclesiastes 1. 1; quoted by Derenbourg, 161.

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pleading the cause neither of Hyrcanus or Aristobulus, but of the people of God, whose institutions had never favoured royalty. But it was under Herod, and immediately after his death, that these ideas first became the cry of any organized party. The people had tired of the dry and lifeless discussions of the Rabbis. Their subtleties and legal distinctions left their hearts untouched. But men had risen like Hezekiah, Judas of Galilee, Mattathias, and Judas, son of Sarpheus, whose harangues set their souls on fire. These earnest spirits did not trouble with barren decisions; they preached and roused. They did not dispute about some obscure chapter of Exodus or Leviticus; their texts were the inspired words of the prophets, the burning and eloquent exhortations of Isaiah and Jeremiah. These they recited, commented on, and enlarged, before multitudes eager to hear them. The voice of the Ancient Oracles had retained all its freshness, and suited the passing times as if written respecting them. For Jehoiakim men read Herod; Rome took the place of Babylon; and the gloomy prophecies of Jeremiah seemed about to be fulfilled anew on the second Temple. For the last time, the almost withered tree of Jewish nationality seemed to live again. In the soil of the Word of God it grew green once more, and pushed out some last branches, but all the prophets through whose impulse it thus revived, paid for the dangerous glory by a violent death.

In the lifetime of Jesus parties had thus become transformed. The Boëthusians, or Alexandrians, raised to the pontificate by Herod, became the royalists. They hoped to be able, under him and the Romans, to maintain ecclesiastical matters as they were, and keep hold of their privileges. They were the high-priestly families whose harshness and violence are handed down to us in the Talmud. "A curse on the family of Boëthos, a curse on their spears"—was the anametha muttered in the streets of Jerusalem—"a curse on the family of Hanan!⁷⁶ a curse on their viper-like hissings! A curse on the family of Kanthera! a curse on their fine feathers! A curse on the family of Ismael Ben Phabi! a curse on their fists! They are high priests themselves, their

⁷⁶ The Annas of the Gospels.

sons keep the money, their sons-in-law are captains, and their servants smite the people with their staves!"^y "The approaches of the sanctuary," continues the Talmud, "echo with four cries—'Depart hence, ye sons of Eli,'^z you pollute the Temple of the Eternal:' 'Depart hence, Issachar Kefr Barkai, who think only of yourself, and profane the consecrated victims,'—for he wore silken gloves to protect his hands in his ministrations. Then, in keen irony, comes the cry—'Open your gates, O Temple, and let Ismael Ben Phabi, the disciple of Phinehas,^{aa} enter, that he may perform the high-priestly rites! and, finally, a fourth voice—'Open wide, ye gates! and let Johanan, the son of Nebedai, the disciple of gluttons and gourmands, enter, that he may gorge on the sacrifices!'"⁷⁷ Nowonder this last pupil of his Roman masters won such a name, if the Talmud may be believed in its statement, that he had three hundred calves, and as many casks of wine, and forty seahs of pigeons, set apart for his kitchen.^{bb}

⁷⁷ Pesachim 57. a, and Keritot 28. a. Derenbourg, 233.

The luxury and audacity of some of the high priests were pushed so far, that it is related of Ismael Ben Phabi that his mother made a tunic for him, that cost a hundred minæ—about £330. The mother of Eliezer Ben Harsom had a similar robe made for him, if we may credit it, at a cost of 20,000 minæ—£66,000, but it was so fine that the other priests would not let him wear it, because he seemed naked from its transparency.⁷⁸ The exaggeration is, doubtless, great, for the fortune of this Pontifical millionaire is a favourite theme of Rabbinical fancy, but such exaggeration itself springs only from truth, striking enough to arrest the imagination. The high priesthood had, in fact, sunk to the extremest corruption. "To what time," asks Rabbi Johanan, "do the words refer—'The fear of the Lord prolongeth life?'"⁷⁹ To that of the first Temple, which stood about four hundred and ten years, and had only eighteen high priests from first to last? And to what time do the other words refer—'And the years of the wicked shall be shortened?' To that of the second Temple, which stood four hundred and twenty years, and had more than three hundred high priests: for, deducting eighty-five years for five exceptional reigns,

⁷⁸ Joma, 556.

⁷⁹ Prov. 10. 27.

CHAP. XXII. less than a single year is left for each of all the other high priests.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Joma, 9. a.

The Pharisees and Sadducees, in these dark years, had to withdraw completely from political life, and seek consolation in the study of the Law, and in attracting the people to the schools where they taught or discussed. The extreme party among the former—the Zealots, the Jacobins of the age, or rather its Maccabees—were enthusiastically popular with the youth of the nation.⁸¹ Stern puritans, who knew no compromise, they dreamed of triumphing in their weakness, by the help of God, for whom they believed they fought, over the armies of the mistress of the world. No danger appalled their magnificent devotion, no sacrifice daunted their heroism. They were the rising party, from the time of Herod's death.

⁸¹ Ant. xvii.
6. 3.

Thus, from about the time of Christ's birth, religion became, once more, the great factor of Jewish national life. The bloody king had died in the midst of rumours of the close approach of the Messiah.

The visit of the Magi, almost immediately before, must have fanned the popular excitement still more, nor would the massacre at Bethlehem be without its influence on the public mind. The insurrection of Mattathias and Judas, at the head of the youth of the city, which, also, marked these eventful months, had only anticipated the theocratic movement, to be made, as all hoped, with success, as soon as the tyrant was dead. The wild outbreaks headed by Simon, the slave of Herod, Judas the Galilean, and Athronges, the Perean shepherd, were all, more or less, connected with religion. The deputation of fifty Jews, sent to Rome to petition Augustus to set aside the Herods, and permit the restoration of the old theocracy, had aroused the Jewish population of Rome itself. The Rabbis, martyred for destroying the golden eagle, and Judas and his colleague, Zadok, the Rabbi, had, moreover, by their inspiring harangues and appeals to Scripture, as well as by their heroism and the lofty grandeur of their aims, given such an impulse to religious enthusiasm, and created such an ideal of patriotic devotion, that the youth of the country, hence-

forth, pressed ever more zealously in their steps. Even CHAP. XXII.
the old looked on them as the glory of their age. Patriotism
became more and more identified with fiery zeal for the
Law, and war with the heathen for its sake became the
religious creed of the multitude.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.

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¹ Mark 6. 3.

THIRTY years of the life of Christ had passed in the seclusion of Nazareth. In early youth he had learned Joseph's trade,¹ and had spent the long years that had intervened, in the duties of His humble calling, for humble it must have been in a provincial town, where there could be no demand for the skill required in great communities, in that age of civic embellishment. It is well for mankind that He chose such a lowly lot. He could sympathise more keenly with the humble poor, from having Himself shared their burden. Nor could labour have been more supremely honoured than by the Saviour giving Himself to life-long toil. Work—the condition of health, the law of progress, the primal duty in Eden, and the safeguard of every virtue in all ages, is touched with a grand nobility by the spectacle of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Idleness, in any rank, becomes doubly a vice from the remembrance of such a lesson.

² Hofmann *das Leben Jesu*, 274.

How these thirty years of obscurity were passed is left untold, beyond the incidental mention of the calling Jesus pursued. Joseph, according to old tradition,² died when Jesus was eighteen years old, and it seems certain, from the fact that he is not mentioned in the Gospels during Christ's public life, that he died at least before that began. From the time of his death, we are told, doubtless correctly, Jesus supported His mother by the work of His hands, at least, in common with the others of the household. It is added that He had grown up with four brothers,³ James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, and at least two sisters, whose names are said to have been Esther and Tamar;⁴ but Jude and Simon,

³ Matt. 13. 55; Mark 6. 3.⁴ Hase's *Leben Jesu*, 67.

and both the sisters, we are told, married before Joseph's death, and settled in the town of Nazareth.⁵ Some think that Salome, the mother of James and John, and wife of Zebedee, was Mary's elder sister; others identify her with the Mary^b who married Clopas-Alphaeus,^{6c} a townsman, but he, like Joseph, seems to have died before Jesus began His ministry. This couple seem to have had two sons, James and Joses, but it is not told us whether they had any daughters. The two households formed the family circle of which Jesus was the wondrous centre. Tradition fills up the outline of one or two of those thus honoured—notably of James, afterwards the saintly head of the Church of Jerusalem^d—a Nazarite from his childhood, and a martyr in his old age. Christ's brothers, Simon and Jude, are also mentioned incidentally; the one as head of the Church of Jerusalem after James' death; the other as having left descendants who were cited before Domitian, as belonging to the kingly race of David. "There were yet living of the family of our Lord," says Eusebius,⁷ from Hegesippus, who wrote about the year 160, "the grand-children of Judas, called the brother of our Lord, according to the flesh. These were reported as being of the family of David, and were brought to Domitian."⁸ For the emperor was as much alarmed at the appearance of Christ as Herod had been. He put the question, whether they were of David's race, and they confessed that they were. He then asked them what property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered, that they had between them only nine thousand denarii (under three hundred pounds), and this they had, not in silver, but in the value of a piece of land, containing only thirty-nine acres, from which they raised their taxes, and supported themselves by their own labour. They also began to show their hands, how they were hard and rough with daily toil." Domitian then asked them some questions about Christ, and, after hearing their answers, dismissed them in contemptuous silence, as simple fools whom it was not worth while to trouble. The momentary glimpses still left us of the home circle of Nazareth thus show us a group of brothers, partly working a small farm,

CHAP. XXIII.
Hofmann, 264.

Matt. 10. 3.

Hist. Eccl.
lib. 20.

A.D. 81—93.

CHAP. XXIII. but all in humble life, and all, alike, marked by so strict an observance of the Law, that, even in their old age, the Jews themselves, and the Jewish Christians, held them in honour on this account.

Communion with His own heart; the quiet gathering in of all the lessons of life and nature around; deep study of the thoughts and hearts of men; a silent mastery of the religious ideas of the day, and a deep knowledge of the religious parties of the people, were daily advancing with Jesus. But in His spiritual life, in these years, as to the end, solitary prayer and long continued communion with God, where no eye saw and no ear heard Him, were, doubtless, His constant characteristics. The Scriptures read in the synagogues, or studied in the household, were His habitual study, till His intellect and heart were so saturated with their words and spirit, that He knew them better than the Scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to make them their whole study.

He must have been a mystery to His household. He had been so even to His mother from the time of the Temple visit, and He must have become more and more so as He went on His own way, joining no party, silent, thoughtful, self-contained, given to solitude, and with a light in His great eyes that seemed as if they saw into the very soul of those on whom they were turned. His brothers and sisters could not understand Him, even after He had become a public teacher. Alone in that beautiful world of Galilee, with its skies filled with light—its green plains and valleys, wooded hills, and shining sea; amidst a brave, bright, fiery, noble people, and yet so different from them—a faithful son, a patient worker at His daily toil, a friend of children and of the poor and needy, gentle, loving, pure, and yet so wholly apart by His very perfection—we may almost think He must have been avoided rather than sought.

Taught by Joseph and Mary, and in the Synagogue school, Jesus had learned the Hebrew, which had long ceased to be a spoken language, so as both to read and write it.⁹ Syro-Chaldaic was the language of the people, and thus His mother tongue; but He must also have gained

⁹ Matt. 5. 18.
John 8. 6.

knowledge enough of Greek, from its being spoken by so many in the different towns of the country, to converse with those who knew no other tongue used in Palestine—such as the centurion or Pilate, or the Greeks who sought an interview with Him in the last week of His life. CHAP. XXIII.

Amidst the homely engagements of life in such a sphere, year after year passed quietly and obscurely away. Events around, and in Judea, were not wanting to keep tongues busy in the market place or in the streets, and thoughtful hearts grew daily more so, as to the issue of all that reached them from the great world outside their hills. Meanwhile, the house of Mary must have been the ideal of a happy home in its relations with her mysterious Son. His child-like humility, sunny contentment, stainless purity, watchful tenderness, and transparent simplicity of soul, would find expression in an ever ready delight in pleasing, an infinite patience, an attractive meekness, and a constant industry. The discipline by which His human character was perfected was not confined to the closing years of His life, when He came before men at large, but began with His childhood and lasted to the end. We grow firm and strong to resist and to do; we gain the mastery of ourselves which brings superiority, by a patient use of the incidents of daily life. To rule one's own spirit on the petty theatre of a private sphere, creates a power which goes with us to wider fields of action. The principles and graces which stand the storms of public life must have been trained in the school of our daily world. Even to have to wait for thirty years before the time came to begin His great work, was itself a discipline to a holy soul. How must He have sighed over the evils of the times; over the sufferings of His fellow men; over the loss of apparent opportunities; over the long-permitted reign of evil. Enthusiasm burns to go out on its mission, and frets at delay, blaming itself if a moment appear to be lost. But Jesus learned at Nazareth to wait His Father's time. Till "His hour was come" He could control His longings, and wait for the divine sanction, in obscurity so complete, that even Nathanael, at Cana, only a few miles off, never heard of Him till His public ministry had begun,

CHAP. XXIII. and His fellow-townsmen had no suspicion of His being more than Jesus, the carpenter.

Thus, although retired, these years were in no measure lost. The divine wisdom, which marks out the life of all men, must have especially watched and planned that of the Perfect One of Nazareth. These unknown secluded years teach us that the noblest lives may yet be the most obscure; that life, in the highest sense, is not mere action, but the calm reign of love and duty, towards God and man, in our allotted sphere—that the truest and holiest joy is not necessarily that of public activity, far less that of excitement and noise, but, rather, where the calm around lets God and heaven be mirrored in an untroubled spirit. Compared with the last years of His life, with their agitation and ceaseless labour, Jesus, doubtless, often looked back fondly on the quiet life of Nazareth, where the skies, filled with cloudless light, or the silent splendour of the stars, or the dream of loveliness in all nature, far and near, were only emblems of the heaven of His own soul.

With the growth in years, his riper faculties would find a growing delight in the highest knowledge. Even as a boy, He had shown a divine love of truth, and a supreme devotion to God, which found its natural joy in “seeking and asking” wherever He could hope to learn, whether in the school of the Rabbis, in the Temple, or from townsmen of Nazareth. He had doubtless a premonition of His calling, which urged Him on. Each day more loveable, He would each day become more thoughtful. He might gather much from without, but his soul developed itself mainly from within.

Meanwhile, the time was drawing near for His manifestation to Israel.

Political oppression, by a natural reaction, had waked the hopes of a great national future to an intensity unknown before, even in Israel. But while, at other times, similar hopes had affected only the narrow bounds of Judea, they now went beyond it, and agitated the whole world. They fell in with the instinctive feeling which in that age pervaded all countries, that the existing state of things could not continue.

The reign of evil throughout the world seemed to have reached its height. In Rome, the infamous Sejanus, long the favourite of Tiberius, had at last fallen, but not till his career had filled the world with horror. The enforcement of obsolete usury laws had spread financial ruin over the empire. Forced sales made property almost worthless. Bankruptcy spread far and near. The courts were filled with men imploring a repeal of the obnoxious laws, and, meanwhile, the capitalists kept back their money. Business was paralyzed throughout the world. Many of the rich were reduced to beggary, and the misery of the poor became more intense. To add to the universal ruin, informers reigned supreme at Rome, and even the forms of law were forgotten. Multitudes, both innocent and guilty, perished in the Roman jails,—men, women, and children—their bodies being thrown into the Tiber. To add to all, the vices of Tiberius, fraught with evil to the world, grew daily more monstrous. Old age and debauchery had bent his body, and covered his face with ugly blotches, but his taste for obscene pleasures steadily increased, and, to indulge them, he shut himself up in loathsome retirement. Virtue and life were alike at his mercy: no one was safe from infamous informers. A reign of terror prevailed. Legal murders and remorseless confiscations were increasing; immorality and crime held high carnival. The most distant countries trembled before Rome, but its rule may be judged by the guilt, cruelty, and corruption at the centre.

The misgoverned East, was deeply agitated by the uneasy presentiment of an impending change. Not only Judea, but the neighbouring countries, were full of restless expectation.

Thus, in perhaps the very year in which John the Baptist appeared, the Egyptian priests announced that the bird known as the Phœnix had once more been seen.¹⁰ Originally the mythological emblem of the sun, it had gradually come to be regarded as a representative of the cycles of the history of the world, appearing at regular intervals, to consume itself, and rise anew from its ashes, in mystic indication of the end of one great period and the opening

¹⁰ Tac. Ann. vi. 28.

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of another. It had appeared under Sesostris, under Amasis, and under Ptolemy, the third king of the Macedonian dynasty. That it should appear now seemed strange, as the intervals of its return had hitherto been 1,461 and 500 years, but it was only 250 since Ptolemy.¹¹ Meanwhile, the sacred colleges of the capital confirmed what was announced by the Egyptian priests. If the Egyptian consoled himself, amidst the oppressions of the dark Tiberius days, by the fond belief that the mysterious bird was about to bear away the expiring age, the priestly college of Rome reckoned that the great world-year was about to end, and the age of Saturn to return. According to the Augurs, the ninth world-month, and, with it, the reign of Diana, had closed with Caesar's death, and the last month, that of Apollo, had begun. As, moreover, the secular months were of unequal length, it seemed as if the end of all things were at hand. Virgil,¹² in the generation before Christ, had already written his Fourth Eclogue, with its pictures of the coming golden age, borrowed from Isaiah, through the medium of the Jewish Sibylline poems, then widely circulated through the world.¹³ It seems a satire on his visions of future happy years, that the child,^e of whom he wrote in such lofty strains, not only failed to bring in a golden age, but died of hunger, under Tiberius, in the very year in which, it would seem, Jesus was crucified.¹⁴ The legend of the death of the great god, Pan, which, according to Plutarch, happened in the days of Tiberius, shows the same deep and boding presentiment, in the ancient world, that a great change was at hand.

"At that time," it relates, "a ship, when off Corfu, was strangely becalmed, and, forthwith, the Egyptian helmsman, Thamnus, heard a loud voice from the Echinadian Islands call him by name, and bid him say, when he got to Palodes, that the great god, Pan, was dead. The Egyptian did as he was bidden, but scarcely had he called out his message over the shore that had been named to him, when there rose, around, a great sighing, and a sound as of wonder, that filled the passengers with awe; the story, when it was told in Rome, troubling the Emperor Tiberius and the people

¹¹ Tac. Ann.
vi. 28.

¹² B.C. 70—19

¹³ Hausrath, II.
110 ff.

¹⁴ A.D. 33.

not a little." ¹⁵ The great Pan was, indeed, dead, and the other gods wailed over his bier. The oracles and sacred utterances of the time breathe a dark dread of a coming world-catastrophe. The bright day of the Augustan age had long passed. The air over Rome smelt of blood. Murder and suicide were the fashion, and even women were not safe from the dagger. ¹⁶ Financial distress brought want to the mass. Even the provinces suffered by the awful monetary crisis. In Palestine, men saw their future king, Agrippa, reduced to the greatest straits for money, borrowing where he could, glad to accept funds secretly offered to gain his influence,—for a time dependent for his very food on Herod Antipas, and, in the end, a fugitive from his usurious creditors. ¹⁷ The debtor, the creditor, and the jail, which recur so often in the parables, were illustrations only too vividly realized by the people at large. It was a time of change, transition, universal doubt, uncertainty, and expectation. In the heathen world, men did not know what to think of the future; in Judea, they looked for the sudden appearance of the Messiah. The drama of ancient society had been played out; a vast empire had risen on the ruins of the nationalities that had, hitherto, kept men apart, and its triumphs had discredited the local gods, to whom men had everywhere looked for protection. A calm had followed ages of universal war between city and city, and State and State, and had revolutionized life. Corruption and oppression had followed in the wake of dominion, and had filled the world with vague longings for a higher morality, and the hopes of a nobler religion than the decayed systems around them. The very triumph of one power over all others had, indeed, before all things besides, opened the way for the new faith of Christ. The isolation of hostile races had been broken down, and the dim but magnificent conception of a brotherhood of men, though, as yet, only as subjects of a universal despotism, had risen in the mind of all peoples. The highways of Rome invited communication with all lands; her government and laws guaranteed order and safety, wherever they obtained; but, above all, she had prepared the world for a religion which should address all

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¹⁵ Plut. de Def. Orac. 17.¹⁶ Tac. Ann. vi. 9.¹⁷ Ant. xviii. 6. 2.

CHAP. XXIII. humanity, by levelling the innumerable barriers of rival nationality—with their jealousies and impenetrable prejudices, and linking all races into a single grand federation, with common sympathies, and as fellow-citizens of the same great dominion.

It was amidst such a state of things, when the fabric of society seemed dissolving, and the new world had not yet risen from the chaos of the old, that the destined herald of a new moral order was born,¹⁸ apparently, in Hebron. The son of a pure and worthy priest, John, the future Baptist, was, from his birth, surrounded by the influences most fitted to develope a saintly character. Of priestly descent, on his mother's side as well as his father's, he began life with all the advantages of an ancient ancestry, every link of which, in the eyes of his race, was noble. In the society of Hebron, his parents would have a prominent position, and their young son must have been surrounded, on their account, with the respect which insensibly educates and refines. His early education, received at the hands of his father and mother, would take the colour of their position and training. The child would hear, from his infancy, the history of his people, and of the great priestly race whose blood ran in his veins. His genealogy was no doubtful conjecture, but clear and well established through fourteen centuries,¹⁹ lighted up, at intervals, by traditions of famous names, and as famous deeds. The child of strict observers of the Law, he would grow up with a religious reverence for its minutest prescriptions, its feasts and fasts, its Sabbaths, and new moons, its ten thousand rules²⁰ on meats and drinks, dress, furniture, dishes, conversation, reading, travelling, meeting, parting, buying, selling, cooking, the washing of pots, cups, tables, and person—that slavery of ritualism to which pious Jews gave a trembling and anxious obedience. From his earliest years he would feel that he could not eat, drink, clothe himself, wash his hands or feet, bathe, or perform the most secret function, except by set rules. He would grow up in the ideas of the system into which he had been born, which mapped out his every act, and word, and thought, and

¹⁸ B.C. 5.

¹⁹ From the Exaltus, c. 1r. B.C. 1460.

²⁰ Jud. Handwerkerleben, 35.

denounced every deviation from the all-embracing rules of Rabbinism as a sin, fatal to his caste as a Jew. CHAP. XXIII.

As the son of a priest, and, as such, himself a destined priest hereafter, John would early learn all the details of the Temple service, and, doubtless, often went with his parents to the Temple, the glittering pinnacles of which he could see from Hebron. The countless pilgrims at the great feasts: the solemnities of the altar, with its turbaned, white-robed, barefooted priests: the swelling music of the Levites, who, each morning, sang the psalms of the day, in the inner court, to the accompaniment of citterns, harps, and cymbals, and the deep roll of the great Temple organ, whose music the Rabbis, with fond exaggeration, spoke of as heard at Jericho,^{21f} — would be familiar and dear to him, and the splendour of the newly built Temple, resplendent in snowy marble and gold, would kindle at once his pride and affection. He would, necessarily, rise to manhood coloured by the influences around him, and these all tended to the narrowest Judaism. Living almost under the shadow of the Temple, he was in the centre of all that was most rigid and intolerant; unlike Jesus, whose Galilaean home kept him in a freer air, far from the dead conservatism of the Temple city, and from the bigotry of its schools and people.

But though thus, by birth, education, and circumstances, naturally, a strict and rigid Jew, higher influences surrounded John, from his birth, than those of mere formalism. His father and mother were both righteous⁶ before God,²² in a higher sense than that of Rabbinical blamelessness. Their religion was deep and sincere, for they were among the remnant in Israel who fulfilled the sacred ideal of the divine requirements: they did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with their God.²³ Their son inherited their finest characteristics. Even from childhood he showed his religious bias.²⁴ The only son of a priest, he might have passed through life with flattering respect, in the enjoyment of a modest plenty, but he early caught the spirit of the heroes of his race, of whom he heard and read so much in the ancient Scriptures. Disdaining self-indulgent ease, his soul kindled under the influences of home, of the times, and of religion,

^{21f} Delitzsch, *Art. "Psalm."* Herzog, xii. 284. *Leyrer, Art. "Musik,"* in Herzog, x. 191.

²² Luke 1. 6.

²³ Micah 6. 8.

²⁴ Luke 1. 15.

CHAP. XXIII. into a fervent enthusiasm, which formed its loftiest conception of life in asceticism and joyful self-sacrifice. Always more or less in favour with his race, this tendency was more frequent
²⁵ Ewald, v. 210. in the Jewish priesthood than in any other of antiquity.²⁵ Feeling the pulses of the spiritual excitement which throbbed through the people around him : pondering their sufferings, their sins, and their hopes, John gave himself up, though born a priest, to the higher mission of a prophet, and devoted his life to the reform of the evils he so deeply deplored, and to the revival of the religion of his fathers.

His course was, doubtless, in some measure, determined by an act of his parents, before his birth. They had made a vow in his name that he should be a Nazarite²⁶ all his life, and had thus marked him out as one formally devoted to God, and he freely adopted the vow. The Nazarite, among the Jews, was one, of either sex, consecrated to God as peculiarly His. The conception was the natural development, in earnest spirit, of the self-mortification, for religious ends, by fasts and the like, common to all Eastern races. It had been practised in Israel from the earliest times, and is already formulated as a recognized institution in the Book of Numbers.²⁷ The Nazarite was required to abstain altogether from wine and intoxicating drinks, even from vinegar, or any syrup or preparation of the grape, and from grapes themselves, and raisins. All the days of his Nazariteship he was to eat nothing made of the vine, from the kernels to the husk.²⁸ "No razor was to come upon his head ;" he was to "be holy," and to let the locks of the hair of his head grow.²⁹ To guard against any legal defilement from a corpse, he was to go near no dead body, even if it were that of his father, mother, brother, or sister,³⁰ because the consecration of God was on his head ; and if, by chance, death came where he was, the defilement could only be removed by a seven days' "uncleanness," to be followed by shaving his head, and presenting a special trespass-offering. His vow was, moreover, regarded as broken, and he had to begin its fulfilment again.

³¹ Acts 21. 23, 24. A Nazarite vow was commonly made for a fixed time,³¹ but parents might vow for their infant, or even unborn

²⁶ From נָזִיר (nazar), to consecrate, to vow.

²⁷ Ch. 6. 1—21.

²⁸ Numb. 6. 4.

²⁹ Ver. 5.

³⁰ Ver. 7.

children, that they should be Nazarites for life. It was thus in the case of John; it had been so with Samuel and Samson, and, according to tradition, in the case of James the Just, the brother of our Lord. But though consecrated to God, and marked as such by special signs, the Nazarite was not a monk, who withdrew wholly from family, social, or civil life, and thus shut himself out from all useful activity. The sound sense of early antiquity had no conception of such selfish devotion. He only shunned certain aspects or parts of common life, though some, of their own accord, carried self-denial farther.³² Not a few retired into the desolation of the hills of southern Judea, and lived rudely in caves, allowing themselves only the rough fare of the wilderness, and the coarsest clothing. Others, like James the Just, used no oil for anointing, though almost a necessary of life in warm countries, and ate no flesh.³³ The shrinking avoidance of all levitical defilement, which dictated such mortifications, was held due to their special consecration to God, whom such rigid ceremonial purity was supposed to honour. The shunning the sight of the dead was but a repetition of what was required from the levitically holiest man of the nation—the high priest.³⁴ The abstaining from wine and strong drink guarded against an offence doubly evil in one who had given himself to God, and was a security for vigour and clearness of mind in His service. The uncut hair was, perhaps, a visible sign of the sacred and inviolable surrender of the whole man to Jehovah. The hair was the symbol of manly vigour, its crown and ornament; and its untouched locks thus symbolized the consecration of the reason and higher powers to God. Thus especially “holy,” the life-long Nazarite stood on an equality with a priest, and might enter the inner Temple, as we see in the instance of James the Just.

The Nazarite vow was often taken to attain some wish—for health, safety, or success—from God. But where it was for life, no such selfish aims could be cherished. In lower cases, like that of Samson, there might be a vague craving for special favour from God, but in such as that of John, the impelling motive was intense desire after the highest

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³² Jer. 35. 6, 7.³³ Euseb. H. E. II. 23. 2.³⁴ Lev. 21. 11.

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religious attainments. It was in him a visible and enduring protest against the worldliness and spiritual indifference of mankind at large.

The time of Samson and Samuel, towards the close of the period of the Judges, seems to have been that of the greatest glory of Nazaritism,³⁵ which prepared the way for the grander era of the prophets, beginning with Samuel, and for the great spiritual movement of the reign of the first kings.

Less than two hundred years after David, however, Amos

³⁶ Amos 2.11, &c. laments the mockery with which the people treated it.³⁶

Yet Nazarites must always have been numerous in Israel, for the duplicity of the Rabbi Simeon Ben Schelach, in regard to the sacrifices required to discharge three hundred Nazarites from their vow, was the first cause of his disastrous quarrel with Alexander Jannæus.³⁷ Even two hundred years before, the vitality of the institution must have declined. "I

³⁷ Derenbourg, 96. Jost, and others.

never, through life," said Simeon the Just, at that time,³⁸

"liked to taste the trespass-offering of a Nazarite. Once, however, a man of the South came to me who had made the Nazarite vow. I looked at him. He had glorious eyes, a noble face, and his hair fell over his shoulders in great waving masses. 'Why do you wish to cut off this magnificent hair, and be a Nazarite no longer?' I asked him. 'I am shepherd to my father,' said he, 'in the town where I live. One day, in drawing water from the spring, I saw my likeness below, and felt a secret pride. An evil thought began to lay hold on me and destroy me. Then, I said, Wicked creature! you would fain be proud of what is not yours, and ought to be no more to you than dust and worthlessness; I vow to my God that I shall cut off my hair for His glory.' "

"Forthwith," continued Simeon, "I embraced him and said,

³⁸ Neelarin, l. 1.

'Would that we had many Nazarites like thee in Israel.' "³⁹

The instinct which has led men, in every religion, and in all ages, to adopt an ascetic life, doubtless springs from the belief, that self-denial and the subjugation of the body, leave the soul more free to attend to its special interests. Buddhism is a system of self-mortification, and Brahmanism has its Yogus, or devotees, who aspire, by the renunciation of all that can make life pleasant, to attain union with the

Supreme Spirit. Mohammedanism has its fakirs, who seek to subdue the flesh by their austerities, and to strengthen the soul by contemplation and prayer. The Egyptian priests passed their novitiate in the deserts, where, like John, they lived in caves. "The priests in Heliopolis," says Plutarch,⁴⁰ "bring no wine into the temple, as it is not seemly to drink by day, whilst the Lord and King, Helios (the sun), looks on; the others drink wine, but very little. They have many fasts, during which they refrain from wine, and continuously meditate on divine things, learn, and teach them."

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⁴⁰ Isis et Osiris, c. 6.

Reaction from the corruption around, the weariness of the world, natural in a period of universal unquiet and uncertainty, and the wish to follow out the letter of the law exactly, had led to the adoption of an austere life by many in Palestine. As the Nazarites strove to attain ideal ceremonial purity in rude isolation, others sought it in brotherhoods. Josephus⁴¹ classes as one of the four great parties of his day, the Essenes,^k an order numbering about 4,000 members, in Syria and Palestine,⁴² more or less devoted to an ascetic life. Like the Pharisees, they were a development of the zeal for the Law which had first marked the Hasidim, in the Maccabæan wars. The feverish anxiety to avoid levitical defilement, which had already given rise to Pharisaism, found its extreme expression in these ultra rigid legalists, who hoped, by isolation, to attain ceremonial righteousness impossible in the open world. The strictness and asceticism of others, appeared only a hypocritical effeminacy in their severer eyes.⁴³ But, even with them, there were grades of strictness, for only the most rigid withdrew from society. The Pharisees had had brotherhoods and unions⁴⁴ for generations, and in Egypt there were colonies of "Therapeutæ," who lived a lonely, contemplative, idle life, in the desert, coming together only for common worship and holy meals. But the Essenes were as far from the saintly idleness of the one, as from the restless demagogue activity of the others. The Pharisees, as years passed on, had become constantly less entitled to the name of the Separated, since they eagerly courted the multitude, and compassed sea and land to make a proselyte, and frequented the corners

⁴¹ Ant. xiii. 6. 9.⁴² Philo, 876.⁴³ Grætz, iii. 468.⁴⁴ See page 230.

CHAP. XXIII. and public places, to make a show of their piety. Ideal legal purity could not be attained by such a life, and hence members who aspired to a higher standard, withdrew, to form sacred colonies by themselves.

The rise of these desert colonies is not known, but the wanderer over the district between Jerusalem¹ and the Dead Sea, in the days of John, came, every here and there, on such settlements, in the narrow, shady wadys, sometimes green in their hollows, which sink in great numbers from the high stony plateau, towards the Dead Sea. Their sad appearance, their life strictly regulated by the law, in the least detail, gave them the air of people weary of life, who had withdrawn from the world to prepare for death. They seemed to have given themselves up to a life-long penance, in hope of gaining heaven.

The upper valley of Engedi, where Pliny tells us most of the Essenes had settled, was exactly suited for the monkish life they had chosen. A zigzag path leads from the wilderness of Judea, about three hours north of Masada, by a steep descent of fully 1,500 feet, over loose rocks and stones, to a rich spring, which makes its way under a luxuriant growth of shrubs and bushes, to the Dead Sea. The name Engedi, the goat's spring, may well have been given from the wild goats having first found out and used the steep path. A tropical vegetation supplies the simple wants of life almost without labour. In the upper parts of the wady, and in others running parallel with it, the Essenes found exactly the localities that suited them. Each colony had its own synagogue, its common hall for meals and assemblies, and its provision for daily baths in running water. Besides these settlers, there were lonely hermits, living beside solitary mountain springs, to be able to secure their ceremonial purity still better than their brethren, by more frequent bathing.⁴⁵ These anchorets, the precursors of the Christian monks, lived solely on the wild plants of the hill-sides, but, yet, were frequently surrounded by large numbers of disciples, who adopted their painful discipline. Colonies were also formed in various outlying towns of Judea, the members maintaining the same rites as their brethren, and having always ceremonially pure accom-

⁴⁵ Jos. Vita, 6.

modation for them when they wandered from the hills. It seems as if the order had originally lived wholly among men, and had only gradually retired to more or less complete seclusion, as dread of defilement grew more intense.⁴⁶

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⁴⁶ Bell. Jud. ii. 8. 4.

Their whole day was spent in labour in the field, or in the care of cattle, or in that of bees, and in other useful industries.⁴⁷ They thus provided nearly all they wanted, buying what little they required besides, through a special officer. They neither bought nor sold among themselves, but exchanged as each required, and they would hardly use coin, from its bearing an image.

⁴⁷ Ant. xvii. 1. 5. Philo, ii. 457.

The supreme end of their retirement, either in associations or as solitary hermits, was to keep the Mosaic law with all possible strictness. They read it not only on Sabbath, but day and night, all other reading being forbidden. To blaspheme the name of Moses was the highest crime, punishable with death, and to give up his Books was a treachery which no Essene would commit, even under the agonies of torture or death.^m

The superstitious dread of defilement, which required the cups and platters of one company of Pharisees to be cleaned for the use of another,⁴⁸ was carried even farther by the Essenes. In imitation of the priestly meals in the Temple, from which the "unclean" were scrupulously excluded, they had common meals, morning and evening, before and after the day's work; all novices till the third year, and all who were not of the order, being excluded as levitically unclean. The dining hall was as sacred as a synagogue, the vessels and dishes purified with sleepless care, and even the clothing worn during the meals was counted holy. Priests invoked a blessing over the food, and it was eaten in reverent silence. Whoever became members of the order, gave up all they possessed to it, and the common stock thus obtained, added to the fruit and earnings of the general labour, were shared by all; the old and sick receiving the tenderest care.

⁴⁸ Geiger's Uebersetzung, 123.

The earnestness of the order showed itself in its principles. The novices had to promise "to honour God, to be righteous towards man, to injure no one, either at the bidding of another or of their own accord, to hate evil, to promote

CHAP. XXIII. good, to be faithful to every one, especially those in authority, to love the truth, to unmask liars, and to keep the hand from theft, and the conscience from unrighteous gain.”⁴⁹ Slavery was forbidden, and no oaths permitted, save those by which members were admitted to the order. War, and even the manufacture of weapons, was held unlawful, nor would they even use animal food, since the Law said, “Thou shalt not kill.” Trade, except so far as their simple wants required, was discountenanced.

⁴⁹ Bell. Jud. ii. 8. 7. Philo, ii. 457. Ant. xviii. 1. 5.

But if their morality, drawn from the Old Testament, was pure and lofty, their slavish devotion to ceremonial observances marked them as the most superstitious of their nation. There were four grades of levitical “cleanness,” through which the novice rose only by a long and stern probation, and it was defilement that needed to be washed away by a bath, for the member of a higher grade to be touched by one of a lower.⁵⁰ Priests washed their hands and feet before any sacred rite, but the Essenes bathed their whole body in cold water before every meal, and all they ate must be prepared by one of their own number. They bathed, also, each morning, before uttering the name of God. On Sabbaths, they would not even move any vessel from its place, and they prepared all their food on Friday, to avoid kindling a fire on the sacred day.⁵¹ They refused to eat flesh or wine, partly from fear of defilement, partly because they wished to reproduce in their whole lives the strictness of the Nazarites, of the priests during their ministrations, and of the old Rechabites. Thus, their only food was that prescribed to others for fasts. They kept aloof from the Temple, though they sent the usual gifts—for the presentation of an offering involved partaking in a sacrificial meal, which would have defiled them. In some of their colonies women were not suffered, from the same dread of uncleanness, and though they did not wholly forbid marriage, the wife was required to undergo even more ceremonial cleansings than the brethren. They kept a watchful guard that no one was defiled by the spittle of another, and that it did not fall on the right side. The anointing oil, which was to other Jews a festal luxury, in which the Psalmist had

⁵⁰ Bell. Jud. ii. 8. 5, 8.

⁵¹ Bell. Jud. ii. 8. 9.

gloried, as dropping from Aaron's beard, was, to the Essene, an uncleanness, which needed to be washed away; a brother, expelled from the order, would rather starve to death, than touch food prepared by a common Jew, nor would any Roman torture force him to lose his caste.⁵² The whole life of an Essene was a long terror of defilement. The work of the colony began before sunrise, with psalms and hymns, followed by prayer and washing. They then went to their day's work. At eleven—the fifth hour—the scattered labourers gathered again for a common bath in cold water. The woollen dress in which they worked was now laid aside, and the consecrated dress of the order put on, in preparation for their eating together, and their meal, which consisted only of bread and a single kind of vegetable, was eaten with prayer, in solemn stillness. The holy dress was then laid aside, and work resumed. In the evening, the second meal was taken, with the same solemnities and rites, and worship closed the day, that only pure thoughts might fill their souls as they retired to rest. One day followed another, with the monotony of pendulum beats, in precisely the same round of unbending forms.

The Essenes, as the mystics of Judaism, naturally gave themselves to metaphysical speculations, and, like the Rabbis, they revelled in fantastic allegorizing of Scripture. From the philosophic Judaism of Alexandria, they borrowed notions on free will and fate, and from Persia and Greece, with both of which their race had been, for long periods, in contact, they adopted various dogmas. The soul, they imagined, was a subtle ether, of heavenly origin, drawn down to earth by a fell necessity, and imprisoned in the body till set free at death. It was then borne away, if pure, beyond the ocean, to a region where storms were unknown, and where the heat was tempered by a gentle west wind, perpetually blowing from the ocean. If it had neglected the Law, however, it was carried off to a dark, wintry abyss, to dwell there for ever.⁵³ Every morning, the Essenes paid homage to the Sun, and they would not, at any time, let its beams fall on anything levitically unclean.

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⁵² Bell. Jud. ii. 8. 10.⁵³ Bell. Jud. ii. 8. 11. Ant. xviii. 1. 5.

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The community of goods among them was a necessity of their mode of life, since the order alone could supply the wants of its members. It had the result of enforcing simplicity. An under garment, without sleeves, was their only clothing in summer, and a rough mantle their prophet-like winter garb. The inter-relation of the different colonies made money useless in travelling, for there was no need of it when, at each resting place, their frugal wants were freely supplied by any brother. They had no servants, and, as they recognized no distinction but that of "clean and unclean," they could have no slaves.

The grand aim of this amazing system of self-denial and ascetic endurance is told by Josephus, in a brief sentence. "Consecrated, from childhood, by many purifications, and familiar, beyond thought, with the Holy Books, and the utterances of the prophets, they claim to see into the future, and, in truth, there is scarcely an instance in which their prophecies have been found false."⁵⁴ The belief that they could attain direct communion with God, by intense legal purification and mystic contemplation, and even pass, in the end, to such transcendental vision as would reveal to them the secrets of the future, was the supreme motive to endure a life of so much privation and self-denial. A similar course had been followed before their day, as a means of preparation for divine visions, and communion with higher powers. "In those days," says Daniel, "I was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh or wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. And on the four-and-twentieth day of the month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel," then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz." In the same way, Esdras prepared himself, beforehand, for his visions—"Go to the flowery open, where there is no house," said the angel to him, "and eat only the herbs of the field; taste no flesh, drink no wine, but eat herbs only, and pray unto the Highest continually; then will I come and talk with thee."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Bell. Jud. ii.
8, 12.

⁵⁵ 2 Esdras 9.
24, 25.

It was universally believed that the future was open before the aged members of the order, who had laboured after "purity" through life. Their souls were supposed to be well-nigh freed from the bonds of the flesh, and able to wander forth to the world beyond. Thus an Essene was said to have prophesied his miserable death to the brother of the first Aristobulus;⁵⁶ and another to have predicted to the boy Herod that he would be king, and that he would have a long reign, after he had gained the crown.⁵⁷ This gift of prophecy was believed by Herod and his sons,⁵⁸ no less than among the people, and hence an Essene was often sent for when a bad dream disturbed royalty, or anxiety for the future troubled it.⁵⁹ With such mystic claims, the expectations of Israel must have been their chief thought. Their old men dreamed dreams, their young men saw visions, and their sons and daughters prophesied, as if in fulfilment of the prophet's signs of the coming of the Messiah.⁶⁰ Yet we have no proof that they anticipated it as near, or applied themselves in any practical way to a preparation of Israel for it. It was only a fond and airy vision of the ideal future. They were rigid Predestinarians, believing that all things, in the course of nature and in the life of man, are fixed by fate.⁶¹ Where there was no moral freedom, it was idle either to preach or teach, and so they did neither.

As was natural with minds occupied mainly with subjects above human grasp, the speculations of the order became wild, and often monstrous. The novice was required by a fearful oath to conceal the secret names of the angels, which were known to the brotherhood, and gave him who learned them power, by pronouncing them, to draw down these awful beings from heaven. The Apocryphal literature of the day boasted of long lists of the names of angels, with their powers and offices; and the Essenes, like the Rabbis, believed that by secret spells, in which these names played a foremost part, they could command their services for good or evil, as the services of the genii are at the command of the magicians in the Arabian Nights. They believed also, in common with the age, in the secret magic

⁵⁶ Bell. Jud. i. 9.
5. Ant. xiii.
11. 2.

⁵⁷ Ant. xv. 10. 5.

⁵⁸ See the case of Archelaus before his fall, page 274.
Bell. Jud. ii.
7. 3.

⁵⁹ See the instance of Herod sending for Menahem. Ant. xv.
10. 5.

⁶⁰ Joel 2. 28.

⁶¹ Ant. xiii. 3. 9.

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⁶² Bell. Jud. II. 8. 7.

Authorities for this description of the Essenes: Lepsius *Art. "Essener,"* Bibel Lexicon. Hausrath's *Zeltgeschichte*, I. 132—149. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums*, I. 207—214. Ewald *Geschichte*, IV. 483 ff. Kelm, *Geschichte Jesu*, I. 282—306. Derenbourg, *Histoire de la Palestine*, 166—175. 460—462. Uhlhorn, *Art. "Essener,"* in Herzog's *Real Ency.* Schürer's *Lehrbuch*, 599—619, &c.

The influence of Essenism on the age, however, was small, for its members were few in proportion to the teeming population, and made no attempt at propagandism, but lived entirely apart from men. The natural product of the times, with its Messianic hopes, its striving after legal righteousness, its glorification of the past, and its contact with heathen superstition, it served the purpose, in some measure, of drawing away the thoughts from the dream of national political glory, and of preparing the soil for the more spiritual conception of the Messiah, which John and Jesus were to introduce. The Essenes came in contact with the people as healers, prophets, dream-interpreters, and exorcists, not as teachers or preachers. Their religious exercises and pure ideas were cherished in the community without an attempt to spread them through the nation;—in marked contrast to the Baptist, whose life was a fervent ministry to the masses of his countryman, and, still more, to Jesus,—for he lived in constant contact with men, even those shunned alike by Essene and Rabbi, as unclean: showed the most perfect superiority to all ritual narrowness; set light by ceremonial purity, or superstitious Sabbath laws; discarded fasting; took part in the social enjoyment of feasts, and meals, and marriages, and left a new code of rules and maxims for His disciples. Essenism was, at best, only the vivid culmination of the past, doomed to pass away, and wholly unfit to create.

From their lofty morality, the Essenes have been assigned a rank among the spiritual forces of their age, to which in reality they had no claim. If their moral purity and

spiritual depth, breathed of the prophets rather than the theocracy, and made their order, in so far, a herald of Christianity, their exaggerated ceremonialism, their harsh austerity, and their fantastic and half-heathen superstitions neutralized, to a large extent, this healthy influence. Still, in some directions, they surpassed in true morality anything in the last centuries of Jewish life. It gives even their harsh asceticism a higher dignity, that it was not, like that of the Pharisees, a mercenary service for external reward, but a self-denying attempt to keep out evil from the soul, and thus prepare it for that high communion with God, in whose sacred calm the still small voice of divine revelations grows audible. For the first time since the prophets, the spiritual condition of the soul was declared to be the end of religion. While the Rabbis distracted the age with their fierce party strifes about the merely external, another kind of life ripened in the seclusion of the colonies of Essenes, which bore better fruit, because it concerned itself with the need of a New Birth, and the circumcision of the heart, not with the theocracy, the Temple, or politics. The likeness to Christianity, where it exists in Essenism, was not in its institutions, but in the quiet and meditative frame that breathed through the community in its religious seriousness and priestly consecration of life—the “daily keeping of Sabbath” which was also the ideal of the first Christian communions. These characteristics of the order were, in some degree, common also to those who, after them, were “the quiet and peaceful in the land,” although its doctrines and ideas offered, otherwise, rather a contrast to Christianity than a resemblance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS.

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NO one is unaffected by the spirit of his age. It is not surprising, therefore, that at a time when religious earnestness found expression in the ascetic self-denial and retirement from the world of Nazarites, Essenes, and even of others, not connected with either,¹ the young enthusiast of Hebron² withdrew from his family and mankind, to the caves of the wilderness stretching away from his native town. In an age so troubled in politics and religion, the peaceful simplicity of such a hermit life was irresistible, and in its calm retirement men could work out their salvation by prayer, fasts, washings, and rigid zeal for the Law, with no one to make them afraid. The weary heart found repose in a solitude, where the great world, with its discord, turmoil, and confusion, its cruelty, selfishness, and treachery, was shut out.³ The psalm-singing, the ceremonies, and the quiet industry of the colonies of Essenes, sent strange emotions of gentleness and awe into men's hearts, in an age when, everywhere else, wickedness reigned triumphant. In such dark days these spots shone with a holy light. Having fled, in horror, from prevalent violence and sin,—by the natural law of reaction, the fugitives sought to extinguish in themselves the simplest instincts of human nature. It was thus, afterwards, in the awful times of the dissolution of the Roman empire. The deserts of Egypt and Syria were filled with a strange population, fleeing from the wild tumult and commotion under which the earth reeled. It was thus, also, in the fierce and lawless middle ages, when the cloister was like a speck of blue in a heaven of storm. Asceticism, in these different

¹ Schiller's
Lehrbuch, 617.

² Schiller, 618.

³ Morrison's Life
of St. Bernard,
90, 217.

periods, as in that of the Gospel history, was the only protest which told with sufficient force against the rampant evil around. Eleven centuries after Christ, a similar state of society made the ascetic life the ideal of the noblest souls, even where they did not withdraw from the world. St. Bernard's saintly mother,⁴ the model of Christian charity and lowliness, could not rest satisfied with these graces. By scantiness of food, by simplicity of dress, by the avoidance of worldly pleasures, by fasting, prayer, and vigils, she strove after that vision of self-sacrifice and humility, which alone was attractive in that age.⁵ Asceticism is not needed now. Its place has been more nobly filled by the claims of Christian work for others, but in John the Baptist's day, and for long centuries after, it was a natural tendency.

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A.D. 1091.

Morrison's St. Bernard, 4.

The wilderness to which John withdrew stretches, far and near, over the whole eastern part of Judea, beginning almost at Jerusalem, and reaching away, under different names, to the Dead Sea and the southern desert, as its distant limits. It is a dreary waste of rocky valleys; in some parts stern and terrible—the rocks cleft and shattered by earthquakes and convulsions, into rifts and gorges sometimes a thousand feet in depth, though only thirty or forty in width; in others, stretching out in bare chalk hills full of caves, or in white, flint-bound ridges, and winding, muddy wadys, with an occasional reservoir, hewn in the hard limestone, to supply water in a country destitute of springs. One may travel all day, and see no other life than the desert partridge, and a chance fox or vulture. Only the dry and fleshy plants, which require no water, grow on the hills, and in the valleys the most luxuriant vegetation is the white broom bushes, which blossom in March and April. The whole district is, in fact, the slope of the midland chalk and limestone hills, from their highest point of nearly 3,000 feet, near Hebron, to 1,000 or 1,500 feet, at the valley of the Dead Sea. The Hebrews fitly call it Jeshimon⁶—"the appalling desolation," or "horror"—for it is not possible to conceive a more desolate region. Parts of it are deserted even by the Arabs. On the northern side, valleys of great depth, sinking towards the Dead Sea, almost

⁶ 1 Sam. 23. 19, 24.

יֵשׁוּמוֹן (Ha Jeshimon), from יָשַׁם and שָׁמָם (yasham and shamam), to be waste, desolate, with the idea of creating horror—dis-maying.

CHAP. XXIV. preclude travelling except in their troughs, and farther south, the country is absolutely impassable. Huge perpendicular gorges, of from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet in depth, and in some places nearly a mile in width, have been hollowed out by the great torrents, rushing in winter over the precipices, towards the Dead Sea. The only natural site for a town, in the whole district, is the opening at the foot of the pass of Engedi, the spring of the wild goats, above the shores of the sea, and this is reached only by a narrow, serpent-like path, down cliffs twelve hundred feet high,—well named by the Hebrews, the rocks of the wild goats,⁷—which only unloaded beasts, by an hour's slow care, can descend in safety. Excepting in the spring, at this spot, water is to be found only in hollows of the rocks, or in the very rare water-cisterns, hewn in past ages in the limestone, which catch some of the few passing showers which visit this region.

⁷ 1 Sam. 24. 2.

⁸ Keim, I. 485.

This "Spring of Engedi"—or "Ain Jidy," gushes from beneath a rock on a little plateau, 500 feet above the Dead Sea, and 1,200 feet below the top of the cliffs. The water is sweet and clear, but unpleasantly warm to the taste. The stream flows in a long cascade over the steep face of the cliff, and is lost in channels for irrigation, beneath,—low bushes, bending rushes, and the gigantic leaves of the osher, the yellow berries of the apple of Sodom, and the flat cedar-like tops of the thorny Darda'ra, rising in a thicket along its course. Bulbuls and hopping thrushes court this shelter, and black grakles, with golden wings, and melodious note, flit to and fro on the cliffs above. On every side, below the spring, ruined garden walls, and terraces, and a large terraced mound, show the site of the ancient town,⁸ which had, perhaps, a thousand inhabitants. The scenery along the shore is magnificent in its wild and desolate grandeur. Beneath, is the blue water of the Dead Sea; above, rise the tall crags and castellated precipices of the great rock-wall, which runs, ever higher and steeper, nearly to the fortress of Masada, the square isolated mass of which, more than 1,500 feet above the Dead Sea, forms a great plateau, cut off on every side by deep gorges, and vertical walls of rock, and

seen from Engedi. On the east, beyond the deep gorges of the Arnon, and lesser streams of the Blue Mountains, the white towers of Kerak look down from a great cliff which seems to defy approach.⁹

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The town of Engedi was the one minute living spot in the whole region, for the only human habitations in the wild region above were the hill caves, in which hermits sought a miserable shelter. Somewhere in the gorge leading down to the spring, the Essenes had their little colony in John's day, but their strict isolation left the lonely anchorite in a deeper solitude. In the neighbouring wilderness, where the venomous desert viper¹⁰ glided among the stones, and the scorpion, the fox, the vulture, or the raven, were almost the only signs of life: where drought reigned, and the waterless hills and stony valleys were symbols of utter desolation,—in some cave, perhaps, in the depth of a deep and narrow gorge, that at least gave shelter from the pitiless heat and glare of an eastern sun, John took up his abode, to be alone with God and his own soul, and, thus, the better able to fulfil the life-long vow which separated him from men. Bred up a strict Jew, and trained, like St. Paul, in the perfect knowledge and observance of the Law,¹¹ he was, doubtless, like him, a zealot towards God in all things respecting it. At what age he retired from Hebron to this hermit life, we have no means of knowing, but he had, apparently, lived for many years apart from men before his public appearance. The Gospels furnish us with vivid glimpses of his appearance and mode of life. His hair hung long about him, like Sampson's, for it had never been cut from his birth.¹² His only food was the locusts which leaped or flew on the bare hills, and the honey of wild bees which he found, here and there, in the clefts of the rocks, and his only drink a draught of water from some rocky hollow. Locusts are still the food of the poor in many parts of the East. "All the Bedouins of Arabia, and the inhabitants of towns in Nedj and Hedjaz, are accustomed to eat them," says Burckhardt. "I have seen at Medina and Tayf, locust shops, where they are sold by measure. In Egypt and Nubia they are eaten only by the poorest beggars. The Arabs, in preparing them for eating, throw them

⁹ Lieut. Claude Conder, in *Pal. Ex. Fund Rep.* July, 1875.

¹⁰ Deut. 32. 10; 8. 15.

¹¹ Acts 22. 3.

¹² Judges 16. 17.

CHAP. XXIV. alive into boiling water, with which a good deal of salt has been mixed, taking them out after a few minutes, and drying them in the sun. The head, feet, and wings, are then torn off, the bodies cleansed from the salt, and perfectly dried. They are sometimes eaten boiled in butter, or spread on unleavened bread mixed with butter." In Palestine, they are eaten only by the Arabs on the extreme frontiers; elsewhere they are looked on with disgust and loathing, and only the very poorest use them.¹³ Tristram, however, speaks of them as "very palatable."¹⁴ "I found them very good," says he, "when eaten after the Arab fashion, stewed with butter. They tasted somewhat like shrimps, but with less flavour." In the wilderness of Judea, various kinds abound at all seasons, and spring up with a drumming sound, at every step, suddenly spreading their bright hind wings, of scarlet, crimson, blue, yellow, white, green, or brown, according to the species. They were "clean," under the Mosaic Law,¹⁵ and hence could be eaten by John without offence. The wild bees in Palestine are far more numerous than those kept in hives, and the greater part of the honey sold in the southern districts is obtained from wild swarms. Few countries, indeed, are better adapted for bees. The dry climate, and the stunted but varied flora, consisting largely of aromatic thymes, mints, and other similar plants, with crocuses in the spring, are very favourable to them, while the dry recesses of the limestone rocks everywhere afford them shelter and protection for their combs. In the wilderness of Judea, bees are far more numerous than in any other part of Palestine, and it is, to this day, part of the homely diet of the Bedouins, who squeeze it from the combs and store it in skins.¹⁶

John's dress was in keeping with the austerity of his life. A burnouse of rough, rudely woven cloth of coarse camels' hair,^a such as the Bedouins still wear, bound round his body by the common leathern girdle still in use among the very poor,¹⁷ was apparently his only clothing. His head-dress, if he had any, was the triangular head-cloth, kept in its place by a cord, as is still the custom among the Arabs, and his feet were shod with coarse sandals. In Hebron he had had

¹³ The Land and the Book, 420.

¹⁴ Natural Hist. of Bible, 308.

¹⁵ Lev. 11, 22.

¹⁶ Tristram, 324.

¹⁷ Furrer's Wanderungen, 28.

around him all that could make life pleasant—a saintly home, loving parents, social consideration, modest comforts, and an easy outlook for the future. But the burden of life had weighed heavy on him, and his heart was sad, and drove him forth from men. The enemies of his people were strong, and the hand of them that hated them¹⁸ lay ¹⁸ Luke 1. 71. sore upon them. The cry of the faithful in the land rose to God, that He would remember His holy covenant and deliver them.¹⁹ They sighed to be free from the presence ¹⁹ Luke 1. 72, 73. of the heathen, that, once more under God as their only king, with their country to themselves, they might serve Him without fear, in the homage of the Temple, and the rites of the Law.²⁰ Israel had long sat in darkness,²¹ with no break ²⁰ Luke 1. 74, 75. of light from heaven. The promises seemed to tarry. The ²¹ Luke 1. 79. godly sighed to have their feet guided into the way of peace, but no Messiah had appeared to lead them.²² ²² Luke 1. 79.

But if the sorrows of the nation pressed on the heart of John, so, also, did their sins. If the “shadow of death” thus lay on them,²³ it was through their own sins and de- ²³ Luke 1. 79. generacy, for God had only forsaken them because they had first forsaken Him. The courts of His Temple had been turned into a den of thieves;²⁴ the spiritual guides of the ²⁴ Mark 11. 17. multitude were deceitful and deadly as the viper of the desert; blind leaders of a blind people.²⁵ They who should ²⁵ Matt. 15. 14. have been the holiest of the holy—God’s priests—were a scorn and derision for their unworthiness. Before John reached his majority, he had seen the sacred mitre changed nine times, at the will of Archelaus, or of a heathen governor from Rome, and the puppet high priests had desecrated its awful dignity by personal vice, or time-serving policy, or indifference to its highest obligations, or shameful luxury and haughty pride. Two of the family of Boëthos of Alexandria, raised by Herod to dignify his marriage into the house, had worn the high priests’ robes, but the people muttered curses on them,²⁶ for having surrounded themselves ²⁶ Page 344. with courtly show and military violence. Ismael, the son of Phabi, had worn them, but the clubs of his retainers had become a by-word in Jerusalem, as had his own shameful personal luxury.²⁷ Three members of the family of Hannas ²⁷ Page 345.

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had worn them—Hannas himself,²⁸ Eleazar, his son, and, now, Caiaphas, his son-in-law,—and Hannas was still the foremost man in Jerusalem, but they hated the people, and the people hated them, and maintained that they hissed at them like vipers, in their proud malignity;²⁹ or glided to their evil ends, like the snake. Their families were branded as Sons of Eli. Iniquity filled the high places of the Hill of God. Nor were the people themselves innocent, for He who was meek and lowly in spirit denounced them, a year or two later, as an evil and adulterous generation, more hardened and hopeless than Nineveh, or Sodom and Gomorrah, which God had cursed.³⁰ Earnest souls, in such circumstances, with the earth dark around them, and no light in the heavens;³¹ feeling that hope could only come with national contrition, and awakened spiritual life, might well, in loving, sad despair, withdraw themselves from mankind.

²⁸ The Annas of the Gospels.²⁹ Page 344.

³⁰ Matt. 12. 39.
Mark 8. 38.
Matt. 12. 41;
10. 15; 11. 24.

³¹ Jerem. 4. 28.

But with John there was also a conviction that the Messiah, long expected, must be near at hand, and that the fit preparation for His advent was a self-denial and humiliation, which surrendered the whole present, and gave itself up to prayer and watching, in desert solitudes. It was the idea of his age, and John could be satisfied with nothing less. A great sorrow and a great ideal alike drove him to “keep his body under,” as if the least pleasure were sin, and the flesh the enemy of the soul.

³² Vita, 2.

Josephus gives us a sketch³² of one of the recluses of the desert, with whom he himself lived for three years. “His name was Banus, his home the desert, his only clothing the leaves or bark of trees, his only food what grew of its own accord, his only drink the brook, and his daily and nightly practice, to bathe in cold water.” Not a few such, no doubt, buried themselves in the dens and caves of the lonely hills round John, weary of the world, as Pliny says, and seeking, by a life of penitence, as he calls it, to cleanse away the defilements of the flesh.

With many, the great motive might be to save themselves in the shipwreck of all besides, but no such unworthy impulse actuated John. He sought the wilderness, at once

to secure perfect levitical purity, for he was a strict Jew— to ponder over the mysteries of the long-delayed kingdom of God, and to aid in bringing about its accomplishment. His life, so earnestly striving for meetness for the new Messianic kingdom, was no vacant and idle solitude. He had nothing of the Eastern mystic, whose cell witnesses only dreamy and selfish meditation. The struggles of soul, in all natures like his, were unspeakably real, and we cannot doubt that his days and nights saw him pleading, by long earnest prayer, with many tears and sore fasting, that God, in His mercy, would, at last, send the Messiah to His people. We know how even Christ, "in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears;" how He sighed deeply in His spirit, and spent whole nights in the hills, or in the desert, in lonely prayer, and His herald must have felt, in his measure, the same all-absorbing zeal. The prophets and Rabbis, alike, taught that the "Kingdom of Heaven" could only come when Israel had prepared itself by humiliation and repentance, and John sought to rouse men at large to feel this, by the protest against their sins, embodied in his example. To rebuke love of riches would have been idle, had he lived in comfort; to condemn the hollowness and unreality of life, he must be clear of all suspicion of them himself. Men involuntarily do homage to self-denying sincerity, and there could be no question as to that of John. It was felt that he was real. Religion had become a thing of forms. Men had settled into a round of externals, as if all religion centred in these. Deencies and proprieties formed the substance of human life. But John showed that there was, at least, one man with whom religion was an everlasting reality.³³

A soul lost in the greatness of eternal truths, like that of John, may well have risen to an indifference to the comforts, or even ordinary wants of the body, otherwise almost impossible. We have no record of his daily life, but that of one who, in saintliness of spirit, trod in his steps, is still preserved. Saint Antony, in the deserts of Egypt, was wont to pass whole nights in prayer, and that not once, but often, to the astonishment of men. He ate once a day, after the

³³ Robertson's Sermons, 1st series, 124.

CHAP. XXIV. setting of the sun; his food was bread with salt, his drink nothing but water. Flesh and wine he never tasted. When he slept, he was content with a rush mat, but mostly he lay on the bare ground. He would not anoint himself with oil, saying that it was more fit for young men to be earnest in subduing the body, than to seek things which softened it. Forgetting the past, he, daily, as if beginning afresh, took more pains to improve, saying over to himself, continually, the Apostle's words—"Forgetting what is behind; stretching forth to what is before;" and mindful, too, of Elijah's saying, "The Lord liveth, before whom I stand"—he said, in himself, that the ascetic ought ever to be learning his own life from that of the great Elias, as from a mirror.³⁴ The picture may not suit in some particulars, but as a glimpse of the mortified life of the desert, in its best aspect, it may serve to realize that of John, in the loneliness of the rough wilderness of Judea.

³⁴ Kingsley's
The Hermits,
39, 40.

In its rugged solitudes, his soul gradually rose to the consciousness of a great mission. He believed that the wrath of God was near at hand, to take vengeance on the unrighteousness of men, but he knew that the God of Abraham, even in wrath, remembers mercy, and that, with the judgments, there would come the long-promised deliverer. His impetuous nature, and a heart that never feared the face of man, raised him to the level of the old prophets, and impelled him, like them, to address his generation. Instinct with the deepest religious feeling; of a transparent simplicity, and reverend truthfulness of word and bearing; glowing with energy: a living embodiment of sincerity and self-denial, and in the best position, from his earliest years, to know the age, he was, above all men, fitted to rouse the sleeping conscience of Israel, and to lay bare the self-deceptions and sins of even the religionists of the day. Though a hereditary priest, he had stood aloof from the Temple service, for its mechanical rites gave him no inner peace.

From the Temple aristocracy he shrank with a special aversion, for the guilt of the nation culminated in them. Under the mantle of legal purity, and behind the cheap

popular sanctity of the Pharisees, his quick eye saw, at a glance, hateful ambition, greed, and hypocrisy. The nation itself stirred his soul, as he saw it, in a time so earnest, contenting itself with Pharisaic righteousness, and trusting, with insane self-complacency, to its being the people of God.³⁵ In his loneliness, his soul had communed much with the prophets of the Old Covenant, and found in their holy zeal for Israel and God; in their demand for a higher righteousness of the heart and life, instead of sacrifices of beasts; in their lofty announcement of a divine future for his nation, if it prepared itself for it, the prophetic longing and prophecy of his own spirit. That he never names Moses, shows that he must have passed beyond the Law, to the prophets. Isaiah, especially, had excited in him a faith so deep and intelligent that Jesus rebuked his fears, when perplexed and doubting, by a quotation from that prophet's³⁶ Messianic predictions. The few fragments left of his preaching abound in figures borrowed from this, his favourite Book—the viper brood, the trees of God's vineyard, the felling that which was barren, the consuming fire, the threshing floor and the winnowing shovel, and the giving bread and clothing to the poor.³⁷

John's life in the wilderness seems to have been no short retirement. His whole later bearing, his mode of life, his sad passionate earnestness, and even his lofty resolve to come forth as a prophet, imply a long abode in the solemn freedom of the desert, far from the distracting and enfeebling tumult of life. But, though in the same wilderness, he was no Essene. His relation to the people at large, his conception of a kingdom of God in their midst, his later preaching to them, his sympathy even for publicans and sinners, from whom the Essenes and Pharisees shrank as pollution; even his food, which, though simple, was still, in part, of flesh, show that he was in no way connected with that order. Like its members, he was unmarried; like them, he denied himself all indulgence, and showed a prophet-like grandeur in his standard of aim and practice. But though their settlements were close at hand, and were open to him, he chose to live free and alone. It was well he did so, for this freedom

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³⁵ Matt. 9, 7 ff.
Luke 4, 7 ff.³⁶ Matt. 11, 5.³⁷ Isaiah 59, 5;
5, 7; 6, 13;
10, 15; 18, 33;
40, 24; 1, 31;
9, 18; 10, 17;
5, 24; 47, 14;
21, 10; 28, 27;
30, 24; 40, 24;
41, 15; 68, 7.

CHAP. XXIV. created an impulse before which the nation trembled and lived, while Essenism, with no vital power beyond itself, left it to lie dead.

The fundamental principle in John's seclusion was, in fact, exactly the reverse of that of the recluses of his day. They dwelt apart from men, to seek their own spiritual good with a pious and cynical selfishness. John sought the wilderness by an impulse which seemed like the voice of God, to seek, in its loneliness, a loftier spiritual life than seemed possible amidst the religious decay of the time. As a Jew, he had not risen above the external and material in religion. An earnest, strong, all-embracing heroism of self-denial, which proved its depth by its self-inflictions; a rejection of all temptations of society and culture, with their threatening possibilities of defilement; a strenuous war against nature, in every appetite, to the extent of enduring the privations of hunger, homelessness, and exposure, were, at once, the discipline by which he struggled against the "uncleanness" he still lamented, and the aids by which he hoped to attain nearness to God. Yet he was far from caring only for himself. His future career, and his very clothing, which was that of an ancient prophet, showed that he carried the burden of his people on his soul, and had fled from the crowd to entreat God for them, by prayer and penitence, and, in accordance with the ideas of his time, to prepare, on behalf of all, by holy fasts, for gracious revelations from heaven.

This revelation, he, in fact, received. He already saw that the times were ripe for the judgments of God. The slavery to heathen Rome had followed the agony of the days of Herod, and had dispelled every hope. For nearly a generation he had seen nothing but misery in the land. In his boyhood the census of Quirinius had drenched the country in blood, and had been followed by such oppression as had, already, in his early manhood,⁸⁸ exhausted the resources of the nation, and caused a despairing appeal to Rome for relief. Rapacious and unjust governors, true Roman knights, seeking only their own fortune, and rioting in the abuse of their power, had added burdens on their own account; the officials and

⁸⁸ A.D. 17.

soldiers had only too faithfully copied their lawless violence; heathen garrisons occupied the Holy City and the Temple; the high-priesthood had become a mere sport of those in power, and all the sanctities of the national life had been mocked and outraged in turn. Since the year 26, Pontius Pilate had been governor, a man to be compared only to Gessius Florus, the last Roman Procurator, whose enormities at last roused the war of despair in which Jerusalem perished. Pilate wilfully set himself to insult and violate the sacred customs. It was beneath him to study the people he ruled. Not merely harsh, and hot-headed; carrying matters haughtily even towards Antipas and the sons of Herod—he was malevolent, and ever on the watch to gratify, by cunning and venomous threats, the hatred rankling in his breast against a race he did not understand, and who defied him. The people of Jerusalem suffered at his hands a series of provocations without end, of malicious injuries, brawls, and massacres. So envenomed was he, indeed, that even when he saw his mistake and trembled before Tiberius, he would not yield, because he could not consent to do his subjects a pleasure. Philo,³⁹ his contemporary, charges him with accepting bribes, with acts of wanton violence, with robberies, with shameful treatment of many, wanton insults and threats, continual executions contrary to law, and aimless and grievous cruelties. “He was a malicious and furious man,” says Philo, “unwilling to do anything that he thought would please his subjects.” The nation looked back even on Herod’s days with regret, so much worse had become its state, now that it was trodden under foot by the Romans, and saw no hope of relief. John had noted all this. Living close to Jerusalem, he had been amidst it all; unlike Jesus, who had lived far off in Galilee. He had shuddered at the spectacle of infidel high priests—mere Sadducees, culminating now in Caiaphas, whom the people hated,⁴⁰ but Pilate liked, or, at least, endured. He had learned to despise the bulk of the Rabbis, who tamely bowed to the shameful yoke they had invoked, and submitted to it from interest. Nor were the people better than their leaders. They lived in the day dreams of a merely outward

³⁹ Philon. Leg. 1033.

⁴⁰ Ant. xviii. 4. 3.

CHAP. XXIV. piety, with proud and mercenary hopes of a rich earthly reward for it from the Messiah.

Amidst such mingled crime, wickedness, and corruption, the soul of John was filled with humiliation and grief. The Holy Law, given at Sinai, had sunk to a superstitious creed, and was only tolerated by Rome: the sceptre of the nation was broken in pieces, though it had been promised that it would be everlasting: the holy hill had become the citadel of an uncircumcised soldiery, and the streets, which had echoed to the minstrelsy of David and his sacred choir, were invaded by the ensigns and music of a Gentile nation. It seemed as if God must presently appear. He had never before remained for centuries without baring His Mighty Arm: He had never before endured, thus, the derision of the heathen, or the sin of His people: He had never before left them to perish as now. For His own name sake He would assuredly appear. The prophecies of Daniel had predicted only a short triumph to the iron kingdom, Rome,⁴¹ and it had now lasted for a generation. But even in these last days, had not the curse on the house of the Idumean, the destruction of Antipater, Phasael, Herod, Archelaus, and many others of the hated race, shown that the wrath of God was kindled, and that His avenging judgments were on the way? The judgments of God, foretold by the prophets, must speedily fall, alike on apostate Israel, and on her enemies.

⁴¹ Dan. 7. 25;
12. 7.
Ant. x. 11. 7.

What John had foreboded in Hebron or Jerusalem became a certainty to him in the wilderness. The lonely vastness raised him above anxious contrasts of the weakness of Israel and the might of Rome, which might have paralyzed resolution, and bidden hope despair. The solemn stillness of the hills, and the boundless sweep of the daily and nightly heavens, effaced the thought of man, and filled his soul with the majesty of God. What was man, whose days were a handbreadth, and whose foundation was in the dust, before the Mighty Maker of Heaven and Earth—the rock of Israel? He had often appeared to deliver His people when their case seemed hopeless. And did not the judgments of God, in the prophets, always come laden with hidden good?

Were not cursing and blessing, smiting and healing, death and resurrection, always joined in His visitations? John's own history in the wilderness gave him hope for his race. His prayers, his penitence, his renunciation of the world, his life devoted to God, had removed the burden and agony of his soul, and he had found peace, and rest, and grace, and heavenly light. What he had felt was possible for all Israel. If they could only be brought to resolve, to turn, to repent, to live a new life, their repentance would bring down showers of blessings, as it had always done in the past, and the lightnings and thunders of judgment would break in wrath on their foes, but in heavenly help to themselves. The repentance of Israel would bring the Messiah. He knew He was near. It had been revealed even before his birth that he himself was to go before Him, in the spirit and power of Elias, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.⁴² The call of God rang in his soul like a trumpet, ⁴³ Luke 1. 17. to go forth and preach to the people the coming of the expected Deliverer, in judgment to the impenitent, and grace to the contrite. Led by the Divine Spirit, through long years of spiritual struggle—his soul turned inward on itself and upward to God—his body subdued by long exposure and privation, and his whole being raised to a lofty invincibility of purpose, untamed by customs, unweakened by compliances, but filled with meditation and high religious life—he had, at length, felt equal to taking the sublimest and most terrible position into which a frail man could be raised by the Almighty—that of the herald predicted by his favourite Isaiah, to pioneer the way for the Messiah of God. He was to fill up the valleys, and make low the mountains and hills, to make the crooked places straight, and the rough places even; that is, to rebuke the lofty and proud; to raise up the humble and oppressed; to spare none of the crooked policies and ways of men, and to smooth down their roughness by a hearty repentance, so as to fit them for the peaceful entrance of the Christ.

The kingdom of God, as thus realized by John, was far higher and grander than previous conceptions. In his infancy, Judas, the son of Saripheus, and Mattathias, had

CHAP. XXIV. sought to bring in the reign of the Messiah by a political rising, which had been quenched in blood. In his boyhood, Judas, the Galilean; had, in the same way, appealed to force, for the same end, but had only covered the land with mourning. Yet the party with whom a religious war with Rome had become a fanatical creed, was daily increasing. Even in Samaria, it was proclaimed that the kingdom of God was about to come, and that it would take an outward political form. The misery that had roused Judea had also pressed heavily on the Samaritans, and their national jealousy of the Jews anticipated a share in the expected Messianic glory. In their opinion, they, and not the Jews, held the real Holy Land promised to Abraham—the land where the patriarchs had fed their flocks: they had the true Temple Mount, and the true Law, free from the corruptions of the prophets; upon their holy mountain Moses had buried the true vessels of the Tabernacle, which the Jews claimed to have possessed under the Temple of Solomon, and which, they asserted, had been miraculously hidden, after the Temple had been destroyed by the Chaldeans. The possession of these vessels was all important, for, with the fondness for outward embodiments of belief common to the East, it was held that the place where they were hidden would be the scene of the proclamation of the Messiah. A cherished promise, they avowed, announced that when the kingdom of the Messiah was set up, the Ark, and these sacred vessels, would be again brought forth. Jeremiah, so ran the Jewish tradition, being warned of God, commanded the Tabernacle and the Ark to go with him to Mount Nebo, and there he hid them and the altar of incense in a hollow cave, and stopped the door, which none who went with him could afterwards find. Jeremiah thereon told them that it would be “unknown till the time when God gathers His people again together, and receives them to mercy. Then shall the Lord show them these things again, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shown unto Moses.”⁴³ A fuller version of this tradition introduced an angel as the chief actor, instead of Jeremiah. Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, it went on, this

⁴³ 2 Macc. 2.
4—8.

heavenly being descended to Jerusalem, alighting on the Temple, to save it. Having prepared the Tabernacle, the Ephod of the High Priest, the Ark, the Two Tables of Stone from Sinai, the Golden Robes of the High Priest, the Altar of Incense, the Urim and Thummim, and the holy vessels, for removal, he carried them to a secret place, and cried with a loud voice, "O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the mighty Lord, and receive what I commit to thee, and keep it to the end of the times, to restore it again when thou art commanded, that the stranger get not possession of these things. For the time will come when Jerusalem shall arise again, to endure for ever!" Then the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up all.⁴⁴ A third version, used figuratively in the Apocalypse, supposes the holy vessels to have been taken to heaven and hidden there. He who overcomes is to eat of the manna which is hidden in Heaven,⁴⁵ and when "the Temple of God was opened above, there was seen in it the Ark of the Covenant."⁴⁶

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⁴⁴ Apocalypse of Baruch, in Ceriani Monumenta Sacra et Prof. Tom. i. fasc. II. cap. 6.

⁴⁵ Rev. 2. 17.

⁴⁶ Rev. 11. 19.

The Samaritans, treasuring these fancies no less warmly than the Jews, gave them a local colour, and had persuaded themselves that the true place of the mysteriously hidden treasures was the top of Gerizim, beside their own city—the hill from whose top the tribes of Israel had sounded the blessings of the Law, on the entrance of Joshua into Canaan.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Dent. 17. 5—26.

How intensely such thoughts were fermenting in the minds of the Samaritans in these years was shown a little later, when John's mission had closed without bringing them the results they had expected; for what then took place was only the final outburst of feelings long pent up. "A man,"⁴⁸ says Josephus, "who made nothing of falsehood, and tickled the multitude by whatever seemed likely to please them," had determined, if he could, to raise a popular movement, like that of John's, which had swept over Judea and Galilee, with the hope, most probably, of being able to turn it to political account. Sending abroad a report through the valleys of Samaria, that a new prophet would reveal, on a fixed day, on Mount Gerizim, the place where Moses had hidden the vessels of the Tabernacle,

⁴⁸ Ant. xviii. 4. 1.

CHAP. XXIV. he raised an uncontrollable excitement. The announcement implied that the kingdom of God would on that day appear, for the sacred vessels were to remain hidden till it was to begin. It was a crafty scheme, to transfer to Samaria the boastful hopes which had been the glory of Judea, by making open claim to the possession of the mysterious treasures, and of the Law in its purity. Thousands gathered on the day appointed, between Ebal and Gerizim. New caravans continually brought fresh numbers to Tirabatha, the village named by the prophet as the rendezvous, till the matter became serious in its possible political results, since the "elders" of the people identified themselves with the movement. Pilate was alarmed, fearing that the multitude might be easily led from a search for the sacred vessels to open sedition. His brutality had, in fact, already made them ready for it.⁴⁹ He therefore forbade the pilgrimage, and placed posts of foot and horse at all the approaches to Gerizim, to prevent them ascending it. But the vast multitude, many of whom were armed, would not be baulked, and tried to force their way to the sacred spot. Pilate, on this, ordered the troops to disperse them: fierce fighting followed, in which many were killed, the rest taking to flight, the principal men among the prisoners, taken during or after the battle, being put to death.^b

This tragical incident took place a few years after John's appearance,⁵⁰ but it was of a piece with the popular feeling respecting the Messianic kingdom, which was mixed up with the politics of the day. John kept entirely aloof from such views. If, as a Jew, he hoped that Israel would hereafter be exalted under the Messiah, he left that for future disclosure, and confined himself exclusively to the moral and spiritual. He was no political agitator, no revolutionary, like Judas the Galilean: his Messianic kingdom, like that of Jesus, was, at least for the time, a kingdom not of this world.⁵¹

⁴⁹ A.D. 33. Soon after the Crucifixion; some, however, think it happened about the time of Christ's death.

⁵¹ John 18. 36.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW PROPHET IN THE WILDERNESS.

IN the fifteenth year of Tiberius, which fell between August, CHAP. XXV.
A.D. 28, and August, A.D. 29, the Roman empire lay
 under the shadow of the darkest years of the tyrant, now
 an old man of seventy-one. Among those alive at the time,
 and remembered since, for good or evil, the elder Pliny,¹—1 Born A.D. 24.
 afterwards, when a Roman admiral, killed at the first
 eruption, in historical times, of Mount Vesuvius—was a child
 of four; Vespasian,² hereafter, with his son Titus, to crush 2 Born A.D. 9.
 Jerusalem, was full of the ambitions and dreams of a youth
 of 19; Caligula,³ one day to horrify the world by the 3 Born A.D. 12.
 spectacle of an insane despot at the head of the empire, was
 a lad of 16; Claudius,⁴ one day to be emperor, was a poor 4 Born B.C. 10.
 lane, trembling man of 38, and among the marriages of the
 year was that of the daughter of the ill-fated Germanicus,
 from which, nine years later, was born NERO. Things were
 very peaceful through the empire, for the only wars at the
 moment were with the Thracians, on the east of Europe, and
 with the Frisians, in the Dutch swamps on the north-west.
 Pontius Pilate had been two years procurator of Samaria,
 Judea, and Idumea, Herod Antipas had been reigning for
 about thirty-two years over Galilee and Samaria, and was
 now a man of about 50, and Philip, his brother, about the
 same age, and of the same standing as a ruler, was still
 tetrarch of the rest of the land, beyond the Jordan, living
 a quiet life, usefully and worthily.

Excepting the religious rising of Judas, and the other
 confusions after Herod's death, and at the time of the census
 by Quirinius, Palestine had enjoyed nominal peace for nearly
 sixty years.⁵ New cities and towns, with all the elegancies 5 Since B.C. 29.

CHAP. XXV. and splendour of Roman civilization, had risen all over the land—Cæsarea, with its docks, piers, warehouses, and broad streets, on which a splendid temple to Augustus, seen far off at sea, looked down. In Jerusalem, the great Temple, four huge castles, the theatre, the circus, and Herod's new palace, had risen. Samaria had been rebuilt with great splendour, and re-named Sebaste, the Greek equivalent of Augusta, after the Emperor. The old Kaphar Saba, on the inner edge of the sea plain, behind Joppa, had been rebuilt, and re-named Antipatris, after Herod's father. Near Jericho, two towns—Kypros, named after Herod's mother, and Phasaelis, after his brother, had been created. Anthedon, close to Gaza, on the sea coast, had been raised from its ruins, and called Agrippeion, after Agrippa, the son-in-law of Augustus. Two great fortresses had risen, called, after Herod, Herodion,—one in the hills on the south border, the other, three hours from Jerusalem, at the head of the descent to the Jordan valley, where Herod had once had a sore struggle with the rebellious Jews who pursued him. The passion of Augustus for obliterating the traces of the great civil wars throughout the empire, had everywhere been flattered by creations which at once beautified the land, and defiled it by their heathen accessories. In the far north, Philip, after his father's death, had re-built Paneas, in the green lap of Mount Hermon, and called it Cæsarea Philippi, in flattery of the emperor, and on the north-east of the Sea of Galilee, he had embellished the old Bethsaida, and re-named it Julias, after the daughter of Augustus. In Galilee, Herod Antipas had re-built Sepphoris, and surrounded its hill with strong walls; in the sheltered green plain opposite Jericho—the valley of the Acacias, of the days of Joshua⁶—he had built a fine town known as Livias, in compliment to the unworthy wife of Augustus, and within the last ten years he had built the splendid new capital on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, and called it Tiberias, after the new emperor. Even the gross and sensual Archelaus had copied to some extent his father's example, for a new town had risen on the west side of the Jordan, amidst palm groves elaborately irrigated, and called after himself, Archelais.

⁶ Abel-Shittim.
אֶבֶל שִׁטִּים
Numb. 33, 49.

The "Roman peace" which was destined to prepare the way for Christianity, by breaking down the barriers between nations, and fusing the civilized world, for the time, into one mighty commonwealth, had thus borne fruits on all sides, though mis-government was silently undermining the whole imperial system. The East was in profound peace. The Parthian cavalry hosts, who were the terror of the age, had not watered their horses in the Euphrates, or dared to cross it, for two generations.⁷ But they still swarmed over the plains of Parthia, and only waited the orders of the court of Ctesiphon, to dash in on the exposed territory of Palestine. Four legions, held in reserve in Syria, and a strong line of military posts along the Euphrates, at the thought of being ordered to which the Roman military youth shuddered, as a banishment from the world,⁸ barely sufficed to hold these fierce Cossacks of the age in check. The terror they had inspired in their last invasion was still unabated, for even St. John, forty years later, in the Apocalypse,⁹ saw four destroying angels bound in the great river Euphrates, who were loosed to slay the third part of men. Two hundred thousand horsemen in fiery, blue and brimstone-coloured mail, rode forth through the dried up river-bed, an army of hell, to destroy mankind—symbols taken, unquestionably, from the remembrance of the Parthians. The Roman historians use language hardly less striking of the endless rushing swarms of wild cavalry—their terrible shouts, like the bellowing of beasts, and the hideous clamour of countless drums, like the noise of thunder; their breastplates and helmets of steel glittering like lightning, their horses covered with brass and steelappings, the faces of the soldiers painted, and their shaggy hair gathered in a mass upon their foreheads, after the Scythian fashion. Their dreadful lances, their feigned retreats, their resistless arrows, the clouds of dust they raised by their charges, hiding the battle-field,—their spears, their slings, their blazing banners, gleaming with gold and silver,¹⁰ are all recounted. John and Jesus had, doubtless, both, often heard from the men of the generation before them, how these awful enemies had wasted the land once and again, swarming on their lean and untiring steppe horses through every

⁷ Since B.C. 38.⁸ Horat. Od. ii. 13; l. 12, 19.⁹ Ch. 9. 14 ff.¹⁰ Plut. Cræsus, iii. 331.

CHAP. XXV. valley, murdering, violating, burning, and plundering, for their squadrons of "Immortals" and "Freemen," especially, remained the terror of after years, as the symbol of treachery, greed, and ruthless brutality.

It was in such a state of things that John at last came forth from his retreat, as a prophet to his nation. The nearness of the wilderness of Judea to Jerusalem, and the dense population on every side of it, had no doubt led many to visit him from time to time, for the report of a hermit of special sanctity, living in any particular district, invariably attracted many to see him, and receive his counsels. He made his first public appearance on the Lower Jordan.

Two hours east of the wretched village which is the Jericho of the present day, but three hours from the site of the city of John's day, and eight or nine hours from Jerusalem, the Jordan flows with a quick current towards the Dead Sea, which is in sight, close at hand. Rising in the spurs of Lebanon, and gathering tributary springs and brooks at Cæsarea Philippi, from which Christ set out on His last journey to Jerusalem; flowing, presently, through the pear-shaped, marshy, Sea of Merom, and then through the lovely Lake of Galilee,—the course of the stream, from its leaving the lake to its passing Jericho, is only sixty English miles in a direct line, but two hundred if one follow its countless twistings and turnings. Near Jericho it has a breadth of from ninety to a hundred feet, and a varying depth of from three to seven, and hence can be forded easily, except during the time of floods, in spring, autumn, and winter, when to attempt to cross is very dangerous.¹¹ It was at this part of the Jordan that Vespasian's soldiers drove such multitudes of the Jews, in the last war, into the stream, when swollen by spring floods, that "the river could not be passed over on account of the dead bodies that were in it," (which might defile one), "and the Lake Asphaltitis" (the Dead Sea) "was also full of corpses, carried down into it by the river."¹² The waters flowing on towards the Dead Sea, between double banks, marking their lower and higher levels, in November and April—here muddy, and elsewhere steep,—covered with dense vegetation, or

¹¹ Lord Nugent's *Lands Classical and Sacred*, 100 ff. Sepp, *Das Heilige Land*, 770 ff. Keim's *Jesu von Nazara*, I. 497.

¹² *Jos. Bell. Jud.* iv. 7. 6.

with waving forests of reeds: the rounded hills of Judea on the west, giving way to the lofty peaks of Ammon on the east, made a scene well suited for his ministrations. Dense thickets of red tamarisks, stately sycamores, with their white stems and broad leaves, oaks with their dark, massy shadow, bending acacias, pale green willows and many-coloured oleanders, still cover the upper terrace,—varied by long, swampy tracts of reeds, taller than a tall man, on the lower levels,—while over the former, in John's day, rose graceful clumps of palms, "the pride of Jordan,"¹³ in which lions found covert in the time of the prophets. The valley is only a quarter of an hour broad, and is barren wherever it rises above the reach of the spring floods. Above it, a plain of three or four hours' breadth, and from fifty to sixty feet higher than the ground beneath, stretches, on the west side, to the foot of the rugged, bare, Jewish hills, which rise from a thousand to twelve hundred feet high, and, on the east, to the similar hills of Perea, two thousand to five thousand feet high. This plain, the barren background to a fringe of verdure, is the once famous "circle of the Jordan,"^a where Sodom and other towns flourished, till volcanic forces, as instruments of the wrath of God, destroyed them. It is now known by the name El Ghor, and is a vast, sandy, barren expanse, hot as a furnace, and very unhealthy in summer, from the depth of the Jordan gorge beneath the sea-level. Hence, in John's day, it formed a strong contrast to the green paradise, on the western bank,—“the divine land,” immediately around Jericho, the city of palms and roses, as it still does to the rich fringe of vegetation skirting the waters on the eastern side of the river, but vanishing like a dream at only a few paces from them.^b

It was in this region, beside the flowing stream, with the wild, stony hills shutting in the view on both sides; in a landscape where the narrow limits of the yearly floods drew a sharp line between tropical luxuriance and the scorched and desert barrenness beyond, that John, of whom Jesus could say, in allusion to the waving cane beds on the river's edge, that he was no reed shaken in the wind, but in very truth, Elias

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¹³ Jer. 12. 5; 49.
19; 50. 41.
Zech. 11. 3.
The word
תִּכְרֹךְ (gōn)—
pride, glory—
is wrongly
translated in
the English
version,
swellings.

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who was to come, a prophet, and much more than a prophet—lifted up his voice as the messenger before the face of God's Anointed, to prepare His way.¹⁴ The appearance of John was itself sufficient to arrest attention. His spare form, attenuated by meagre food and austerity: his bright Jewish eyes, full of the living energy that burned within: his long hair, uncut for thirty years—the mark of Nazarite consecration: his rough haircloth garment,¹⁵ and his coarse leather girdle, made him the picture of one of the ancient prophets. The Scriptures described the greatest of the prophets—Elijah the Tishbite, whom all expected to reappear before the Messiah—in exactly such a guise as John presented—“a long-haired man, wearing a leather girdle;”¹⁵ and they knew from the lessons in the Synagogue, if they had not read it for themselves, that the rough haircloth mantle had been the common dress of the old prophets as a class.¹⁶ It was also that of grief and contrition, even then,¹⁷ and added to the associations of the sacred past an appeal to their own sense of guilt and need of contrition.

The idea of the wilderness was sacred to the Jews. “From it,” say the Rabbis, “came the Law, the Tabernacle, the Sanhedrim, the priesthood, and the office of the Levites. Even the kingship, and, indeed, every good gift which God granted Israel, came from the desert.”¹⁸ The invitation of the people to it was in itself significant, for it recalled the words of Isaiah—“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”¹⁹ In connection with the expectation of the Messiah, its influence was immense. It was by relying on its weight with the people, that Theudas, a wild visionary, who assumed the role of a prophet some years after the Crucifixion,²⁰ persuaded the multitudes to follow him, as a second Moses, over the Jordan, to the wilderness, where he promised to perform miracles, and assured them that God would appear to deliver his people. Josephus speaks also of others who persuaded the people to follow them into the desert, “where, through the help of God, they would work open signs and wonders,”²¹ and Jesus Himself thought it necessary, before leaving his disciples, to warn them that “when it was said the Christ was in the wilder-

¹⁴ Matt. 11. 7;
11. 14; 17. 11.
Mark 9. 12.
Matt. 11. 9, 10.
Luke 7. 26, 27.

¹⁵ 2 Kings 1. 8.

¹⁶ Rev. 11. 3.
See texts in
note.

¹⁷ 2 Kings 6. 30.
Job 16. 15.
1 Kings 21. 27.

¹⁸ Schir. Hasch.
r. f. 13. 13.
Quoted by
Sepp, *Leben*
Jesu, ii. 44.

¹⁹ Isaiah 11. 3.

²⁰ In the reign
of Claudius,
A.D. 46.

²¹ Ant. xx. 5. 1;
8. 6.

ness, they were not to go out thither."²² The nation was daily expecting the appearance of "the wise and perfect prophet," who should bring back the lost Urim and Thummin, "restore the tribes of Israel, turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, reprove the times, and appease the wrath of God, before it broke out in fury."²³ Since Ezra's days the feeling had grown even deeper, that repentance alone could save Israel. "If we repented but one day," said the Rabbis, "the Messiah would appear." He was to lead all men back to God by repentance.²⁴ "As long as Israel does not repent, it cannot expect the Saviour," said Rabbi Juda.²⁵ But this repentance would not happen till Elijah had come, in fulfilment of the prediction of Malachi, and he was not to do so till three days before the appearance of the Messiah, when his voice would proclaim from one end of the earth to the other—"Salvation cometh into the world."²⁶

A prophet, in the Jewish point of view, was less a seer than a fearless preacher, from whom, to use the words of Clement, of Alexandria, the truth shone forth, as the light streams from the sun.²⁷ He might reveal the future, but his great characteristic was, that he was the mouthpiece of God, to utter, by resistless impulse, the rebukes or commands of the Almighty,²⁸ as His ambassador, and the interpreter of His will to men. John realized this ideal. He startled the people by demanding repentance, if they would escape the close approaching wrath of God. The Kingdom of Heaven²⁹—a phrase familiar to them from the language of Daniel, of the Psalms of Solomon,³⁰ and of other books, then in wide circulation—was at hand, and would bring with it the terrors of heaven. The conscience of the masses was roused. It had sunk to sleep under Pharisaic formalism, Roman oppression, and Sadducean indifference. John's voice sounded like a trumpet to alarm them. The popular excitement spread. Though he kept aloof from Jerusalem and the thickly peopled districts, the note he had struck vibrated through the whole land. Crowds gathered in daily greater numbers from Jerusalem, Judea, and the wide uplands of Perea.³¹ It seemed, indeed, as if he were the promised Elias, the herald of

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²² Matt. 24. 26.

²³ Ecclesiast. xiv. 11. Megillath Taanith, c. 8.

²⁴ Midrasch on Song of Sol. 7. 4. Nork, Rabbinsche Quellen, 15. Jerusalem Talmud, Taanith, fol. 64. 1.

²⁵ The Rabbis, quoted by Nork, 16.

²⁶ Eisenmenger Judenthum Entdecktes, II. 696.

²⁷ Clement. Hom. II. 6.

²⁸ נָבִיא (nabi), a prophet, from נָבָא (naba), to boil up, or boil forth—hence to pour forth words with the fervour and inspiration of a prophet.

²⁹ Ch. 7. 18.

³⁰ Ps. Salomonis, xvii. 4.

³¹ Matt. 3. 5. Mark 1. 5.

CHAP. XXV. the Messiah. Intensely real, he spoke nothing of levitical rites, or sacrifices, or of the Rabbis, but demanded that the Law should be applied to the conscience, and carried out in the life. A spiritual preparation would alone avert the coming wrath. A second Elijah, in spirit, as well as outward appearance, and, like him, witnessing in evil times, he came to throw down, not to build; to startle, not to instruct; to use the axe, not the trowel. The approach of the judgments of which the last of the prophets had spoken; when the indignation of God would burn as an oven,³² and the proud and the wicked should be as stubble, and be burned up till there was left neither root nor branch,—was his great theme. He added, however, the comforting assurance of the prophet, that to those who feared the name of the Lord of Hosts, the Sun of Righteousness should rise, with healing in His wing-like beams. The whole strain of Malachi was, indeed, only an anticipation of John's preaching. "The Lord, whom ye seek, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver; and He will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and the adulterers, and the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts."³³ Like all the prophets, his message was one of wrath, and yet, like theirs, it had a conditional promise of divine love and pity. As befitted his office, he seemed ordained, like Elijah, to reprove his times, for like him, "he was unmoved before the face of man, neither could any bring him into subjection."³⁴

³² Malachi 4, 1.

³³ Malachi 3.
1—3, 5.

³⁴ Ecclesiasticus
48. 12.

With the call to repent, John united a significant rite for all who were willing to own their sins, and promise amendment of life. It was the new and striking requirement of baptism, which John had been sent by divine appointment to introduce. The Mosaic ritual had indeed required

washings, and purifications, but they were mostly personal acts for cleansing from ceremonial defilements, and were repeated as often as new uncleanness demanded. But baptism was performed only once, and those who sought it had to receive it from the hands of John. The old rites and requirements of the Pharisees would not content him. A new symbol was needed, striking enough to express the vastness of the change he demanded, and to form its fit beginning, and yet simple enough to be easily applied to the whole people, for all, alike, needed to break with the past, and to enter on the life of spiritual effort he proclaimed. Washing had, in all ages, been used as a religious symbol, and significant rite. Naaman's leprosy had been cleansed away in the waters of the Jordan.³⁵ The priests in the Temple practised constant ablutions, and others were required daily from the people at large, to remove ceremonial impurity.³⁶ David had prayed, "Wash me from mine iniquity." Isaiah had cried, "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings."³⁷ Ezekiel had told his countrymen, to "wash their hearts from wickedness."³⁸ Ablution in the East, is indeed, of itself, almost a religious duty. The dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load; its removal is refreshment and happiness. It was, hence, impossible to see a convert go down into a stream, travel-worn, and soiled with dust, and, after disappearing for a moment, emerge pure and fresh, without feeling that the symbol suited and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart.³⁹ It was no formal rite with John. "He was a good man," says Josephus,⁴⁰ "and urged the Jews who were willing to live worthily, and to show uprightness one to another, and piety towards God, to be baptized. For baptism was approved of by him, not as a means of obtaining pardon for some sins only, but for the purity of the whole body, when the soul had been cleansed beforehand by righteousness." On baptism, in itself, he set no mysterious sacramental value. It was only water,⁴¹ a mere emblem of the purification required in the life and heart, and needed an after baptism by the Holy Spirit. No one could receive it till he had proved his

³⁵ 2 Kings 5. 10.³⁶ Ps. 51. 2.³⁷ Isaiah 1. 16.³⁸ Ezek. 23. 40.³⁹ Robertson's Sermons I. 120.⁴⁰ Ant. xviii. 5. 2.⁴¹ Mark 1. 8.
Matt. 3. 11.
Luke 3. 16.

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⁴² Matt. 3. 6.
Mark 1. 5.

sincerity, by an humble public confession of his sins.⁴² Baptism then became a moral vow, to show, by a better life, that the change of heart^d was genuine.

Bathing in Jordan had been a sacred symbol, at least, since the days of Naaman, but immersion by one like John, with strict and humbling confession of sin, sacred vows of amendment, and hope of forgiveness, if they proved lasting, and all this in preparation for the Messiah, was something wholly new in Israel. It marked, in the most striking way, the wonderful moral revolution which had taken place in the hearts of the people. If, as a school of the Rabbis contend, it was even then the custom to baptize proselytes on their forsaking heathenism, and seeking admission to the communion of Israel, the attitude of John towards the nation was even startling, and their submission to the rite a still greater proof of His power over the popular mind. In this case, it was no less than the treatment of Israel as if it had become heathen, and needed to seek entrance again, on no higher footing than a Gentile convert, to the privileges it had lost.

But he did not leave them to their own unaided efforts after purity. Had he merely summoned them to "flee from the wrath to come," he would have driven them to despair. Had he invited them to baptism, and then left them to their own efforts after holiness, he would have mocked them by an impossible task; for man, looking no higher than himself, can never become pure. Avowing this, he gave meaning and promise to his command and invitation, by pointing them to the coming Messiah, the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world.⁴³

⁴³ F. W. Robertson, i. 121.

It must have been a strange scene, and it remained long in the popular memory. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?" asked Jesus, in later months. The sudden apparition of a "saint," whose life, for years, had been spent in "the house of thirst, where demons and dragons howl," was fitted to startle the whole community, already excited to the uttermost. Men of all classes gathered to listen to the new prophet. The movement, at first local, gradually spread through "the whole

nation.”⁴⁴ The nearer districts—Jerusalem, Judea, and Perea—gathered first. Ere long, the excitable Galilæans, as far as Lebanon and the East Jordan country, caught the enthusiasm, and moved towards the Jordan valley. Caravans, with their numerous beasts, must have covered the Galilæan and Jewish roads, all wending to the one centre. Men left their work, or their calling; the keen trader, the Roman tax-collector, and the native and foreign soldier^a among them. Every rank was represented. All that was noble, and all that was base in Israel: the holy and the worldly; the pure and the corrupt; the earnest and the false; the friends of Rome and its enemies, mingled in the throng. Supercilious Rabbis, long-robed Pharisees, cold and courtly Sadducees, dignified high priests, circumspect Levites, grey-haired elders of the people; the rich farmer with full barns, and the poor peasant; soldiers of the Tetrarch Antipas, from Perea; perhaps, also, proselytes from the Roman garrison at Jerusalem, more disposed to accept baptism in the Jordan than circumcision; publicans,—born Jews, but despised and hated, alike, for their calling and their unjust exactions,—found themselves together. Israelitish women, also, were not wanting, and among them, not a few outcasts of the community—servants of vice.⁴⁵ All sought part in the salvation of Israel, or, at least, wished to seem interested in it—even the classes thrust back as unclean by the Pharisees and Essenes. Some longed to lay hold of it, others came only to look, criticize, and gossip, or report to the authorities.

Everything was so new, so startling, so impressive—the wilderness, the stream, the solemn hills—a prophet appearing, after more than five hundred years. His right to reject and denounce the whole present, in the name of God, was now, as always with prophets in the past, universally acknowledged. His words, his baptismal symbol, the kingdom he preached, the Messiah whom he announced as at hand, the very multitudes assembled, the visible emotion, the evident good effected, the contrition of the most sunken classes—the publicans and harlots—all showed that the whole nation believed in him.⁴⁶ From the rite advanced with such prominence, he was known as “the Baptist,” but

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^a Luke 20, 6.

⁴⁵ Matt. 3, 7; 21.
32 (harlots).
Luke 3, 10 ff.
John 1, 19 ff.

⁴⁶ Matt. 21, 26.

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⁴⁷ Luke 3. 12.⁴⁸ Matt. 11. 9;
21. 26.⁴⁹ Matt. 21. 25.

many gave him the name of Teacher,⁴⁷ and even that of Prophet.⁴⁸ He did not claim to perform miracles, like Elias, but his word had a wonderful power—his very baptism seemed to be “from heaven”⁴⁹—and, even after his imprisonment and death, the people maintained, with passionate tenacity, against the petty carpings of the priesthood, that he was, indeed, a prophet.

⁵⁰ Luke 3. 15.

John 1. 19 ff.

⁵¹ Jos. Ant. xviii.
5. 2.

Many even questioned whether he were not the Messiah, or, at least, “the prophet like Moses,” whom they expected.⁵⁰ He swayed the masses by his words, at his will,⁵¹ and might have made any political use of them he chose, had he been so minded.

⁵² Matt. 23. 2.

Luke 11. 52.

⁵³ Matt. 21. 23.

As the influence of the movement spread in ever-widening circles over the nation, it became impossible for the self-sufficient authorities at Jerusalem to ignore it. The religious instruction of the people was their prerogative. They claimed to sit in the seat of Moses and to have the key of knowledge,⁵² and it was against the rule for any one to teach who had not their authority,⁵³ confirmed by formal ordination.^f A deputation of priests and Levites of the Pharisee party was, therefore, deputed to go to the Jordan, and interrogate this new leader of the people as to his claims. Was he the Christ? or was he Elias? or was he the expected prophet?⁵⁴ Without a momentary hesitation of vanity or ambition, at the possibility, with his vast popular support, of playing a great part, his manly truthfulness repudiated the right to any of these names. With the whole nation under his influence, and regarded by them with the reverend awe which such questions and suggestions hint, his lofty soul retained its grand simplicity. “He was only the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as saith the prophet Esaias.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Dent. 18. 15.Meyer's Kom-
mentar. Joh.
1. 22.⁵⁵ John 1. 19, 24.

Nor is it wonderful that his mission had such amazing success. Men honour a lofty and fearless soul, seeking no selfish object, but braving all opposition for the noblest ends. John had nothing to lose but his life, and cared for nothing but the faithful discharge of his high commission from the Almighty. Hunger and thirst and nakedness had been his familiar friends, and he who had faced the terrors

of the deserts so long, could have little to alarm him in any human anger. "What to him," asks Edward Irving,^r "was a scowling Pharisee, or a mocking Sadducee, or a fawning publican, or a rough soldier, or a riotous mob? These were jocund, cheerful sights, to one who had roamed amongst the wild beasts of the desert, and in the midst of them laid down his head under no canopy, and with no defence but the canopy and defence of the providence of the Most High. Around a man who can despise accommodations and conveniences, and deal with nature in ancient simplicity and independence, and move amongst her social and religious institutions, like a traveller from another world, free to judge, and censure, and approve, as having himself nothing at stake—around such a man there is a moral grandeur and authority to which none but the narrowest and most bigoted minds will refuse a certain awe and reverence. And when such a personage assumes to himself Divine commission, and publishes new truth with Divine authority, and rebukes all wickedness, and scorns all consequences, he takes, by the natural right of the wiser, the bolder, and the better man, a high place above those who feel themselves enslaved and ensnaked by customs which they despise."

Such was the mighty movement that filled all minds, and drew the whole people, by turns, to the banks of the Jordan. Beside the living waters, between the solemn hills on both sides, and under the cloudless blue of an Eastern sky, stood the strange figure of the prophet before his no less striking audience. Like all great leaders, he could read the characters of those he addressed. The smooth varnished hypocrisy of the Pharisee or Sadducee could not deceive him. Those who might have come to him in the hope to gain the inviting promises of the new life by an easy lip confession, and a momentary rite, soon found their error. Like Luther, or Latimer, or Knox, he forgot self in his grand fidelity. Cold prudence or timid caution had no place in a soul so intensely in earnest. THE TRUTH, which he comes to proclaim, is higher than man, and alone commands his homage. His sentences strike, swift and glittering, like lightning flashes, amidst the roll of judgment-day thunders.

CHAP. XXV. Each sentence is vivid with bold pictures drawn from nature and life. He compares Israel to a barren fruit-tree ready for felling, and points to the axe already laid at its roots. Timely repentance, and the bringing forth good fruit, may avert the stroke, otherwise it must presently fall, and the tree be cast into the fire. The next moment Israel is a great threshing floor, and the winnowing shovel is at hand to cleanse it thoroughly,⁵⁶ that the wheat may be gathered into the garner, and the chaff burned up with unquenchable fire. With perfect humility he points all away from himself, to the Mightier One at hand, for whom he was unworthy, in his own esteem, to perform the slave boy's service⁵⁶ of unloosing and removing his sandals. HE would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire—the Holy Ghost to kindle in them heavenly grace, if penitent,—fire, to consume them, if the reverse.⁵⁷ The terrors of the day of wrath rolled over his hearers, as his foremost thought; sounds of hope broke in, like soft music, only at intervals, to keep the contrite from despair.

⁵⁶ Plut. ii. 712.

⁵⁷ See Meyer, De Wette, Lange, Kulnoel, *in loc.* Neander, *Life of Christ*, 55.

The announcement of divine judgments on a rebellious people was by no means new in Israel, and of itself hardly explains the immense effect of John's preaching. Its power lay in its depth and its demands. The kingdom of heaven, which was at hand, was not a mere gift from above, which they might passively receive, but a human work, which they must themselves carry out. Merely to wait in idle expectancy, as in the past, would not suffice. Nor would the idly-busy trifling of legal rites and observances. They must no longer trust to their descent from Abraham, nor to the cleansing of the outside of the platter by Pharisaic strictness. The coming of the promised kingdom to each hearer, meant his lifting his own life to a higher plane, by steady resolve and effort. Religion must, henceforth, be practical and earnest: in the heart and life, not in worthless outward forms or privileges. For the first time, the great truth was pressed home to the conscience of men that the true kingdom of heaven is in the renewed soul. It marked an era in the moral history of the world, and Christ Himself has recognized its momentous greatness. "Among

them that are born of women," said He, "there has not CHAP. XXV. risen a greater than John the Baptist. For all the prophets and the Law *prophesied*, until John.⁵⁸ Till then it was 58 Matt. 11. 11. future and distant; the object of passive expectation only. But, from his days, the kingdom of heaven is gained by earnest violence, and men who struggle earnestly take it for themselves." John proclaimed the great truth to a generation that had overlooked it, that "the kingdom" was no mere external blessedness, but the reign of God in the soul of man, and that we must strive, if we would enter into it, or, to use the figure employed by Jesus,—like a city to be taken by storm, it was to be won only by the utmost earnestness. Repentance, with John, was no mere formal confession, but a change of mind; it included not only regret for the past, but a new life for the future;ⁱ and this he urged so prominently, that even Josephus, a generation afterwards, makes it a characteristic of his preaching.⁵⁹ To 59 Ant. xviii. 5. 2. the frank confession of sins there was added an annihilation of all self-righteousness, whether resting on Abrahamic descent, or attainments in Pharisaic holiness, and a pledge was demanded of a higher spiritual life towards God and man, involving life-long effort.

His whole conception of preparation for the Messianic kingdom was new in his age. The Samaritan prophet, who soon after summoned the multitudes to Gerizim, relied on the wholly external act of securing the vessels of the old Tabernacle, as an inauguration of the day of the Messiah. The Galileans were disposed to demand the kingdom from the Romans, sword in hand, in the belief that Jehovah would not desert His people, in arms for His cause. John, on the contrary, sought to prepare for it by a moral regeneration of the community. The kingdom of God, with Him, was, like that of Isaiah, a kingdom of righteousness and holiness. He had sat at the feet of the prophets, not of the Rabbis. He had sought the knowledge of the preparation needed, not, like the Rabbis, from the Book of Leviticus; not, like the Zealots, from the warlike records of the Maccabees; nor, like the Essenes, from mystic revelations, but from Isaiah. His whole preaching was only a variation of

CHAP. XXV. that of the great prophet, in the opening of his book—"Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil, learn to do well : seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."⁶⁰ He says nothing of an earthly kingdom, or political glory. The sins that had separated between them and God must be removed, and their place filled with "fruits meet for repentance," if the divine kingdom was to be established among them. Pharisees and Essenes had sought to propitiate God by their legal rites. Neither knew of confession of sins, or repentance. The Pharisee only boasted of his virtues, and the Essenes praised righteousness, without a word about penitence.⁶¹ John trusted, not to external forms, but to broken-hearted contrition. Man must work together with God to bring about the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Messiah's reign.

Nor did he content himself with vague or general appeals or reproofs. "Ye brood of vipers," cried he to a crowd of Pharisees and Sadducees, who had come to his baptism, to scoff and criticize, rather than to confess and repent, and who opposed him with the conservatism of lawyers, and the bigotry of priests,—“who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” In the words of St. Luke, “they rejected the counsel of God towards themselves, not having been baptized by John,”⁶² and, so far from accepting his mission, denounced him as having a devil.⁶³ He brushed them aside, with their endless quiddities, and quillies, and casuistical cases, and legal cobwebbery, and they hated him in return. They had come from Jerusalem in full-blown official dignity, as a deputation from the ecclesiastical courts, to ask his credentials,⁶⁴ and test his soundness. But whether priests, or Levites, or Rabbis, they shrivelled before the indignant glance and fiery words which exposed their insincerity and incompetence. John held his authority, not from them, but from a higher court! Instead of flattering them, he told them, as he had told the crowds they despised, that they must bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. In their narrow pedantic pride they felt sure of a part in the kingdom of the Messiah, simply as descendants of Abraham ;

⁶⁰ Isaiah 1.
16, 17.

⁶¹ Luke 18, 11.
Jon. Bell, Jud.
ii. 8, 7.

⁶² Luke 7. 30.
Dr. Davidson's
Tischendorf's
version.

⁶³ Luke 7. 33.

⁶⁴ John 1. 19.

his righteousness being reckoned as theirs.⁶⁵ Israel, alone, could please or find favour with God, and it did so on the footing of its descent. The "kingdom of Heaven" was to be strictly Jewish, all other nations being excluded, and "it was Jewish by hereditary right." But John shattered this wretched immorality. "Begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones of the desert, lying countless around, to raise up *true* children to Abraham, and will exclude you, his pretended children, from the kingdom, unless you repent!" The stern, fearless words of the old prophets, which made them be hated by the multitude, with the exception of Daniel, the prophet of pleasant things,⁶⁶ fell once more from the lips of John, with the same result, at least on the part of the Rabbis. They received homage from all others, but this man treated them with withering scorn. They had fancied he would be like a reed moved in the wind, before them, but they had found him an oak. Flattery and fear were as strange to his soul, as his own rough mantle would have been among the soft clothing of kings' palaces.

The contrast between John's teaching and that of the Rabbis, could have had no more striking illustration than his recorded answers to various inquirers, whom his stern language to their religious leaders had, apparently, alarmed. If the Rabbis were in danger of the fire, what must be required of common men? But no harshness marked his words to honest anxiety. He demanded simply that they show their sincerity by their unselfishness. They were to act on their professions of desire to lead a new life. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." If they ministered to the naked and hungry,⁶⁷ as a loving duty, they proved their discipleship genuine. John's wide human sympathies embraced all classes. Like Jesus, he cast out none who came to him. The abhorred publicans, from whom the Pharisees shrank as accursed, were cheered by the assurance that they, too, might share in the kingdom, if their repentance were sincere. "Exact no more," said the

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⁶⁵ Meyer on
Matt. 3, 9.
Horne Heb.
iii. 264.
Kuinol.
Matt. 3, 9.

⁶⁶ Jos. Ant. x.
11. 7.

⁶⁷ Compare with
the words of
Jesus, Matt.
23. 36. Also
with Isaiah
58, 6-9. John
had, here, also
drunk at the
fountain of
this great
prophet's
teaching.

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prophet, "than that which is appointed you." Even the soldiers were welcome, and had a fitting counsel—"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." That the publican should do his duty honestly, as in the sight of God, and that the soldier should deny himself the license of his calling, and be faithful to his standard, from a sense of obligation before God, were practical tests of loyalty to conscience, which would carry with them the Divine favour. In all cases, moral regeneration was the grand aim, and the man himself must work to carry out the reformation.

But, while John thus demanded practical results, by human effort, he was far from teaching that the most earnest wish to change the life, would, of itself, suffice. He brought the hope of forgiveness in the day of the wrath of God, to bear on all classes, and made them feel that salvation could not come, after all, from their own acts, though these must be rendered, but only by pardon from God.⁶⁸ He proclaimed, besides, the need of the Spirit of God to perfect the inner revolution. "He that cometh after me will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." For the hardened there would, indeed, be a baptism of fire, but, for the contrite, the heavenly gift of a higher will, and a greater power, a deeper knowledge of God, and a closer communion with Him. Feeling the want of the times, and filled with the spirit of the prophets, he could not forget how they had announced, as a sign of the coming of the Messiah, that Jehovah "would pour out His spirit upon all flesh,"⁶⁹ "that He would pour water upon him that was thirsty, and floods on the dry ground," and "His spirit upon the offspring of Jacob."⁷⁰ He could not doubt, therefore, that He, before whom he was only a herald's voice, the Mighty One, whose sandals it was too great an honour for him to unloose, would come, not only to avenge, but to bless. But, to do this, He must bring with Him a higher, quickening spiritual power—the power of the Holy Ghost. In the bestowal of this heavenly influence, to carry out the new creation, begun by the forgiveness of sins, was summed up John's message to his age.

⁶⁸ Jos. Ant. xiii.
5, 2. Matt. 3.
7. Mark 1, 4.
Luke 3, 3.
Comp. Isaiah
33, 24; 55, 7.

⁶⁹ Joel 2, 28.

⁷⁰ Isaiah 44, 3.
Ezek. 39, 29.

It was a mark of the surprising greatness of John's whole spiritual nature, that he had realized the need of action on the part of man, to secure the fulfilment of the divine promise of the kingdom; but it was no less so, that he realized the limitations of human effort, and proclaimed the necessity of a Divine, new-creating power, to secure the holy transformation of the will and heart. To be real and earnest in such an age, to unveil its true spiritual wants, to wake it to new religious life, were transcendent merits, but it is even grander to see the mighty man—full of humility, with deep self-knowledge, and knowledge of his fellow-men,—pointing to God in heaven, who, stronger than human will or effort, alone could break the chains of sin from the soul, and lead it to the light.⁷¹

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Wholly self-oblivious, tainted by no stain of human pride, self-consciousness, or low ambition, John had felt it no usurpation, or sacrilegious assumption, to constitute himself "the messenger," predicted by Malachi,⁷² "sent to prepare the way before the Lord." Nor was his preaching more than an expansion of the prophet's words—that "the Lord,^k whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." He had received the commission from no human lips, but had been set apart to it, from above, before his birth. Filled with the grandeur of his mission, nothing arrested him, or turned him aside. The crowds saw in him the most unbending strength, united with the most complete self-sacrifice: a type of grand fidelity to God and His truth, and of the lowliest self-denial. The sorrows and hopes of Israel seemed to shine out from his eyes,—bright with the inspiration of his soul, but sad with the greatness of his work,—as he summoned the crowds to repentance, alarmed them by words of terror, or led them,^l in groups, to the Jordan, and immersed each singly in the waters, after earnest and full confession of their sins. The newly baptized knelt in prayer⁷³ along the banks, many, doubtless, with tears, loud sighs, and exclamations, as is still the manner with the emotional races of the East, even when far less excited than John's hearers must have been.^m All wished to begin a new

⁷¹ See Keim's *Jesu von Nazara*, I. 510.

⁷² Ch. 3. 1.

⁷³ Luke 3. 21.

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life, and craved counsel from one in whom they now implicitly believed, and each, in turn—publican, soldier, citizen, and open sinner—heard a few words which pointed out to them their future safety. The narrow separatism and worthless externalism of the Law were to be forsaken, and love to God and their neighbour, and a future baptism of the Holy Ghost, by Him who was to come, were to take their place.

But John, with all his grandeur, was still a Jew. What his conceptions of the kingdom of the Messiah were," beyond his realization of its purity, we have few grounds of judging. From an after incident in his life, it would seem that he thought of it as the restoration of the theocracy, amidst a people prepared for it by repentance and moral reformation. It would be to set him above his times, and even above the apostles, as they remained during the whole lifetime of their Master, to conceive him as realizing the purely spiritual kingdom Jesus was to establish. He was greater than all the prophets, in his magnificent faith that the work he had begun would be carried out by Jehovah Himself, through His Messiah, and in his realization of the need of human action, in repentance and a new life, to the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Others had left God to do all at some future time, limiting themselves to prophecy. John alone taught that the kingdom of God had already come in the contrite soul which proved its penitence by holy fruits.

⁷⁴ Matt. 11. 11.

But he was also less than the least in that kingdom,⁷⁴ in his inadequate realization of it in its full greatness. He

⁷⁵ Matt. 11. 18.

"came neither eating nor drinking,"⁷⁵—a type of Jewish asceticism, and his teaching bore, throughout, the true Jewish stamp. Perhaps he rose above the thought, universal in his day, that the outer act had, in itself, an intrinsic worth, if not, even, a spiritual power, but the importance he attached to outward expressions of penitence was entirely Jewish. Like the Rabbis, he laid stress on fasting, and on the "making prayers," in the Jewish sense,⁷⁶ and his disciples, in these and other external exercises of religion, found themselves nearer the disciples of the Pharisees than those of Jesus. As a Nazarite and an ascetic, the dread of defilement

⁷⁶ Matt. 9. 14.
Luke 5. 27.

must have kept him apart from the great mass of his audience,⁷⁷ for he dared not touch any but "the clean," even ⁷⁷ John 1. 400. in baptizing them.

In this aspect of it, the work of John was, in the eyes of Christ, only the sewing a new patch on an old garment, or new wine put into old bottles.⁷⁸ The great movement he set ⁷⁸ Matt. 9. 16, 17.
Mark 2. 21, 22.
Luke 5. 36, 37. on foot, while an immense advance on the past in Judaism, was yet, in its essence, Jewish. The ascetic spirit of its origin perpetuated itself in John's disciples, and marked his whole conceptions as imperfect and passing—the morning red heralding the day, but as yet mingled with the night.

John formed no separate communion. He taught his disciples to pray, and it would seem as if he had ultimately gathered a special band round him,⁷⁹ as the apostles were ⁷⁹ John 1. 35. gathered round Jesus. But he came, not to found a new sect. His far grander aim was to raise the nation from spiritual death, and direct it to the coming Messiah.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS AND THE DEATH OF JOHN.

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THE great wave of religious excitement produced by the preaching of John had set the whole land in motion. Foulque de Nouilly, the famous monkish preacher of the thirteenth century, whose discourses moved all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest, so that people rushed in crowds from distant countries to hear him,¹ or Whitfield, in the last century, who stirred the whole nation in his day, help us to realize the sensation produced by John's ministrations. To a people sunk for the time in religious apathy, and corrupted in morals, but loyal to the voice of their Scriptures, and the lofty spiritual ideals of the past, his voice came like a trumpet, rousing them to new life. His bronzed, wasted features, his prophet's dress and bearing, his fearless boldness for God, and the response of their own hearts to his denunciations and demands, made him a mighty power. He gave utterance to their deepest desires and aspirations, fanned their national hopes, and roused their enthusiasm. As a people, they were not in favour of asceticism.² The Rabbis had a saying, that the ignorant did not know how to keep themselves from transgressions of the Law, nor the common people how to become "the Pious," or rigorous Jews.³ Even one so famous as Simeon the Just discountenanced Nazarite vows, with the rigid abstinence and self-denial they imposed. The worldly Sadducee laughed at the austerities of the Rabbis, "who tormented themselves in this life without gaining anything by it in the other,"⁴ and the mass of the people were no doubt of their mind. But the vision of a true Nazarite, in whom all could see a grand superiority to the worthless ambitions of life, was like

¹ Baring-Gould
Post-medieval
Preachers, 11.

² Derenbourg,
174.

³ Derenbourg,
175.

⁴ R. Nathan,
quoted by
Derenbourg,
124.

a revelation of eternal realities, which no one could turn lightly aside. The very power of his words seemed to imply the truth of his warnings, for the Rabbis had already told them that "universal repentance," such as they seemed to see round them, "would only happen when Elias had come,"⁵ and his coming was the sure sign of the approach of the kingdom of God.

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⁵ Nork, Rabbinische Quellen, 15.

Everything was fitted to startle. The proclamation of the Messiah as at hand—the call to repentance—the announcement of the swift rolling towards them of the thunders of the wrath of God—the declared worthlessness of distinctions of race, blood, or position—the demand for fruits meet for repentance, or, in other words, that a man must work out his own salvation in co-operation with God—the symbolical rite, to which he required submission, and the humbling confession of sin before the world, which he added—all combined to carry his name and work to the utmost limits of the land.

Meanwhile, the authorities at Jerusalem, with the jealousy of all ecclesiastical bodies towards those outside their own pale, grew uneasy at his success, and plotted to get him into their toils, as they did afterwards in the case of our Lord. The ensnaring questions put to him by the deputation of priestly Pharisees sent from Jerusalem, seemed to have made John think it necessary to seek safety by removing beyond the bounds of Judea.⁶ From the "circle of Jordan," including both sides of the stream, he passed upwards, apparently, to the small sunken plain which borders it, just beneath Scythopolis, where Gideon's Brook of Trembling makes its steep way from the eastern end of Esdraelon, down the Wady Jâlûd, to the Jordan. He chose a spot near this, on the eastern side, known in those days as Bethabara,⁶ where a ford crossed the river, and gave facilities for baptism.⁷ He had been preaching and baptizing for some time in the south, and his removal to a more northern position opened a new field, from its nearness to Galilee. The excitement still continued as great as ever. The towns on the Lake of Galilee, and even the villages north of Esdraelon,⁸ poured forth to the new prophet.⁹ Weeks passed,

⁶ John 1. 28.

⁷ Lieut. Conder, in Palest. Fund Report, April, 1875. Dict. of Bible. Art. "Bethabara."

⁸ John 1. 43.

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and it must now have been the late summer, for, before long, John had to leave the Jordan, as too shallow, at its accessible parts for baptism, and go to another place—Enon, near Salem—an unknown locality, where pools more suitable were yet to be had.⁹ But, as yet, there was no sign of the advent of the expected Messiah. The assembling of the nation, and the great work on the banks of the Jordan, were necessary preliminaries, in the Divine Counsels, to dignify the ultimate Advent of the Redeemer.

⁹ Luke 3. 21.

Jesus had been waiting the fit moment for leaving His thirty years' obscurity in Nazareth, and presenting Himself before the herald who had been unconsciously proclaiming Him. Though cousins, the Baptist and the Son of Mary had never seen each other, for they lived at opposite ends of the country, and John had spent we do not know how many years of his life in hermit seclusion, far from man. But if John did not know His person, he had yet, doubtless, heard the wondrous circumstances attending His birth, and must have been daily expecting Him to put forth His claims. At last, Jesus left Nazareth and came to Jordan, and presented Himself before him. His appearance, wholly different from that of all who had thronged to his ministry, at once arrested the prophet's eye. The holy devotion and heavenly repose which marked Him as He stood in prayer, spoke of a purity and greatness before which the soul of John did instant reverence. He might have stern words for the proud and self-righteous, but, in the presence of such a vision as that before him, he has only those of lowliest homage. The light, as of other worlds, shining from the depths of those calm eyes; the radiance of a soul free from all stain of sin, transfiguring the pale face,—full, at once, of highest beauty, tenderest love, and deepest sadness, was hereafter, even when dimly seen by the light of midnight torches and lanterns, to make accusers shrink backwards and fall, overcome, to the ground,¹⁰ and Simon Peter pray—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" The soul has an instinctive recognition of goodness, and feels its awfulness. Spiritual greatness wears a kingly crown which compels instant reverence. Had He been an

¹⁰ John 18. 6.

earthly king, John would have remained the stern, fearless prophet; had He been the highest of the earthly priesthood, he would have borne himself as his superior, in the consciousness of his high mission. But the royalty before him was not of this world, and the priesthood was higher than that of Aaron. Jesus had come to be baptized, but John, for the first and last time, with any one of all the crowds that had gathered round him, hesitated, and drew back. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," said he, "and comest Thou to me?" He might not know by name, or open intimation, whom he had before him, but unerring instinct taught him that he addressed a greater than himself. He was longing for the revelation of the Messiah, and knew that God could manifest Him at any moment, clothing Him whom He had designated for the high dignity, with divine might, to carry out His work. It is, indeed, the especial greatness of the Baptist that he not only rose to the level of so great an enterprise as the spiritual regeneration of his country, and devoted himself to it with gigantic energy, and that he was a man of spotless truth and dauntless courage, but that, with all this, he was filled with a splendid enthusiasm, and unfaltering faith in the nearness of the Messiah. This alone could have supported, him under the burden of his work. No one, till then, had stood, like him, between the dead past and the dimly rising future, in hopeful and confident expectation. He had led the people from the corruption, wickedness, and confusion of their decayed religiousness, and stood calmly and grandly at their head, in the firm belief that the Messiah, who, only, could realize the promises he had made them, of divine help towards a higher life, would emerge from the darkness before him. In such an attitude of intensest expectancy, he must at once have recognized the marks of the possible Messiah in any one who showed them. He might look for no outward signs: the divine lineaments of a nature fit for such an office would suffice, the future being left to God, to whom he entrusted his own work. He could not go abroad to search for one who might be what he desired, but his ardent, yet keen, soul, could not fail to discover Him if He came within his sphere.

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No wonder, then, he felt, that, in Jesus, the object of his longings seemed to have been found. "I knew Him not," said he, some time later, "and had not in any measure begun my work because I knew Him, or that He might at my request come to me, but I have been baptizing and rousing Israel, that He, though unknown to me,—drawn indeed by my work, but without design or thought on my part, and, therefore, only by the clear leading and purpose of God,—should be revealed to Israel as the true Messiah."¹⁰ He had, already, before Jesus had presented Himself, made known his firm conviction that God had heard the cry of His people, and had provided the Messiah, though as yet He had not disclosed Him. In his grand trust in God, he had told the multitudes, "there standeth one among you, whom you know not—the true Messiah," who has been among you, and you have not dreamed of it, because you knew neither the marks nor nature of God's Anointed, and, indeed, you will not recognize Him, even when He appears.¹¹ That ye may know Him, He is He who cometh after me, and yet shall be preferred before me—the true Messiah, whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. "He shall be preferred before me, *for He was before me.* He is no man of mortal birth, for scripture and Rabbi unite in recognizing the Messiah as the uncreated Word of God, sent down from heaven, to dwell for a time among men." John's long communion with God in the wilderness, his prayers and tears, had raised him to a spiritual grandeur which anticipated, with a higher than human sense, the yet unrevealed. Lifted above earth, the advent of the Messiah had become to him a living truth, which only waited God's time for its disclosure, and at last stood visibly before him, in Him who sought baptism at his hands.^f

No wonder he shrank from assuming to such a being the relation in which he stood to other men. He knew that only one who was wholly free from sin could be the Messiah, and such an One he felt was before him. The meekness, gentleness, and purity, which overawed him, spoke of nothing less, and the heart of John, on the instant, could express its overpowering emotion in no more fitting thought than that he

¹¹ John 1. 27.

"beheld the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the World."¹² In such words he embodied a conception which he had heard from the Rabbis since his childhood, for the daily sacrifice, on whose head the sins of Israel were laid by a formal act, was their favourite type of the Messiah, who was hence known by the endearing name of the "Lamb of God."¹³ The sublime picture in Isaiah of Him on whom Jehovah had laid the iniquities of His people, and who was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, had already been applied to the Messiah,¹⁴ and John might well think of Him in this His highest aspect, —oppressed in soul, as he himself was, by the weight of the sins of his race.

The hesitation of the Baptist, however, was not allowed to prevail, for Jesus still repeated His desire to be baptized. "Suffer it now," said He, "for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness."¹⁵ From whatever God has required of Israel as a duty, I cannot withhold myself." Baptism was an ordinance of God, required by His prophet as the introduction of the new dispensation. It was a part of "righteousness," that is, it was a part of God's commandments, which Jesus came into the world to show us the example of fulfilling, both in the letter and the spirit.¹⁶ Moreover, He had not yet received the consecration of the Spirit, abiding on Him, and had not yet assumed the awful dignity of the Messiah, but had hitherto been only the unknown villager of Nazareth. No subject is more mysterious than the "increase in wisdom"¹⁷ which marked the Saviour, as it does all other men, nor can we conjecture when it was that the full realization of His divine mission first rose before Him. As yet there had been no indication of its having done so, for he had not yet "manifested His glory,"¹⁸ or appeared at all before men. Is it too much to believe that His baptism was the formal consecration, which marked His entrance on His great office?

John resisted no longer, and leading Jesus into the stream, the rite was performed. Can we question that such an act was a crisis in the life of Our Lord? His perfect manhood, like that of other men, in all things, except sin, forbids our doubting it. Holy and pure before sinking under the waters,

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¹² John 1. 29.¹³ Nork, 115.
Sepp, II. 170.¹⁴ Buxtorf, *anb.*
r. עֶזְרָא¹⁵ "Every duty,"
Tischendorf
—Davidson's
translation.
John 1. 13.¹⁶ Irving's John
the Baptist:
Works, III. 97.¹⁷ Luke 2. 52.¹⁸ John 2. 11.

CHAP. XXVI. He must yet have risen from them with the light of a higher glory in His countenance. His past life was closed ; a new era had opened. Hitherto the humble villager, veiled from the world, He was henceforth the Messiah, openly working amongst men. It was the true moment of His entrance on a new life. Past years had been buried in the waters of Jordan. He entered them as Jesus, the Son of Man ; He rose from them, The Christ of God.

Nor is it wonderful that, at a moment when He was passing through such a supreme spiritual crisis, there should have been sympathy with it in the distant regions of the Universe. "Being baptized," says St. Luke, "and praying,"—in the overpowering emotion of such a time—the heaven was opened—all hindrances of human weakness withdrawing, so that the eye seemed to pierce the sky, to the far off heavenly splendours. And now a vision as of the Holy Ghost descending in the "bodily form" of a dove, the symbol of purity and peace, and resting over the newly baptized as in permanent consecration, revealed itself to John¹⁹ and Jesus; a heavenly voice uttering as it did so, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Isaiah had, long before, foretold how the Spirit of Jehovah should rest upon the Branch from the roots of Jesse—the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of fear of the Lord,²⁰ and the prediction was now fulfilled. It was the divine anointing of Jesus, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of God²¹—the consecration from on High to the office of Messiah, and, as such, the true birth-hour of Christianity. It was His solemn designation as the Great High Priest of the new and abiding Dispensation. The sons of Aaron were required by the Levitical Law to be set apart to their high office by washing and anointing, and He who was to be clothed with an infinitely loftier priesthood, could not be allowed to want a correspondingly grander inauguration. Instead of the Temple made with hands, He had around Him the great Temple of nature; for the brazen laver He

¹⁹ John 1. 32.

²⁰ Isaiah 11. 2.

²¹ Isaiah 61. 1.

had the flowing river, reflecting the vault of heaven. If CHAP. XXVI. He had no golden robes, He had the robe of a sinless righteousness, and if there were no sacred oil, He had, instead, the anointing of the Holy Ghost. John had already, by divine intimation, learned that the Spirit should thus descend on Him who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost,²² and thus 22 John 1. 33. saw the confirmation of his belief that Jesus was, indeed, the Lamb of God, and His Son.²³ How long He remained with 23 John 1. 34. John is not told us, but it would seem as if He had forthwith retired to the wilderness, to return only after His temptation.

The great work of John was now over. As Samuel had once consecrated the earthly David king over the outward theocracy, the last of the prophets had consecrated a greater king, who should rule, by different means, over a kingdom wholly different, though John, standing as He did, outside, could at best only dimly conjecture these characteristics of the new Messianic reign. He lived and worked long enough after this crowning moment, to rejoice over the first advances of the new theocracy he had called into being, but also long enough to show that he did not comprehend its spirit, as he would have done, had he lived later. His days were numbered. Those in power feared his words and work, which gave him supreme influence among the people. The priests and Rabbis had failed in their plots against him, but what they could not themselves do, they were ere long able to effect through one of greater power for evil.

John seems latterly to have moved from place to place, along both banks of the Jordan, both north and south. How long he continued to labour is not known, but he was still baptizing after Jesus had begun his ministry, at the marriage feast of Cana.²⁴ The popularity of Jesus had roused 24 John 3. 24. the jealousy of the disciples of the Baptist, and had even led to angry feeling. A dispute with a Jew²⁵—likely a disciple of Jesus—respecting baptism, brought matters to a crisis. He had, apparently, claimed for that of Jesus a higher power of cleansing from the guilt of sin than that of their Master. Irritated and annoyed, John's followers returned and told him how He "who had been with him beyond Jordan,

25 Thus, in the correct text.

CHAP. XXVI. to whom he had borne witness, was baptizing, and that all men were now coming to Him." The news only seemed to bring the grand humility of the Baptist more prominently than ever into view, and showed him to be above any selfish or petty thought; a man to whom the will of God was the abiding law. "He must increase," said he, "but I must decrease, for He is the Christ, the Bridegroom. I rejoice greatly to hear His voice. He is from above, and, therefore, above all: I am only of the earth, and speak as such. He has received the testimony of heaven: He has the power of life and death: He is the beloved son, into whose hand the Father has committed all things."²⁶ With this grand utterance, John disappears into the gloom of a prison. He had been a "lamp," as Jesus calls him,²⁷ burning brightly in his day, but the Light of the world had now risen, and *his* light must grow dim and expire.

²⁶ John 3. 25—36.

²⁷ John 5. 35.

John owed his imprisonment to Herod Antipas, in whose territories he had sought safety, and the opportunity of carrying on his work in peace. The cause assigned before the people for his arrest, was that John had ventured to reprove Herod for his unlawful marriage with Herodias, but political fears had, probably, in reality, more to do with it. Herod, with the crafty cunning for which Jesus afterwards spoke of him as "the fox," was afraid that John might turn his wide popularity to political account, and head a religious rising, perhaps like that of Judas the Galilæan, for all men seemed ready for anything he might advise. He held it, therefore, better, says Josephus, to anticipate any attempt at revolution, by imprisoning him, and, if needs were, by putting him to death, rather than lament a disturbance after it had broken out.²⁸

²⁸ Ant. xviii. 5. 2.

Antipas, it seems, passed his time, now, in Tiberias, then, in Machærus, on his southern border, in Perea. In him, the hierarchy and Rabbis at Jerusalem, impotent themselves, found an instrument to crush the unlicensed teacher who so freely condemned them, and had so great a hold upon the people. Pilate, ever fearful of any popular movement, may have demanded, at their crafty instigation, that action should be taken, and these influences, added to the

apprehensions of Antipas himself, brought matters to a crisis. Sending a band of soldiers and police northwards to the Jordan, a distance of from six to eight hours, they apprehended the Baptist, likely by night, when the people were not astir, and, binding the defenceless man, hurried him off to the fortress Machaerus.²⁹

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■ Jos. Ant. xviii.
 §. 2.

This castle, known as "the diadem,"³⁰ from its crown-like seat on the lofty rocks, and as "the black tower," lay on the east side of the Dead Sea, almost on a line with Bethlehem. It was the southern stronghold of Perea, as the Macedonian colony of Pella was the northern. Nature, herself, had here raised a stronghold, as she had that of Masada, on the other side of the Dead Sea, a little further south. It lay above the deep gorge that divides the mountains of Abarim from the range of Pisgah, in the wild region where, from immemorial tradition, the Jews sought the grave of Moses. A few miles to the north, in a deep, rugged valley, lay Callirrhœ, famous for its warm baths, where the dying Herod had sought relief, and had nearly met his death. Its hot springs burst at one spot, from the rocks in the bottom of the gorge, and, near them, others poured forth water of the iciest coldness, while the hills round were in those days pierced with mines of sulphur and alum. The torrent of Zerka Ma'in, descending between walls of basalt, and red, brown, and black, volcanic tuff, rushes through the ravine, over a channel of huge rocks, from the uplands of Perea to the east shore of the Dead Sea. At a short distance south, the Wady Z'gara runs east and west, in a profound gorge, with precipitous sides, at some parts eight hundred feet high, cleaving its wild way, by leaps, down three thousand eight hundred feet, to the Dead Sea. A parallel valley succeeds, along the hollow of which ran the old Roman road, joining Machaerus with Callirrhœ, and with the great road from Petra to Damascus. Rising from this ravine, the long mountain ridge of Attaroth stretches, in heaped-up confusion, ten miles to the south west, and on the highest point of this, where it sinks sheer down towards the Zerka Ma'in, the ruins of Machaerus, in great masses of squared stone, still overhang the profound depth below. At the foot of the

CHAP. XXVI. isolated cliff on which the fortress was built, and separated from it by a deep and narrow valley, not quite a mile across, lie the ruins of the town of Machaerus, covering more than a square mile, showing in the remains of a Temple of the Sun, that, along with the fanatical Jewish population, it must have had many heathen, that is, Greek or Roman citizens, who were allowed to practise their idolatry in peace.

The first fortress had been built here by Alexander Janæus,³⁰ but it was afterwards destroyed by Gabinius,³¹ in his war against Aristobulus. When Herod came to be king, however, his keen eye saw the strength of the position, and he determined to rebuild the castle as a frontier defence against the Arabs. Surrounding a large space with walls and towers, he built a city from which a path led up to the citadel, on the top of the ridge. The citadel itself was at one end of a narrow ridge, nearly a mile in length from east to west, and formed a last retreat in case of attack, but it was not enough for his magnificent ideas. At the other end of the ridge, he built a great wall, enclosing the summit of the hill, with towers two hundred feet high at the corners, and in the space thus gained built a grand palace, with rows of columns of a single stone a-piece, halls lined with many-coloured marbles, magnificent baths, and all the details of Roman luxury, not omitting huge cisterns, barracks, and storehouses, with everything needed for defence in case of siege. The detached citadel was the scene of John's imprisonment; a stern and gloomy keep, with underground dungeons, still visible, hewn down into the living rock. The fortress-palace, at the other end of the fortifications, at the time the residence of Antipas and his retainers, was merry with their revelry, but the dungeon of John lay in midnight darkness. From his windows Antipas had a magnificent view of the Dead Sea, the whole course of the Jordan, Jerusalem, Hebron, the frowning fortress of Masada, the circle of Jordan, and the cliffs of Engedi, on the west, and of the mountains of Gilead, rising beyond the wild heights of Pisgah, on the north; but his captive, the child of the boundless wilderness, pined in perpetual night.

Beneath this stronghold, perched on the top of the highest

³⁰ B.C. 106—79.

³¹ B.C. 56.

summit of the wild region, the valleys sank in unscalable precipices, on three sides, to such a depth that Josephus is well-nigh excused for thinking that the eye could not reach their bottom. The fourth side was only a little less terrible. Wild desolation reigned far and near, but the hidden hollows of some of the gorges were luxuriant with palms, olives, and vines, and superstition believed that, among other wonders, there grew in them a plant, fiery red in colour, and shedding rays of flame in the evening, which had power to expel demons and heal diseases, though only to be pulled at the cost of life. Seetzen, a German traveller, who re-discovered the site in 1807, has left a vivid picture of the landscape round. Masses of lava, brown, red, and black, are varied with pumice stone, or black basalt, in huge broken masses, or perpendicular cliffs, resting on white limestone; and then, again, dark brown rocks—the iron-mountain of Josephus. The rushing stream beneath is overgrown with oleanders and date-palms, willows, poplars, and tall reeds, while hot sulphur springs gush from the clefts of the rocks, sending up a thick mist of steam.^h

In this wild, warlike place, lay John, cut off from the world, from Israel, and from the grand work of national regeneration of which he was the soul—in the midst of a population of soldiers, barbarians, Arabs, Idumeans, Amorites, and Moabites, who ran no risk of being infected by his words. Perhaps he was favoured beyond other prisoners by being brought from his underground vault, after a time, to some cell of the corner towers, to be near his captor. If so, he could look from his lonely height over the regions of the Dead Sea, and the Jordan, where the years of his desert consecration, and the months of his great work, had been spent. Yet he was no mere shadow of the past, but still a living power. No strong hand had protected him; no miracle had been vouchsafed by God for his deliverance, and there was no hope of a rescue by the people, however they might regret him, or murmur at his fate. His prison, unapproachable on three sides, and reached, on the fourth, only by a bridle path, through numerous fortified gates,³² made escape impossible. Nor could he hope to have support

³² Bell. Jud. vii. 8. 3; compared with vi. 1. 4.

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from any within the castle itself, for its motley population of Arabs, Edomites, and Moabites, cared nothing for the promises of Israel.³³ The sheikhs of the wandering tribes around went out and in, the troops of the garrison were reviewed and drilled, or lounged round the battlements, and the courtiers of the haughty Herodias flashed hither and thither in their bravery, through the town: the hot springs of the valley, and the bracing air of the mountain-top, gave new tone to the nerves of the health-seekers frequenting them from all parts, but the Baptist lay unheeded and helpless. Apart from political reasons, it was so healthy a place that Antipas might well be fond of it. "Provisions," says Josephus, "remained good for a hundred years in the fortress of Masada, on the other side of the Dead Sea, for the air, at the great height of the castle, is purified from every earthy or hurtful exhalation."³⁴ Yet there was no great bustle, for the place was too out of the way for much intercourse with it.³⁵ Ten thousand people lived in the town below,³⁶ but round John were only rough soldiery, drafted from the neighbouring tribes, and the attendants on Herod, of whom Jesus speaks as "the people gorgeously appareled, who lived delicately," as became those in the courts of kings.³⁷ Yet the nation, with unbroken faith, kept watch outside the gates of the prison, and the breath of God still moved among them like the soft wind through the leaves of summer.

Antipas had laid hands on John with the intention of putting him to death, and there were those round him who grudged him each day's life, but fear of the people kept "the fox" from his purpose, for a time, as a similar dread, on the part of the hierarchy at Jerusalem, afterwards protected Jesus. Yet, his prison was no mere detention, for prisons in antiquity, and especially in the East, had no refinements of mercy. The words of Christ—"They did to him whatsoever they pleased,"³⁸ are significant, and point to torture, insult, and ill-treatment. The spirit that called for the blind Samson to be brought from his prison, to make sport before the Philistine lords, was still in full vigour.

But John, though defenceless, had a kingly divinity of

³³ Bell. Jud. vii. 6. 4.

³⁴ Ant. xviii. 5. 1.

³⁵ Bell. Jud. vii. 8. 3.

³⁶ Bell. Jud. vii. 6. 4.
2,000 men,
equal, with
women and
children, to
10,000
inhabitants.

³⁷ Luke 7. 25.

³⁸ Matt. 17. 12.

truth and goodness, that, for a time, hedged him round from death. Brought before Antipas, once and again, to be shown off to the crowd at his table, he remained so completely himself, that the tyrant, for the moment, became the conquest of the helpless prisoner. Feeling how awful goodness is, he "feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him closely; and when he heard him, he was very anxious, and heard him gladly."³⁹ Even he, ³⁹ Mark 6. 20. Davidson's Tischendorf. for the instant, looked towards God and heaven! Uneasy conscience, superstition, a natural indisposition to violence, and the slow, cruel delays of Eastern justice, left John alive. He was even allowed to have intercourse with some of his people, whose love braved personal danger, and brought them to his prison to visit him. Perhaps, as with St. Paul, when a prisoner at Caesarea, thirty years later, it was formally permitted that "he should have liberty, and that none of his acquaintance should be forbidden to minister or come unto him;"⁴⁰ or, very likely, the loose ⁴⁰ Acts 24. 23. ways of the East, so different from strict Roman practice, left access to him possible. His disciples came and went,⁴¹ ⁴¹ Matt. 9. 14; 11. 2 ff.; 14. 12. brought him news from the outer world, and told him of the preaching of the kingdom that had begun in Galilee—perhaps shared his imprisonment, in turn, listened to his instructions, and went forth on messages connected with his great work. Antipas had, however, nothing to fear in all this, and the Baptist had as little to hope. His disciples had held badly together, since their head was taken from them. They clung firmly only to the external, ascetic side of his teaching, as might have been expected, striving to outdo the Pharisees in washings and fasts, and they went about sad, because the Bridegroom was taken from them.⁴² Perhaps, ⁴² Matt. 9. 14. some of them still preached the coming of the kingdom, and baptized penitents, but the crowds fell off, in great part, after John's imprisonment, and flocked to the new prophet, whom he had himself baptized.⁴³

⁴³ John 3. 26.

To men trained in Jewish ideas, there was much that seemed strange and doubtful in the teaching that had thus superseded that of John. The works of Jesus were mighty, but His disciples did not fast. The Elijah sternness

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of the preaching in the wilderness of Judea, was not found in that of the shores of the Lake of Tiberias. There was no word of any open assumption of the office of Messiah, nor any signs of the approaching erection of a purified theocracy. There were no preparations for the triumph of Israel, and no symptoms of the wrath of God breaking forth on their oppressors. As a Jew, John must have shared, more or less, in the universal belief of his nation, that, however pure, the kingdom of the Messiah was to be an earthly dominion over Israel, when it had been delivered from the polluting presence of the heathen, and had been marked, once more, as the people of God, under Him alone. The news brought him seems to have made him almost waver in his belief in Jesus, as the Messiah thus expected, for the human mind, in loneliness, disappointment, and imperfect knowledge, is prone to read things by the dull light of the present, rather than by the evidence of the past. In moments of weakness and despondency, it is easy to think that our whole life has been a dream, and our fondest hopes mere illusions. The Gospels seem to point at such a momentary depression in the mind of John. As if he had been lost in thought over what he had heard from his visitors, he sent to Jesus for a solution of his doubts. "Now, when John heard in the prison of the works of the Christ,"⁴⁴ for they had told him concerning all these things,"—the miracle of the centurion's servant, and of the young man just raised from the bier at Nain—"having called unto him two of his disciples, he sent, through them, to the Lord, and said to Him, 'Art Thou the Coming One, or must we look for another?' And the men came to Him, and said, 'John the Baptist has sent us unto Thee, saying, "Art Thou the Coming One, or must we look for another?"' In that hour He healed many of diseases, and plagues, and evil spirits; and unto many blind He granted sight. And He answered, and said unto them, 'Go and tell John what ye saw and heard, that the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them;' and then He added, as if to bring John back from his doubts,

⁴⁴ Matt. 11. 2.
 Luke 7. 18.
 Davidson's
 Tischendorf.

"and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended at me." CHAP. XXVI.
 The whole answer showed a fulfilment of the words of Isaiah, respecting the Messiah, which must have sunk deep into the heart of one to whom that great prophet was an anticipatory Gospel. John would remember that in one place it was written ⁴⁵—"Your God will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing;" and in another—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Jesus could have given him no proof more touching, that He was, indeed, the Messiah. ⁴⁵ Isaiah 35. 4, 5; 61. 1, 2.

This was the summer of John's captivity, but the winter was fast approaching. Antipas, and, perhaps, Herodias, and the local court as well, had been curious to see and hear the man who had played so great a part. At first, mere idle curiosity, like that which afterwards made him anxious to see Jesus,⁴⁶—though he ended his interview by "setting ⁴⁶ Luke 23. 8. Him at nought and mocking Him,"—made him have John brought before him. Perhaps the mingled motives which led Agrippa II., Berenice, and Drusilla, to have Paul brought into their presence,⁴⁷ led to his being called into the palace. ⁴⁷ Acts 24. 24; 25. 13. To hear anything uncourtly from one in their power was not to be imagined. The sight of him would break the monotony of an afternoon, and give something to talk about for the evening. But John was no man for kings' courts. Life was too real for him to deal in smooth-tongued flatteries and deceits. He made an impression on the court, though it was far too proud and trifling to think of anything so vulgar as repentance. Like St. Paul before Felix and Drusilla, but in quite another mode, he was a preacher of righteousness, temperance, and judgment, though in bonds. "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife,"⁴⁸ said the fearless man,—in the grand superiority of religious zeal, —to him who had his life in his hands. Perhaps ⁴⁸ Matt. 14. 4. Mark 6. 18. Luke 3. 19.

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Antipas had wished to know what he must do to secure an interest in the approaching political kingdom of God, and was thus told to prove his sincerity by breaking off a life of sin. In the reproof, John set himself on the firm footing of the Mosaic Law,⁴⁹ which bound Herod, as a Jewish prince; though the cowardly silence of the hierarchy had allowed him to trample it under foot at his will, without censure. "Herodias," says Josephus, "took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and, having divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, married Herod (Antipas), her father's brother, by the father's side."⁵⁰ The Law had repeatedly forbidden marriage with a living brother's wife, as a scandal against which childlessness was threatened, and it made no difference between brothers and half-brothers. In the case of Antipas the transgression of the Law was the greater, as John saw and pointed out, for his marriage had only been effected by adultery on the part of both wife and husband. Moreover, it had been brought about by the most heartless outrage on the hospitality of a brother. To make the whole still more revolting, it was not needed that John should touch on the relationship between Antipas and Herodias, for the Law did not take notice of this, and the Herod family had long disregarded such objections.

The disgraceful story dated back to the first or second year of Pilate. In the year 26, or, more probably, 27,⁵¹ the whole family of the Herods had gathered together to a feast in Jerusalem. To this act of piety, as it was held, they had given a still higher value, in popular opinion, by their action in a matter which lay near the heart of a population zealous for the Law. Pilate, to prevent an insurrection, had reluctantly withdrawn the standards, with their supposed idolatrous emblems, set up in the year 26, before the Castle Antonia. But his offended pride had not forgotten the humiliation, and he, now, to efface the remembrance of it, had hung votive tablets on the palace in Zion. They were golden shields, dedicated to Tiberius, like those everywhere hung up in the temples, in honour of the gods, as acknowledgment of some deliverance, or signal blessing in health or fortune, received at their hands. They got their

⁴⁹ Lev. 18. 16;
20. 21.
Deut. 25. 5.

⁵⁰ Ant. xviii. 5. 4.

⁵¹ Age of Antipas
about 49 or 50.

name from having been vowed beforehand, in case a divine favour, earnestly desired, should be vouchsafed. On those he now hung up, Pilate inscribed only his own name and that of Tiberius, but the Jews denounced them as idolatrous, and raised a great clamour to have them removed. The letter of the Law might not condemn them, but they had homage paid them, like altars, and, hence, were an abomination. The four sons of Herod took up the defence of the Law, thus outraged in spirit, and on Pilate referring the matter to the Emperor, to escape a second humiliation, a deputation was sent off to Rome. It happened that Antipas, also, had business at Rome⁵² at the time, and as he set out on it presently, the people saw in his journey a further proof of his piety, as they never doubted he had gone in support of their cause. But he had adultery in his heart while affecting zeal for religion.

⁵² Ant. xviii 5.1.

Among the members of the Herod family present at the family feast was Herod Boëthos, the son of Herod the Great and the second Mariamme, the famous Jerusalem beauty of her day, whose father, an Alexandrian Jew, Herod had raised to the high priesthood, in honour of the alliance with his daughter. This Herod Boëthos had married Herodias, the grand-daughter of his father and the first Mariamme, and daughter of Aristobulus, one of Mariamme's murdered sons. The uncle had thus married the niece, but this was nothing strange in the Herods. When Antipas came to Jerusalem, to the feast, Herod Boëthos made him his guest, as his half-brother. Never was hospitality worse repaid.

The fair, impetuous, ambitious, Herodias presently made a complete conquest of the weak, unprincipled, Antipas. He soon found himself entangled in an intrigue with the wife of his hospitable brother, though he had long been married to the daughter of a powerful neighbour, Aretas, king of the Nabateans, whose dominions were conterminous with his own, on the south, with Petra for capital. Herodias had been married, by her grandfather Herod, to Herod Boëthos, or Herod Philip, as he was also called, now a man approaching fifty,—to mitigate the misfortunes of her family, left fatherless by his cruel murder of his son

CHAP. XXVI. Aristobulus. She had had, as her only child, a daughter, Salome, now married to Philip, tetrarch of Iturea, the brother of Antipas, who was now in middle life; Herodias, herself, being a woman of thirty-four or thirty-five, or perhaps, some years older.¹ Divine and human laws have seldom been more shamelessly violated than by Antipas, while he was playing the part, in public, of a zealous defender of religion. The vice in Herodias ran in her veins with the blood of Herod and of his sister Salome, for their worst qualities were revived in her nature. Her husband, who had once been named as Herod's heir, but had been blotted from the will when his mother was detected in the plot of Bagoas, the eunuch, seems to have led an idle and insignificant life as a private man, much to the discontent of his imperious, ambitious wife. She was ready, therefore, to intrigue with a crowned prince, though her brother-in-law, and promised to come to him, as soon as he returned from Rome. It was agreed, however, that Antipas should first divorce his wife, the daughter of Aretas.

Antipas set off to Rome with this arrangement. It was to be carried out as soon as he came back again to his palace at Tiberias, though he, doubtless, looked for trouble in effecting his divorce from the daughter of the Nabatean king. To his satisfaction, however, she had spared him any difficulty. The treachery which, from of old, had prevailed in the courts of the Herods, had revealed her husband's relations to Herodias, and she resolved to leave him. She asked no more than permission to visit the border fortress, Machaerus, which had formerly belonged to the Herods, but, at the time, was in her father's hands, perhaps as the purchase price, in Eastern fashion, of his daughter. Its hot springs were in great repute as a health resort. Aretas at once took steps to carry her farther off. Conducted by Arab sheikhs, she was led to her family palace at Petra, and her father declared the marriage annulled. Antipas received Machaerus back;² whether by treaty, craft, or force, is not known. Perhaps the Arab feared the tetrarch, as one high in the Emperor's favour; perhaps Antipas exchanged the fortress for other concessions. In any case, the peace was not dis-

¹ Ant. xviii. 5. 1; compared with 5. 2.

turbed for the time, and Herodias left her husband, and came to the palace of Tiberias. CHAP. XXVI.

The whole shameful transaction had been carried out in the very region of John's earlier ministrations, and had, doubtless, created a great sensation in the districts nearest the Arab kingdom. Public policy felt it a mistake to have repudiated the daughter of a dangerous neighbour; the Law and its representatives denounced as a crime the marriage with a brother's wife. Even in his own family, the hateful marriage, with its double adultery, wrought division, cutting Antipas off from all his blood. It was the weak point of his otherwise cautious reign, which had guarded against offending the religious sensitiveness of the people, and it left his frontiers exposed to the anger of Aretas, in revenge for the insult.

It is possible that John may have spoken of a matter so widely mooted among the people, before he was carried off to Machaerus. But the Gospels expressly inform us, that the fearless man reproved Herod respecting it, face to face, perhaps before all his court. If he had been brought for a show, and let loose this shaft at the sleeping conscience of Antipas, before his partner in guilt and the gay parasites round, no scene could have been more dramatic. But the man who had spoken such words could not be allowed to live. Herodias was determined he should pay for his rashness with his life, and lost no opportunity of working on Antipas to give the command for his execution.

The bitter fruits of the marriage were already springing up, to poison the tetrarch's remaining years. The curse of childlessness,⁶⁴ denounced by the Law on such a crime, ³¹ Lev. 20, 21. was fulfilling itself. The father of his repudiated wife threatened war for the insult to his daughter, and Antipas was engrossed by efforts to prepare for it, if he could not prevent it. Long, fierce wrangling passed, after a time, into open hostility, and Antipas was so shamefully beaten that he had to appeal to the Emperor for aid, and kept his throne, for the time, only by his support. Perhaps Jesus referred to this uneasy time when He asked, "What king, going to make war against another king, will not first

CHAP. XXVI. sit down and consult whether he is able, with 10,000, to meet him that comes against him with 20,000? Otherwise, while he is yet a great way off, having sent an embassy, he asks conditions of peace."⁵⁵ To make his condition still more unhappy, John had touched his conscience to the quick by his reproofs. Should he put him to death, and thus, at once, avenge such a liberty with one who wore the purple, and put an end to all fear of political trouble, through the bold man's influence on the people? Herodias sedulously kept alive the struggle in her husband's breast, between conscience and fear, and passion and pride. She herself was doubly touched, for John had recalled her violation of her first duty as a wife, and the ghastly fact that she had been the virtual seducer of him whom she now had in her power. But Antipas, for once, would not give way to the murderous wish of Herodias. He spared the Baptist's life, protected him from the snares of his unscrupulous enemy, and even made his imprisonment bearable, as far as was possible. It was no friendly feeling, however, that moved him thus, but the involuntary homage of even a bad nature to the unbending truth and moral grandeur of his prisoner—a homage, akin to fear—which made him tremble hereafter at the report of the miracles of Jesus, in the belief that it was John risen from the grave, clothed with the supernatural powers of the other world.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Luke 15.
31, 32.

⁵⁶ Matt. 14. 1.

"Herod, though in his palace, surrounded with his royal guards, feared him. He knew the Baptist was stronger than he, for truth is mighty, and mightily prevaieth: and being already conscious of his offendings, and having enough to do to keep down the voices of crime and transgression within him, he feared this righteous man, whose words gave such edge to his self-accusations, such point to his remorse. Unarmed, the Baptist daunted him more than an army of men, an embattled city, or a fenced tower, or any other source of physical and outward force. It reminds me of the saying of the first James, when Knox's daughter came to petition for her husband Welsh's pardon. The monarch asked her who she was; she replied, 'The daughter of John Knox.' 'Knox and Welsh,' said he, 'that is a fearful conjunction of

bloods. And had your father any sons?' 'No, only three daughters.' 'Had his three daughters been three sons,' said the conscience-stricken monarch, 'I would ill have brinked' (enjoyed) 'my three kingdoms in peace. He may return, if he will consent never to preach again.' 'Sooner than he should consent to that,' said the godly and heroic woman, 'I would kep' (catch as it fell from the block) 'his bloody head here,'—stretching out the matronal apron in which she was attired.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Irving's *John the Baptist*, Works III. 150.

That Antipas thus stood between his prisoner and the Jezebel who thirsted for his death, and, even protected him, in a wild border district where human life was held in no regard, was a noble tribute to the greatness of John, for none but a lofty soul could have made such an impression on the weak, selfish, sensual, knavish being, in whose prison he lay, or could have waked, even in such a nature, whatever it had of good, to a struggle with overpowering evil. It was, almost, the raising of a Son of Abraham from the stones of the wilderness. The tyrant's alarm and want of resolution, his consciousness of guilt, and involuntary awe, fenced round the life of the Baptist for the time, till the furious woman whose dismissal John had demanded, after vainly trying to gain her end by wild revenge, reached it, at last, by craft.

Antipas had had the good fortune, by no means common with the vassals of Tiberius, to keep his throne for over thirty years, and, like his father,⁵⁸ had been accustomed to celebrate the anniversary of his accession, each summer, by a banquet.⁵⁹ The time for this had now returned, and an invitation to a grand festivity on the occasion was given to the officers in attendance at Machaerus, the sheikhs of the neighbouring tribes, and the high society within reach, including the lords, chief captains, and first men of Galilee.⁶⁰ Persius, the Roman satirist, has left us a notice of such a feast on the "Herod's day," of some of the family, perhaps, of Antipas.⁶¹ He shows us the palace windows brilliantly illuminated and hung with garlands of flowers; the tables spread with every ostentation of luxury, and the wine flowing freely. On this occasion, the mirth and rejoicing ran high. Herodias, herself, was not present,⁶² for

⁵⁸ *An't.* xv. 11. 6.

⁵⁹ Antipas entered on his reign not before August, B.C. 4.

⁶⁰ *Mark* 6. 22.

⁶¹ *Pers. Sat.* v. 180—184.

⁶² *Mark* 6. 21.

CHAP. XXVI. it is not the custom, even now, in the East, for the women to take part in the festivities of men. But to do honour to the day, and to the company, her daughter Salome, the childless wife of the tetrarch Philip, had broken through the rule of strict seclusion from the other sex, and had condescended, though a princess, and the daughter of kings, to dance before Antipas and his guests. The dancing then in vogue both in Rome and the provinces, from its popularity under Augustus, was very like that of our modern ballet. The dancer did not speak, but acted some story by gestures, movements, and attitudes, to the sound of music. Masks were used in all cases, to conceal the features, but all other parts of the body, especially the hands and arms, were called into action, and a skilful pantomimist could express feelings, passions, and acts, with surprising effect. The subjects of the dance were always mythological, and thus, an abhorrence to strict Jews, as essentially heathen. The dress of the performer, like that of the dancers in our ballet, was planned to show the beauty of the figure to the greatest advantage, though it varied with the characters represented. In the days of Antipas there never was more than one dancer at a time, even when the piece introduced both sexes. Women never performed thus in public, in these earlier times of the empire, but, as in the case of Salome, they did not scruple to act at the private parties of the great.⁶³

⁶³ Winer, and
Bibel Lex.
Art. "Tanz."
Dict. of Antiq.
Art. "Pantomimus."

Salome's ballet was a great success. The revellers were charmed, and the weak head of Antipas, likely made weaker by wine, was fairly turned. He could not give away the humblest village without permission from Tiberius, but, forgetful of this, he vowed, in true Eastern exaggeration, to do anything the dancer asked, if it were to give her half of his kingdom. Seizing the chance, she was yet too cautious to speak off hand, but retired to consult her mother. Herodias, clutching the opportunity, had no hesitation in her answer—"Ask the head of John the Baptist." Returning at once, she made the bloody request. Chagrined at the advantage taken of him, and alarmed at its probable results, he yet had not the moral courage to refuse it. His honour,

he fancied, was compromised, for he had put himself in Salome's power, before the company. Motioning, therefore, to a soldier of the guard, he commanded him to bring John's head. There was no warning given: the entrance of the messenger was the signal for execution, and the head was presently brought in on a salver and given to Salome, who took it out as a welcome present to her mother. The mutilated body, cared for by loving disciples, was, perhaps the same night, laid in a tomb.⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ Mark 6. 22, 29.
Davidson's
Tischendorf.

It is a weird and ghastly story, but one quite in keeping with the almost grotesquely horrible incidents recorded of the half barbarous courts of the East, and even of that of Rome, in this savage age. Herodotus tells the story of the demand made by Amestris, wife of Xerxes, on a birthday festival of her husband, that he should give up the wife of Masistes to her jealous rage, and how, on her persisting, he fancied he could not, on that day, refuse. No entreaty of the unfortunate prince could avail for his wife, whom he loved; Xerxes having once commanded her to be given up to her rival. Nor is the grim parallel to the fury of Herodias wanting, for the spearmen of Xerxes were forthwith sent by the frantic Amestris, and cut her rival to pieces, throwing her, in fragments, to the dogs.^{65 k}

⁶⁵ Herod. ix.
108—112.

In the year B.C. 53, after the battle of Karrha, the Parthian King, Orodes, was celebrating the marriage of his son Pacorus, when the actor who played the part of Agävē, in the Bacchae of Euripides, brought in the half wasted head of Crassus¹ on the stage, and the chorus repeated, with loud, triumphant rejoicing, the well-known strophe—

“We bring from the mountain,
Borne to our home,
The royal booty, the bleeding sport.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Mommsen's
Röm. G. iii.
335.

Nor was Rome itself less savage. Caligula often had men put to torture before his guests at his feasts,⁶⁷ and swordsmen, skilled in beheading, amused the table by striking off the heads of prisoners brought in from their dungeons, to let them show their skill. At a public feast at Rome, he ordered the executioner to strike off the hands of a slave accused of having taken a silver plate from one of the

⁶⁷ Caligula was
born A.D. 12.
Put to death
A.D. 41. He
was thus only
16 years
younger than
Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XXVI. couches, and made the poor wretch go round and round the tables with his hands hanging on his breast, from a string round his neck, a board being carried before him, inscribed with his offence.

After the death of the Baptist, Antipas returned to Tiberias, haunted by the remembrance of his victim.⁶⁸ Salome went back to her elderly husband, who had already built a tomb for himself, in Julius Bethsaida, and did not long survive his marriage.^m Salome, left a widow, once more returned to her mother.

The marriage had been a speculation of Herodias, who hoped thus to get hold of the territory of her neighbour and son-in-law. But the scheme failed, for the tetrarchy was forthwith incorporated with the province of Syria. Antipas, however, still hankered after it, and turned wistful eyes towards it, from his palace at Tiberias, till, at last, it lured him and Herodias to ruin.

“The Baptist had done the Almighty good service—he had not turned back, on any occasion, from his perilous duty—he had kept his Nazarite ritual, both in body and spirit, sustaining the one upon the simplest meat, and the other upon the hardest conditions. The Almighty heard the voice which he spoke always for His Well-beloved Son; He saw that he spoke truth, and held his integrity steadfast unto the end. And, perceiving in His servant such noble and excellent qualities, He resolved to perfect him for a high place in heaven, and so directed his footsteps to the fiery furnace of a court, that the temper of his truth and piety might be purified manifold. And in the fiery furnace He walked with His servant, so that his spirit was not harmed; and having thus annealed his nature to the utmost which this earth could do, He took him hastily away, and placed him among the glorified in heaven.”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Irving's *John the Baptist*, Works III. 180.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TEMPTATION.

THE baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, and His consecration immediately after, by the Holy Spirit, were the close of His private, and the inauguration of His public life. Hitherto He had been the unknown and obscure villager of Nazareth: henceforth He entered on His divine mission as the Messiah, or "Anointed" of God. The beginning of His ministry, and the heavenly equipment needed to sustain Him in it, are always referred, by the apostles, themselves, to this critical moment. With them, His commission, and special endowment for His mighty work, dated from His baptism. "Ye know," says St. Peter, "what was spoken of throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, and with power; who went about doing good, and curing all that were overpowered by the devil, for God was with Him."¹ A mysterious dignity imparted by this heavenly "anointing," filled Him, consciously, with supernatural powers He had not, hitherto, displayed, and raised Him from the subordinate and passive life of Nazareth, to the high office of "Messenger of the Covenant," "the Messiah promised to the fathers."

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Acts 10. 37, 38.
Davidson's
Tischendorf.

In the thirty years of His life in Nazareth, Jesus had done no miracles, and had assumed no authority or public standing as a teacher. On the contrary, He had so withdrawn into the shade of a studied obscurity, and conformed to the daily life of those around, that no one, apparently, suspected Him to be more than the humble villager He seemed.

The baptism in the Jordan, with its mysterious accompa-

CHAP. XXVII. niments—the heavenly dove and the voice of God—marked the dividing line in His life. With such credentials, and such endowments, His call as the Messiah was no longer doubtful. We know nothing of His spiritual history while at Nazareth beyond the fact that His thoughts expanded with His years, for His “keeping on increasing in wisdom”² can mean nothing less. Presentiments must have often risen in His mind, but He may have had no assurance that they were trustworthy,—for His Divine nature is a mystery—till formally “anointed with the Holy Spirit, and with power.” After His baptism,³ we can readily fancy Him, during His stay at the Jordan, listening intently to the preaching of John, and watching the excited multitudes, till the conviction forced itself upon Him, that the Law could no longer be the channel of salvation to the sin-stricken, repentant crowds. The gift of the Spirit, and the words of the heavenly voice, would confirm this conviction, and make it for ever certain that the path into which John was introducing his converts, could not, by itself, lead to the fulness of truth, and abiding peace of heart. The opened heavens revealed a new relation of God to man, which must be proclaimed; and in the holy symbol of the dove—the pledge in Noah’s day that wrath had turned to mercy—the chosen emblem of the Spirit of God,—a vivid lesson was given that peace could be won back to the troubled soul, and the soul itself renewed, only by the soft and gentle influence of heavenly grace. Set apart, by so august a consecration, as God’s anointed, the regeneration of the race, and the reconciliation of earth and heaven, were henceforth entrusted to His hands. He had, till now, been silent; but forthwith began to proclaim that the kingdom of God was no longer, as John had taught, near at hand, but had already come,⁴ and at once assumed and exercised the highest kingly authority, as its Head; ⁵ working miracles as a proof of His superhuman dignity; ⁶ bearing Himself in the Temple as in His Father’s House; ⁷ discoursing, as the Messiah, with Nicodemus.⁸ He even took to Himself, from this time, the name of “The Son of Man;”⁹ derived from the vision of the Messiah in the Book of Daniel,¹⁰ and universally ac-

² Luke 2. 52.

³ Acts 10. 38.
See Ewald’s
Christus,
256 ff.

⁴ John 3. 5.

⁵ John 1. 51.

⁶ John 2. 1.

⁷ John 2. 13.

⁸ John 3. 1.

⁹ John 1. 51.

¹⁰ Dan. 7. 13.

cepted, from that source, as the symbol of Messianic rank. CHAP. XXVII.
His baptismal consecration was presently followed by His taking His place as king in the new theocracy; ruling, and legislating, and displaying all kingly power and dignity, henceforth, as the Messiah of God—Himself Divine.

His baptism was, thus, the birth-hour of Christianity. Crowds, sunk in national and spiritual degradation, thronged the banks of the Jordan, roused by the new Elias to a sense of their wants, but left to expectancy for their future satisfaction. They longed for a last needful word, but John was unable to add it. He could speak of the approach of the Kingdom of God, but he was only its herald, and could not act as its head. The Messiah, who was to give it life and form, was yet to come. His work was a mighty movement, with no adequate end: his converts a mighty host, without a watchword; his exhortations excited a deep yearning, which they left unsatisfied. Such a spectacle must have stirred the soul of Jesus to its lowest depths. Even before His consecration as the Messiah, He must have pondered the condition of His people, and longed, with all the love of His Divine nature, to heal their troubles. It must have been so even in Nazareth. The consecration at the Jordan only stamped with heavenly approval the purposes that had been ripening in His breast from His earliest years. We cannot think of one like Jesus, so profoundly religious, and so divinely compassionate, as at any time indifferent to the supreme question of the reconciliation of man to God. The days and nights passed, in later years, in solitary prayer, in the wilderness, or in the mountains, were, doubtless, only the repetition of far earlier communings with His Father, and with His own soul. But the divine certainty; the imperative signal, that He should arise and gird Himself to the mighty task of winning back the world to God: the awful summons for which He waited with hushed stillness, He first read in the sights and revelations of the Jordan baptism. The heavenly consecration was the divine sanction of His long-cherished but dimly realized purpose. The accompaniments of His baptism made Him the head of the new spiritual theocracy, and laid on Him the burden of giving Himself wholly to its establishment.

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Everything around corroborated the indications of the heavenly vision. The events predicted as inaugurating the advent of the Messiah, were realizing themselves before Him, for had not Elias come again, in the person of John, and had not the nation consecrated itself, in preparation for the Messiah? He, only, was wanting, whom the times themselves could not give : the COMING ONE, who should set up, in its fulness, the Divine Kingdom already begun. No wonder that John, as he daily announced both the Kingdom and the Messiah, with unwavering faith, and searched each group that came before him, in hopes of finding, at last, the chosen of God, fixed his eyes with a settled and clear conviction on Jesus, as He for whom he was looking. The attitude of the Baptist towards Him, was a corroboration of all the rest. His own consciousness of being the Eternal Son of God; the spectacle before Him; the longings of His pity and holy love; the wants of the times; and, above all, the voice and sign from Heaven, made it clear, that "lowly in heart" as He was, He was nevertheless the Messiah.

The earliest chapters of the Gospels show with what majestic fulness and dignity the Saviour rose to the height of this great commission. Recognizing John as a noble servant of God, He yet took His place, from the first, above him. John stayed behind in his Jewish limitations, leaving the great work imperfect, but Jesus from the beginning stood a King over the souls of men, dispensing promises, scattering heavenly gifts, calming fears, satisfying the cravings of the heart, raising an invisible and deathless kingdom in the human spirit, and bearing Himself as, at once, God and man.

It is, of course, wholly beyond us to conceive the mental struggle raised by such a position, when it first opened before Our Lord. It committed Him to meet and overcome the Prince of Darkness, to bear the sins of the world, as the spotless Lamb of God, to withstand the opposition and hatred of men, their indifference, mockery, misconception, and insensibility of heart; to endure, in fact, the life, and at last to die the death, of a martyr. Still more, it opened before Him an awful isolation as the one Holy Being in a world,

and this alone, might well fill a nature like His, of trembling sensibility, and loving tenderness, with overpowering emotion. No wonder it is said He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness. The mind needs to collect itself to survey the ground, and gird itself up to its task, planning its efforts, and guarding against failure, before entering on any great enterprise, and He was "in all things like His brethren." It is in retirement, and sacred communion with God and one's own soul, that we refresh ourselves for our greatest tasks. It was in the solitudes of the mountains that Moses prepared himself for the work of creating a people for God. The Baptist came from the wilderness to enter on his work as a Reformer; and St. Paul, after his conversion, withdrew himself for three years, no one knows whither, to make ready for his commission to the nations. The wilderness, with its sacred quiet and seclusion, was alone fitted for the retirement of Jesus.

To what part He withdrew Himself is not stated, but St. Mark adds the vivid note that He was "with the wild beasts,"¹¹ which excludes the idea of even scattered human population. In this vast and lonely chamber of meditation and prayer He remained for forty days, in intense concentration of soul on the work before Him. To be alone was to have every thought rise in turn: to have human weakness plead for indulgence, and human fears counsel safety. Nor could He escape graver trials. The Prince of Darkness had often, doubtless, attempted before to overcome Him, for "He was tempted in all points like as we are."¹² It was to meet that the Anointed of God should be put to the test. The struggles through which the soul comes to clearness, power, and decision, are themselves temptations, for they imply that the mind has not yet emerged into the calmness of settled triumph. We cannot conceive of Jesus escaping suggestions, to have entertained which would have been fatal. Temptations must needs enter the firmest and holiest soul, else it cannot be said to be tempted at all. They are the more inevitable the greater the task to be undertaken, and serve the high end of separating it from possible error. To let Satan do his worst was the needful preliminary to the

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¹¹ Mark 1. 13.¹² Heb. 4. 15.

CHAP. XXVII. final overthrow of his kingdom, for success or failure at the first step determined the future.

The specific temptations recorded in the Gospels belong to the last days of our Lord's seclusion, for, as the culmination of Satan's assaults, they were subtly reserved till nature was well-nigh exhausted, and the power of resistance weakest. But, though critical hours in life may justly be regarded as especially times of temptation, an existence, like ours, which is a constant choice between good and evil, is, throughout, a probation. We know little of the spiritual world, and cannot say how far our actions are determined for evil by ourselves, or how far active Satanic influences may affect us, for, as in our better, so in our guilty, acts, the mind is conscious of a deliberate freedom of will. Like Adam, we feel that we are "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." Our character is but the stamp on our souls of the free choice of good or evil we have made through life. From childhood to the grave, the road is open to us all, on either side, from the straight path of right. Nor are the only failures those of open act. The soul is, in itself, a world, and evil thoughts count as acts with the Eternal, if not at once repelled. Yet they must rise at every moment, for the choice of right implies freedom to choose the opposite. Milton is true to nature when he makes Satan tell the Saviour that he had heard the angels' song at Bethlehem, and

"From that time seldom have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred."¹³

¹³ Par. Regained,
Book iv.
507—509.

"He was a child, and grew in the grace and faculties of His nature, like another child, into mature manhood, struggling with the temptations, and spoiling the tempters of each stage of life."¹⁴ The probation of the desert was only an outburst, more than usually violent, of that which had attended Him, all through, as a condition of His humanity.

¹⁴ Irving on the
Temptation,
Works, iv. 194.

There are, however, supreme moments of trial, victory in which decides the colour of our life, and breaks the force of future temptations in the same directions, and such was that of the wilderness retirement. It is part of the discipline of

God, to make His servants perfect through suffering, and the Son of Man, the ideal of humanity, could not be made an exception. Retirement was indispensable for preparation. He needed to survey His great commission in all its aspects, to determine the course to be pursued in carrying it out, and realize the difficulties and dangers He had to expect. The transition from the life of Nazareth—private, calm, contemplative, unknown, industrious in a lowly vocation—to that of a public teacher, and, still more, of the Messiah, sent from God, raised a multitude of thoughts which hurried Him away to solitude, and made Him forget, for the time, even the wants of nature.

In this commotion of the bosom, conflicting resolutions and courses must have readily commended themselves. In the Scriptures themselves, opposite characteristics of the Messiah might seem to present themselves. The future Saviour was pictured in one page as triumphing: in another, as lowly and suffering. Man was to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, but Israel had been fed with manna, miraculously supplied. Angels were promised to protect the servants of God, but it was forbidden to tempt the divine goodness. The world was promised to the friend of God, and, on the other hand, the mark of true godliness was humility.¹⁵

Moreover, had not Moses been appointed by God as the Law-giver of Israel? had not the constitution of the nation as a theocracy, with its Temple service and sacrifices, been divinely instituted? Had not a chosen priesthood been set apart by God, and were not the promises of life and prosperity linked with the observance of the Mosaic Law? Was not the promised Saviour described in Scripture as a Royal Hero, who would restore the glory and power of the House of David, and as a conqueror and ruler of the nations?

Such thoughts must not only have raised temptations and disturbance in the mind of Jesus: they necessitated His breaking away utterly from the traditional interpretation of Scripture current in His day, and forced Him to take a position of direct antagonism, as regarded it, to the whole body of the Rabbis, and of the dominant Jewish schools. There was, thus, no other way than to separate Himself in spirit from

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Dent. 8. 3.
Ps. 91. 11.
Dent. 6. 16.
Gen. 17. 6.
Dent. 6. 13;
10. 12, 20;
13. 4.

the theocracy, and prepare for a life and death struggle with the ecclesiastical authorities of the nation. He must take a position, inconceivably painful to a lowly and pure soul like His, which exposed Him to the appearance of sinning against God, and of wilful disobedience to His ordained representatives. On the one hand, He had before Him the allurements of a career of success and honour, with wealth, power, and fame: on the other, He would be branded as criminal and blasphemous, and gain only shame, poverty, and death. But through all these clouds, His spirit, like the sun, held on in its triumphant course, to emerge in full glory, and scatter them from its path.

It was clear that the theocracy had served its day, and could not be made the vehicle of the great work Jesus was to inaugurate. Religion had outgrown it, and demanded something loftier, more spiritual and more universal, and this Jesus had come to supply. Instead of forms and outward precepts, He was about to announce the grand conception of a new kingdom of God—a kingdom in which the heart would be supreme. Winning it over to God and holiness, he would, by it, transform man into the image of God, and earth into that of heaven. It was to be a reign of holy love in the breast, instead of a worthless service of rites and forms. The grandeur of such an ideal it is impossible adequately to realize. Till then, outward priesthods, local temples, the slaying of sacrifices, pompous rites and ceremonial law had been deemed essential. But the consecration of Jesus as the Messiah, not of the Jews alone, but of mankind, made the whole obsolete, as incompatible with a universal religion. No wonder His soul was well-nigh overpowered. He must stand alone against the world: must pass sentence on all its religious wisdom, and must create a new world of spiritual thought. The grand originality of soul which this required, if we may use the word without irreverence, has nothing approaching it in the history of our race.

So vast a conception must have raised endless questions, doubts, and struggles, the more it was pondered, and the more all it involved was perceived. But a lofty spiritual

nature like His must have raised Him wholly above all the human littlenesses, which turn the soul from great undertakings. The thought of self-preservation, in the prospect of immeasurable danger, would not affect Him. He who forgot hunger and thirst, in communion with God, and taught that to be ready to lose one's life¹⁶ was a fundamental condition of interest in the divine kingdom, had no craven thoughts of His own safety. CHAP. XXVII.
—
16 Luke 17. 33.

He was infinitely above every consideration of personal interest. Neither the pleasures of life, nor the delights or duties of His great work, could make Him value life for the sake of enjoying them. Even at the approach of death, the only regret that escapes Him is that He leaves His disciples. The tenderly human shadow that passed over His soul at Gethsemane and Calvary, was only the inevitable tribute to human weakness, which all must yield. The greatness of His task alone weighed Him down. He stood single against spiritual and worldly powers, against a people who, from the days of Moses to the last prophet, had shown themselves lukewarm, obstinate, and slow to move, capricious, fretful, and spiritually dead. The revival, under John, like many before, promised to be a mere fire of thorns.

Even what we may call the details of His great work must have weighed heavily on Jesus, in these momentous weeks. Milton makes Him wander far into the depths of the desert—

“Musing and much revolving in His breast,
How best the mighty work He might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish His God-like office, now mature.”¹⁷

¹⁷ *Par. Regained*,
l. 185—188.

The popular Jewish belief that the Messiah would be an earthly king, found no response in His bosom, and this, in itself, darkened His future.

He had seen the pressure put by the Rabbis on John, to force him to their side. Would not His own opposition to them cause, at least, indifference and neglect, perhaps, even hatred? He could only be a spiritual Saviour: they wished a political. He had no ambition, and contemned earthly power. Even if the people refused to hear, He must still witness to the truth. Then, should His kingdom be raised

CHAP. XXVII. by human agency, or by the arm of God? Might not the Almighty think it meet to overthrow all opposition of the Prince of Darkness, Rome, and the Jewish hierarchy, and establish the new divine kingdom by irresistible force? But He was not led away by such suggestions, however specious. Discarding all thought of playing a great part among men, He chose lowliness and obscurity for Himself, and the smallest beginnings for His kingdom, letting it win its way slowly by the conquest of single souls, as was demanded by its very nature. It was to rest on loyalty and love, which must rise spontaneously in individual breasts. Success and results were only subordinate. His work lay clear before him: to live and to die as the Lamb of God—the incarnation of infinite love, attracting humanity by its holy charms, His life an example, His death an atonement.

This was the great result of His long, still, wilderness retirement. He had surveyed the whole ground: had communed much with His own thoughts, and, above all, with His Father, and came back to the world again in victorious serenity, to proclaim Himself as coming in the name of God, with no lingering fear of His task, or of any spiritual or human opposition.

The mental struggle of these weeks must, in any case, have been intense, but it became unspeakably harder by the presence of the powers of evil, who sought to overcome Him face to face. Nor is this only metaphor. Jesus, Himself, always assigns temptation to the direct action of evil spirits on the soul. A subtle and mighty personality is always presupposed, ruling a mysterious kingdom of evil, from which He can only be cast out when bound by one stronger than Himself.¹⁸ As the Messiah, Jesus proclaimed Himself come to destroy the power of this great enemy of God and man, and, throughout all His ministry, constantly assailed his kingdom, casting out devils from the possessed, as, at this time, He bound and subdued Satan himself.¹⁹

It is not necessary to suppose an outward and corporeal presence of the arch-enemy. He is never spoken of as visible, except when Jesus saw him fall, as lightning, from heaven. He is invisible when he tempts us, which we

¹⁸ Matt. 12. 25.
Luke 11. 17.

¹⁹ Matt. 13. 29.

know he does, for he deceives the whole world,²⁰ and there is no need to suppose that he was present otherwise with our Lord, than by raising suggestions in His sinless mind. To act upon the thoughts may have been the mode of Satan's attack, with Christ as with ourselves.

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²⁰ Rev. 12, 9.

The three instances of the great enemy's attempts, recorded in the Gospels, illustrate the subtlety of his advances. Worn with hunger, Christ is approached with the suggestion that if, indeed, He were what He claimed to be, the Son of God, it was surely unnecessary to suffer as He did, when by a word He might command that the stones of the desert around Him should be made bread. To possess unlimited power for specific ends, and refrain from using it to our own advantage, even in a pressing and apparently innocent case, is an ideal of virtue which it would be vain to expect in any ordinary man. No temptation is more difficult to resist than the prompting to do what seems needful for self-preservation, when abundant means are in our hands. But Jesus did not, for a moment, allow Himself to question His duty. The miraculous gifts newly conferred on Him, had been given, not for His private use, but for the glory of His Father; not as a human convenience, but as spiritual aids in His work as the Messiah. As a man, He was dependent on the care and love of His Heavenly Father, and to use His miraculous powers as the Messiah, for His personal benefit, would be to take Himself out of His Father's hands, and to show distrust of His loving care. But His sublime trust in the infinite goodness and power of God repelled the temptation. God had brought Him hither, and would bring Him thence. Bread was not the only means by which HE could support Him. His word could create what means He pleased. Others had been preserved by Him in unforeseen ways. The tribes in the wilderness had been fed by manna. Moses and Elijah had been sustained in the desert, though bread was wanting. It was not for Him to think Himself forgotten, and to take His life into His own hands, as if unsafe in God's. He would wait till HE gave Him what He chose, in the way that pleased Him.

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The second temptation, following the order in the third Gospel, was no less subtle. The Kingdom of the Messiah as then understood, and as Jesus, no doubt, had from youth been taught, was to be an universal temporal dominion. In the solitude of the desert, His mind filled with the thought of His mysterious consecration as God's Anointed, the thought was insinuated by the great enemy, that He might well ponder what course to pursue. On one hand, the path led to supreme honour, and unequalled glory. Had not the Psalmist himself spoken of the princes of the earth as subject to the Messiah, and did not the prophet say that the Gentiles should come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising, and that the wealth of the world

²¹ *Isaiah 60. 1, 5.* would be brought to Him?²¹ On the other hand, the way led through shame, poverty, neglect, derision, insult, and suffering, in all probability to an ignominious death. The dream of ambition and splendour would have shone with inconceivable attractions to ordinary minds, against such a background. But it was not left to mere vague suggestions. By that mysterious power which spirit has of acting upon spirit, the adversary raised, within the soul of Jesus, a vision the most seductive, to enforce his subtlety. It seemed as if the desert vanished from around Him, and that the tempter and tempted One stood together on a high mountain, from whose top the kindled fancy appeared to see all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory. Milton paints the vision with matchless power.²² Fair rivers, winding through rich pastures, and fertile corn-fields; huge cities, high towered, the seats of mightiest monarchies; regions beyond the conquests of Alexander to the east, and far as Rome to the west. Did not the prophets say that the rightful Sovereign of all this was God's Messiah?

²² *Par. Regained,*
iii. 251 ff.

But if so,—the foul suggestion continued,—how was this world-wide empire, in which, as God's Anointed, He might reign in righteousness, blessing the nations, and filling the earth with the knowledge of God, to be gained? Great enterprises need great means. He was unknown, without friends, of humble birth, the son of a carpenter, and bred up in poverty in a Galilæan village. Why not put Himself

at the head of His nation, which was ready to follow Him if He displayed His glory, and lead them against the heathen, using His divine power to shatter all opposition? Had not God of old divided the sea and the rivers, to make a path for His people, led by His prophet? Had He not rebuked kings for their sake? Had He not promised that the enemies of His Anointed should be made His footstool, and that He Himself would be at His right hand, in the day of His wrath, to make Him reign over the heathen, and smite the people of many lands?²³

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²³ Ps. 110. 1, 2,
5, 6.

It is impossible to conceive a temptation more difficult to resist. Feeling that, as the Messiah, He was destined to universal monarchy, and conscious that His rule would be the happiness of the world; supported, apparently, by the voice of prophets, speaking for God, in using force to establish this heavenly empire, and Himself instinct with miraculous power, which would make resistance vain, it might seem as if He could hardly fail to yield to it. Judas the Galilæan had risen thus a few years before; and his memory was revered. But Satan had spread his subtlest temptations in vain. With the self-restraint becoming a sinless nature, He resisted the dazzling vision. Deliberately rejecting the thought of basing His empire on force; with a lofty grandeur of soul, He chose to found it on the love, rather than on the fears, or compelled submission of mankind. Having come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, He would use His miraculous power only for good to man, and for the glory of His Father, trusting Himself to Him, without other defence or care than His unfailing wisdom and love. The heavenly gifts He held should be used only where they brought no personal advantage to Himself. As a man, He was, and would remain, meek and lowly; His gifts as Messiah would be used only for spiritual ends.

Milton, with striking force, has made Him say—

“Victorious deeds
 Flamed in thy heart, heroic acts—one while
 To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
 Men to subdue, and quell, o'er all the earth,
 Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,

Till truth were freed, and equity restored;
 Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
 And make persuasion do the work of fear.”²⁴

²⁴ Par. Regained,
 l. 217—223.

From first to last, Jesus refused to exercise His supernatural power to establish His kingdom by outward means, and, indeed, it was because of His persistent refusal to do so that His nation rejected Him. Assent to the temptation seemed to Him like an act of homage to the Prince of this world, His adversary, for force and violence are characteristics of *his* sway. As the Prince of Peace, He would have nothing to do with strife. The temptation lost its power as He uttered the words “Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

He had now been tempted by hunger and by ambition: there remained another possible opening for the enemy; through the avenue of spiritual pride. Earthly glory had had no attractions for Him, but He might be vain of His newly acquired Messiahship, and willing to display His supernatural powers for mere empty effect, and to flatter His own self-love. To disguise the aim, a sacred gloss was at hand. Instead of evil,—compliance would only show, in another form, that absolute dependence upon God, by which he had repelled the appeal to His natural wants. The Arch Magician had brought before the eye of His mind, perhaps also of His body, the pomp and glory of the world. He had, before, wrought upon the natural desire there is in all men for fame and dignity; but the vast illusion had been treated as an idle show, unworthy of regard. Would a proposal, however, to inaugurate His Messiahship by what would justify His utmost claims, be as firmly turned aside? Jesus was no angel, or mere spirit without human desires. It was of the very essence of His being to be touched and moved by all that influences men at large, and nothing could be more natural than at once to vindicate His rank and authority, and open the way for His ministrations, by some startling miracle. No place was so well fitted for such a demonstration as Jerusalem, the holy city, and no spot in it

so suited as the Temple, the centre of the national religion, and the chosen dwelling-place of God. Milton makes Satan bear our Lord

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“Over the wilderness, and o’er the plain;
Till, underneath them, fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple rear’d
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topp’d with golden spires:
There, on the highest pinnacle,* he set
The Son of God.”²⁵

²⁵ Par. Regained,
lv. 543—550.

Some famous spire of the Temple buildings must be intended, though we are no longer able to explain the allusion. It may be it was some pinnacle of the great three-aisled Royal Porch, which ran along the southern side of the Temple area, overlooking the valley of Hinnom, from a dizzy height. Perhaps it was the season of one of the great feasts, when countless pilgrims were gathered in Jerusalem, who would carry the report of any miraculous display throughout the earth.²⁶ That the suggestion raised in the mind of Jesus to glorify His office, and lighten His great work, by an astounding miracle, might seem natural and specious, is only to suppose Him human; and that it should take the form of His casting Himself down from an airy height, to alight in the distant valley beneath, might seem no less so. It is not necessary to conceive of a bodily translation to the Temple roof: the true place of temptation is the soul, in which all the scenery and accessories of any prospect can be created by the imagination in a moment. To make it more attractive, a text of Scripture was at hand, for had not God said, “He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up?” So, Shakespere makes Richard of Gloucester twist the sacred text—

²⁶ Schleermacher’s
Predigten, iv.
428—440.

“But then I sigh, and with a piece of Scripture,
Tell them, that God bids us do good for evil.
And thus I clothe my naked villany
With old odd ends, stolen forth of Holy Writ;
And seem a saint when most I play the devil.”

Bassanio’s words never had a more fitting application—

“In religion
What dammed error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?”

But whatever hope the great enemy may have had in this last attempt was vain. To the perfect humility of Jesus, any idea of display or ostentation had no charms; nor could He, who would rather bear the extreme of hunger than seem to distrust His Heavenly Father, by using miraculous power in His own behalf, be for a moment tempted to employ it for any mere personal honour. Nor, moreover, would He dream of claiming miraculous aid from God for that which had not the sanction of His command. His promise of protection vouchsafed aid only when the danger to be averted rose in the discharge of prescribed duty. The appeal to spiritual pride or vanity fell as harmlessly as the temptations already tried. It had been whispered to the soul of Jesus, as the vision rose before Him—“Go and cast Thyself down: is it not written that the angels shall bear Thee up?” But one brief sentence turned the wizard gold to dross—“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

Mysterious in some aspects, the wilderness retirement of our Lord, with its fires of temptation, putting Him to the utmost proof, becomes an inevitable passage in His life, when we think of Him as a man like ourselves, though sinless. His soul could reveal its beauty only by victory in a life-long struggle with temptation, such as happens to us all. Nor can we think of a Messiah, who should draw all men to Him as the ideal of humanity, except as treading the same path as His brethren. It is a vital error, therefore, to represent these temptations as mere outward pictures of the imagination, playing before Him, or as mere emotions of pleasure or aversion, which left His will unassailed, and were dissipated or quenched in a moment, on their rising. It is no less so to regard them as mere illusions of the senses, passing like clouds over His mind, and leaving His inner being wholly undisturbed.

If there had been no more than this, there could have been no struggle, no pause and agony of soul—that is, no

real temptation. The Gospels know nothing of such an unreal probation. They show us temptations throughout, plying His will, and seeking to paralyze it, even to the length of suggesting a withdrawal from His work as the Messiah. What else can have caused His prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears,²⁷ or the touching outburst, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."²⁸ He was proved and tried, from His youth to Gethsemane, and, like us, might have yielded, though, in fact, offering a transcendent contrast, in His unbroken victory over all temptation.

²⁷ Heb. 5. 7.

²⁸ John 12. 27.
Compare
Luke 12. 50.
Matt. 26. 39.

The episode in the wilderness was, indeed, subtler in its seductions than is needed for grosser natures like ours. He had to repel, as evil, what to others might have seemed the ideal of good. It was no irresolution, from pride, or vanity, or fear, that troubled Him; His soul was oppressed by the greatness of His divine office; His lowly humility was like to sink under its burden. With us, there needs a distinct prohibition to make acts sinful, and at every step we hesitate to reject where there seems room to doubt. With Jesus there was no such waving line of compromise. To deviate from the direct command of God, for any end, however holy, was, to Him, a sin. The contrast of Divine and human, or Satanic, rose before Him with such a clear decision, that the least divergence from the express letter of His Father's will was instantly rejected. He turned away from what the noblest souls before Him had cherished as holy visions, as from temptations of the Prince of Darkness. He not only triumphed, but showed, in His perfect obedience to His Heavenly Father, an image of the ideal and stainless holiness required from us all.

This divine purity, inflexible, unswerving, moving ever directly forward, acknowledging only THE RIGHT,—rejecting all else; and finding peace only in complete, loving submission to the will of God, rests with unique glory over all the life of Jesus, but especially over His temptation in the desert. It gives the supreme beauty to His life, and was its strength and power. There could be no hesitation

CHAP. XXVII. where all was thus simplified: where only God, or the world and the devil, beckoned onwards.

Through life, as in the wilderness, His choice was instinctive and instantaneous, between God and sin. Good and evil were, to Him, light and darkness, and it was vain to tempt Him even to approach the cloudy, doubtful, dividing line. The desert had served its purpose. The crisis had passed. Yielding Himself into the hands of God, it was exchanged for the joys of angel ministrations.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RETURN FROM THE WILDERNESS.

HIS seclusion in the desert had been the turning point in CHAP. XXVIII. the life of Jesus. He had left Nazareth to visit John, an humble Galilean villager. He returned, the consecrated Messiah, no longer oppressed by the responsibilities and difficulties of His great office, but ready to come before Israel as the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world.

Can we picture to ourselves the personal appearance of the Saviour at this momentous point in his career? We know that He was still in the glory of early manhood, but can we realize him more closely?

It is fatal to the hope of a reliable portrait, that the Jewish horror of images as idolatrous, extended to the likeness of the human face or form. No hint is given of Christ's appearance in the New Testament; and the early Church, in the absence of all guiding facts, had to fall back on imagination. Itself sorely oppressed, it naturally pictured its founder through the medium of its own despondency. Had he been an illustrious Roman or Greek, the Grecian love of beauty would, doubtless, have created an ideal of faultless perfection, but in its first, dark years, the sorely-trying Church fancied their Lord's visage and form as "marred more than those of other men,"¹ and that He must have had no attractions of personal beauty.² Justin Martyr speaks of Him as without beauty or attractiveness, and of mean appearance.³ Clement of Alexandria³ describes Him as of an uninviting appearance, and almost repulsive.^b Tertullian⁴ says He had not even ordinary human beauty, far less heavenly.^c Origen^d went so far as to say that He was "small in body and deformed,

¹ Isaiah 52. 14.² Isaiah 63. 2.³ Died about A.D. 220 (Jacobi, in Herzog).⁴ Born about A.D. 160. Died about 245.

CHAP. XXVIII. as well as low-born,"⁵ and that "His only beauty was in His soul and life." About the same time, however, the Christian Gnostics, who had not such an antipathy to heathen art, began to make likenesses of Him of another type, in paintings, gems, or metal, and small statues of Him, which they crowned and honoured in the heathen fashion. The features were said to have been copied from a portrait, fancifully thought to have been taken by order of Pilate. The ideal, however, prevailed more and more, for the half-heathen sects who used these likenesses had the Greek feeling that the gods must needs be divinely beautiful. In the third century the conception thus invented found its way into the private chapel of the emperor Severus,⁵ by the side of illustrious kings and emperors, and of "the holy souls," of Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius, and other worthies.⁶ It is possible that degrading caricatures of Jesus, which had become common among the heathen, led to this nobler conception of His beauty.⁷

⁵ A.D. 208—235.

⁶ Lamprid.
Alex. Sever.
c. 29.

⁷ Tertul.
Apologet. c. 16.

The triumph of Christianity over heathenism found a partial revenge in the footing gained in the Church for a more kindly estimate of what had now lost its religious power. The first Christian art bearing on Jesus—that of the catacombs—was, however, purely symbolical. The figure of a fish stood for His name, from the significance of the Greek letters in the word that expressed the idea,^f or He was represented by the symbol of a lamb, or of a shepherd. After a time, the further ideal of a teacher of mankind was added, and, gradually, in the fourth century, He was pictured as a child, after which it was an easy step to portray Him on the Cross. With the general introduction of such likenesses, the idea of any repulsive appearance was necessarily irreconcilable. Eusebius, of Cæsarea,⁸ describes a statue which he himself saw at Panias, or Cæsarea Philippi, the reputed birthplace and residence of the woman who was healed of the issue of blood. "At the gates of her house," says he, "on a raised pedestal, stands a brazen image of a woman on her bended knee, with her hands stretched out before her like one entreating. Opposite her is an image of a man, erect, of the same materials, in a full pallium,^g stretching out his hand to the woman."

⁸ Born about
A.D. 270; died
338.

"Before her feet," he adds, "and on the same pedestal, CHAP. XXVIII.
a strange kind of plant grows, which rises as high as the hem of the brazen garment, and is an antidote to all kinds of diseases.^h This statue, they say, is a statue of Jesus Christ."⁹ Unfortunately, the credulity which believed in the miraculous plant is a poor guarantee for the worth of a vague, popular fancy as to the statue. It was, doubtless, a relic of Grecian art, transformed by a fond reverence into a memorial of Jesus. There can be no doubt, however, that paintings, claiming to be actual resemblances of our Lord, of Peter, and of Paul, were to be found in the time of Eusebius, for he says that he himself had seen them, and thought them old thanks-memorials of devout heathen who had revered Christ and honoured Him in this way, as they were accustomed to honour their own gods.¹⁰

⁹ Hist. Ec. vii. c. 18.

¹⁰ Hist. Ec. vii. c. 18.

The old conception of the appearance of Jesus, borrowed from the words of Isaiah, had now finally given place to one which exalted His beauty to the utmost, as the natural outward expression of the divine purity and perfection of His inner being. Gregory of Nyssa¹¹ applies the imagery of the Song of Solomon to His person, no less than to His doctrine. Jerome¹² embodies in his words the glorious ideal which Christian art was afterwards to develop, basing the thought of Him, no longer on the description of the suffering "servant of God," in Isaiah, but on the words of the forty-fifth Psalm—"Thou art fairer than the children of men." "Assuredly," says he, "that splendour and majesty of the hidden divinity, which shone even in His human countenance, could not but attract, at first sight, all beholders. Unless he had had something heavenly in His appearance, the apostles would not immediately have followed Him."¹³ Chrysostom¹⁴ tells us that "the Heavenly Father poured out on Him, in full streams, that personal beauty which is distilled only drop by drop upon mortal man;"¹⁵ and Augustine, with his wonted vigorous eloquence, says, that "He was beautiful in his mother's bosom, beautiful in the arms of His parents, beautiful on the cross, and beautiful in the sepulchre." But that this glowing language was only metaphor is beyond dispute, from the words of Augustine

¹¹ A.D. 380.

¹² Died A.D. 420.

¹³ Hieronym. in Matt. c. 9. 9. Epist. ad Princip. Virginem.

¹⁴ Born A.D. 354; died 407.

¹⁵ On Psalm 44.

CHAP. XXVIII. himself. "Of His appearance," says he, "we are wholly ignorant, for the likenesses of Him vary entirely, according to the fancy of the artist."¹⁶ Different races had already created distinct and different ideals, in harmony with their local standards of perfection. The old conception of His being without form or beauty did not, however, at once lose its power. St. Basil¹⁷ clung to it strenuously, and the monks of his order are said to have reproduced it in paintings so late as the eighth century. The austere Cyril of Alexandria¹⁸ went so far as to maintain that He was "mean in appearance beyond all the sons of men," a proof, in its very contrast with the then prevailing conception, that there was no historical portrait to which to appeal, nor even a traditional ideal respecting our Lord's appearance.

Images of Christ met at first with earnest opposition, partly because it seemed impossible adequately to represent the glorified Saviour in human form,¹⁹ and partly, no doubt, because heretic sects were the first to introduce them. Cyril of Alexandria is credited with having brought them into the service of the Church. Once in some measure sanctioned, their use, especially in the East, spread far and wide, and legends were invented to support their authenticity as likenesses of the Saviour. John of Damascus,²⁰ in his fiery zeal in the great controversy on the use of images, sought to paralyze the opposition of the iconoclast emperor Constantine Copronymus, by bringing forward a legend which we first meet at the close of the fifth century,²¹ that Abgarus, king of Edessa, had once sent a painter to Jesus to take His portrait, but the artist failed, from the dazzling brightness of the Saviour's features. Jesus, the legend went on to say, honouring the spirit that had prompted the attempt, impressed His likeness on the cloth with which He was wont to wipe His brow, and sent it to Abgarus. But, though a letter of Abgarus to Jesus, and of Jesus to Abgarus, are noticed as early as the middle of the second century, by Justin Martyr, this wondrous story of the miraculous portrait appears only as an addition of centuries later.

Not to be outdone, the Western Church created its own version of this wondrous legend in that of Veronica, a fabled

¹⁶ De Trin. B. vii. c. 4, 5.

¹⁷ A.D. 370.

¹⁸ Died A.D. 444.

¹⁹ So, Eusebius. Kurtz, R. Ges. 3. a 1. 2. 294.

²⁰ From about A.D. 700 to 787. (Herzog, in Art.)

²¹ In Moses Choronenensis, A.D. 470.

saint of Jerusalem, who, seeing Jesus pass, on His way to Calvary, His face streaming with the blood of the crown of thorns, unwound the cloth of her turban and gave it Him that He wipe might His brow. In return, it is said, the loving disciple received, on the cloth, an imprinted likeness of her Lord, not calm and peaceful, however, like that of Edessa, but saddened by pain and sorrow. A third miraculous likeness of Christ's whole body was averred to have been left on the linen in which He had been wrapped in the sepulchre,²² and it was said that this passed into the possession of Nicodemus, and then to the Christians of Jerusalem, from whom, after passing through wonderful fortunes, it was brought at last, in the year 1578, to Turin, where it now is.²³ Veronica's cloth is now in St. Peter's, at Rome, though Milan, in northern Italy, and Jaen, in Spain, both boast that they have the authentic relic!

²² Niceph. H.
Ecc. II. 7.
About A.D.
1400.

²³ Hofmann,
294.

The earliest images of Christ, as has been said, were those introduced among the Gnostics, and of these two, at least, with some claim to authenticity, are still extant. Like the images of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and other sages, which these strange sects consecrated along with that of the Saviour, they are small, and rather medallions than busts. The one is of stone, with a head of Christ, young and beardless, in profile—the name *Χριστος* (Christos) in Greek characters, and the symbolical fish, below. The other is a kind of medal, representing Christ with His hair parted over His forehead, covering the ears, and falling down on the shoulders. It has the name of Jesus, in Hebrew, below it. Perhaps it was the work of some Jewish Christian.²⁴ In the fifteenth century, the historian Nicephorus²⁵ ventured on a fuller sketch of the person of Christ than had been previously given, and it may be well to quote it, if only to reproduce the conception formed by the Church of the Middle Ages. "I shall describe," says Nicephorus,²⁶ "the appearance of our Lord, as handed down to us from antiquity. He was very beautiful. His height was fully seven spans;¹ His hair bright auburn, and not too thick, and was inclined to wave in soft curls. His eyebrows were black and arched, and His eyes seemed to shed from them a

²⁴ Milman's
Christianity,
492.

²⁵ Died A.D. 1450.

²⁶ Quoted in full
by Vaihinger,
Art. "Lentulus," in
Herzog.

CHAP. XXVIII. — gentle golden light. They were very beautiful. His nose was prominent; His beard lovely, but not very long. He wore His hair, on the contrary, very long, for no scissors had ever touched it, nor any human hand, except that of His mother when she played with it in His childhood. He stooped a little, but His body was well formed. His complexion was that of the ripe brown wheat, and His face like His mother's, rather oval than round, with only a little red in it, but through it there shone dignity, intelligence of soul, gentleness, and a calmness of spirit never disturbed. Altogether, He was very like His divine and immaculate mother."^k

What the imaginary description of Christ by Nicephorus has been in the Eastern Church, that of the fictitious letter of Lentulus to the Roman Senate has been to the Western. It first appeared at the close of the fifteenth century, when the works of Anselm were collected and printed, and is the forgery of some monk who sought a good end by one of the pious frauds then very widely in favour. The internal evidence alone shows that it is a mere fabrication, and as even Nicephorus makes no allusion to it, its date may safely be assumed as later than his lifetime. "There has appeared," says Lentulus, "and still lives, a man of great virtue, called Jesus Christ, and, by His disciples, the Son of God. He raises the dead, and heals the sick. He is a man tall in stature,¹ noble in appearance, with a reverend countenance, which at once attracts and keeps at a distance those beholding it. His hair is waving and curly; a little darker and of richer brightness,^m where it flows down from the shoulders. It is divided in the middle, after the custom of the Nazarenes (or Nazarites). His brow is smooth, and wondrously serene, and His features have no wrinkles, nor any blemish, while a red glow makes His cheeks beautiful. His nose and mouth are perfect. He has a full ruddy²⁷ beard, the colour of His hair, not long, but divided into two.²⁸ His eyes are bright, and seem of different colours at different times. He is terrible in His threatenings; calm in His admonitions; loving and loved; and cheerful, but with an abiding gravity. No one ever saw Him smile, but

²⁷ Some MSS. add, "youthful."

²⁸ Some MSS. add, "He looks at once guileless and mature."

He often weeps. His hands and limbs are perfect. He is CHAP. XXVIII gravely eloquent, retiring, and modest, the fairest of the sons of men."²⁹

It may be interesting to add to these older ideals that of a writer of the present day. "Our eyes were restlessly attracted to Him," says Delitzsch, in one of his beautiful stories,³⁰ "for He was the centre of the group. He was not in soft clothing of byssus and silk, like the courtiers of Tiberias or Jerusalem, nor did He wear long trailing robes, like some of the Pharisees.^{31a} On His head was a white keffiyeh—a square of linen doubled so that a corner fell down on each shoulder, and on the back; a fillet or *agbul* round the head, keeping it in its place.^o On His body He wore a tunic, which reached to His wrists and to His feet, and over this a blue tallith, with the prescribed tassels, of blue and white, at the four corners, hung down so that the under garment, which was grey, striped with red, was little seen. His feet shod with sandals, not shoes, were only visible now and then, as He walked or moved."

²⁹ Eplst. Lent., given in full by Valhinger, *Art. "Lentulus,"* in *Herzog*.

³⁰ *Sehet welch ein Mensch*, 4.

³¹ Mark 12. 38.

"He was a man of middle size, with youthful beauty, still, in His face and form." The purity and charm of early manhood blended in His countenance with the ripeness of mature years. His complexion was fairer than that of those around Him, for they had more of the bronze colour of their nation. He seemed, indeed, even pale, under the white sudar, for the ruddy glow of health usual at His years was wanting. The type of His features was hardly Jewish, but rather as if that and the Greek types blended into a perfect beauty, which, while it awakened reverence, filled the heart, still more, with love. His eyes looked on you with light which seemed broken and softened, as if by passing through tears. He stooped a little, and seemed communing with His own thoughts, and when He moved there was no affectation as with some of the Rabbis, but a natural dignity and grace, like one who feels himself a king, though dressed in lowly robes."^q

We owe our knowledge of the period immediately following the Temptation to the narrative of the fourth Gospel, written after the others. The splendour of the later ministry

CHAP. XXVIII in Galilee seems to have overshadowed the humbler beginnings, of the earlier period, in the other Gospels, so that they are almost passed over by them. Happily, however, John preserves for us, in comparative detail,³² the incidents of these silent months, in which the public life of Jesus was slowly opening into full flower.^r How much would have been lost had his record not been given? There is a peculiar charm in the glimpses they supply of the early spring-time of the Saviour's ministry: a tender fragrance all their own.

The first great crisis of His life being over, with its forty days of temptation and proof, its long fasting, its great victory, and its ministrations of angels, Jesus returned to the Jordan, and mingled, unnoticed and unknown, in the crowd round the Baptist. It was apparently the early spring; at least, a fine tradition³³ of the early Church would have it so, perhaps to link together the opening spiritual year with the beauty of the reviving year of nature. He may have held communion once and again with John, but He lived apart from him, silently passing to and fro among the multitudes. Only the day before His arrival,³⁴ John had renewed his homage to Him in His absence, before a deputation from the ecclesiastical authorities of the Temple, sent to investigate his own teaching and authority. "Was he the Christ? or Elijah? or the expected prophet, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or some other?"³⁵ The nobly humble man, though at the height of his glory, with the nation looking up to him, in reverence, as a prophet, had no thought of hesitation in his answer. Jesus was unknown, but John yields Him the first place, and proclaims himself unworthy to perform the lowliest offices for One so exalted. "I am only he of whom Isaiah speaks, as a voice crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.' I only baptize with water, but there stands among you One whom ye know not^s—He who is to come after me; I am not worthy to kneel before Him to loose the thong of His sandal." The symbol of servitude and subjection offered by a slave to a new master was to untie his shoe and bind it again,³⁶ but even this was too great an honour, in John's opinion, to be permitted him to pay to Christ.

³² John 1. 35 to 4. 54.

³³ Clem. Hom. 1. 6.

³⁴ John 1. 29.

³⁵ Matt. 16. 14. See articles by Nägelsbach and Oehler, in Herzog, vols. vi. 482; ix. 432. 4 Esdras 9. 18.

³⁶ Sepp, *Leben Jesu*, II. 159.

He had often borne similar testimony, lifting up his voice and crying aloud,⁸⁷ in his addresses to the people, to make known the speedy manifestation of the Great Expected One, but, now, he was able to bear witness to Him in His presence. As he was standing the next day among his followers, Jesus Himself approached, doubtless to speak with him on the affairs of the kingdom of God, in which both were so entirely engrossed. He was still unknown, unrecognized, and unnoticed, and He would not reveal Himself by any act of self-assertion on His own part. But the very end of John's mission from God was that "He should be made manifest to Israel," and the hour had now come to draw aside the veil. Pointing to Him while He was yet at a distance, he proclaims His glory in words which must have thrilled those who heard them: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man' who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' And I knew Him not (as the Messiah); but, that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not (as the Messiah); but He that sent me to baptize with water, the Same said unto me, 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining^x on Him, He it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God."

It is possible, as Milman suggests,⁸⁸ that flocks of lambs, intended for the Temple sacrifices, then passing, from the rich pastures of Perea, to the ford beside which John was baptizing, may have suggested the name "Lamb of God," by which he consecrated to the Church, for ever, that most cherished symbol of the Redeemer. Jesus was meek and gentle like the lamb, but there was much more in the use of such a name by the son of a priest—a Nazarite, and a prophet, like John. The idea of sacrifice was natural and inevitable to him, in connection with it. The nation, indeed, in Christ's day, had so little idea of a suffering and dying Messiah, that Jonathan Ben Uzziel, the contemporary of Christ, while he sees the Messiah in the "Servant of

CHAP. XXVIII.
" κίκραγε,
verse 16.

⁸⁸ Milman's
Christianity,
8vo, 76.

CHAP. XXVIII. God," of Isaiah's prophecies,³⁹ ingeniously explains His sufferings as meaning those of Israel.⁴⁰ But the number of passages which spoke of the Messiah as suffering, even then arrested attention, and raised the difficulty which the Rabbis of a later day tried to solve, by assuming that there would be two Messiahs—one, the son of Joseph, who should suffer and die; the other, the son of David, who should live and reign. Even then, the Rabbis saw in the words of Zechariah, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced," and in the words of Isaiah, in his fifty-third chapter, a reference to the Messiah, and, hence, the Jew, in Justin's dialogue, written about a hundred years after Christ, saw nothing surprising in the idea of the Messiah suffering, though he revolted from the thought of His dying in a way cursed by the Law, like crucifixion,⁴¹ a difficulty met with by St. Paul himself.⁴²

John, who had studied Isaiah so deeply, and was so penetrated by his spirit, could not have overlooked those verses which speak of the "Servant of God," as "brought like a lamb to the slaughter," and as "bearing the iniquities of many," and "making intercession for the transgressors,"⁴³ nor the words of Zechariah, which even the Rabbis referred to the Messiah. But his language, after the return of Jesus from the wilderness, shows a striking contrast to his previous tone. Before that, he spoke of the Messiah only as having the fan in His hand, and as laying the axe at the root of the tree, and as baptizing with fire as well as the Spirit. Now, he sees in Him only the meek, pure, and patient Lamb, destined by God to sacrifice. That He was to "take away the sin of the world," leaves no question as to the sense in which John saw in Him the "Lamb of God." Isaiah had painted "the Servant of God" as making peace for the people, by His vicarious sufferings for them, and this "Servant" John sees in Jesus. Fitly typified by "The Lamb," from His gentle patience, He is still more so, as the Antitype of Old Testament sacrifice. To exclude the idea of expiatory suffering, is to trifle with the words of the Baptist, and the ingenious fancy that finds an allusion to the pastoral imagery of the twenty-third Psalm,⁴⁴ is even more

³⁹ Ch. 52. 13.

⁴⁰ Nork, Rabbim. Quellen, xxiii. Langen's Judenthum, 423.

⁴¹ Oehler, in Herzog, ix. 440.

⁴² 1 Cor. i. 23.

⁴³ Isaiah 53. 7, 11, 12.

⁴⁴ Ecce Homo, 6. pastoral imagery of the twenty-third Psalm,⁴⁴ is even more

arbitrary. John saw in Jesus the propitiation, which was, CHAP. XXVIII. even then, bearing and carrying away the sin of the world.⁷

How was it that John realized so much more clearly than any around him the true ideal of the Messiah, as the sacrificial Lamb, appointed of God, on whom had been laid the sins of a guilty world? It can be explained only by remembering that his very mission was to reveal Him to the world. For this, he tells us, he had been sent, and his commission, therefore, implied a disclosure to him, not only of the person, but the true work of the Messiah. We know that revelation from above pointed out Jesus to him by a heavenly sign,⁴⁵ and, from the same source, we may assume, 45 Verse 33. he learned the great truth that, as the Messiah, He would expiate the sin of the world by His sufferings. It may be that Jesus Himself talked with him of "His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."⁴⁶ But this, itself, 46 Luke 9. 31. would be a revelation. Only, however, by communication from a higher source, could the idea have been formed of a suffering Messiah—an idea so alien to the conceptions of the day, though dimly realized by individuals, like the aged Simeon, or Zacharias,⁴⁷ to whom a prophetic insight had been, 47 Luke 2. 34; 1. 77. for the moment, given. "We have heard out of the Law," said the people to Jesus Himself, "that the Christ abideth for ever"—that is, should never die—"and how sayest Thou, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up?' Who is this Son of Man?" It was in the face of such a universal contrast of thought, that John announced the great truth, with clear and precise distinctness, noting even its having already begun, and its future world-embracing greatness. The more novel the conception of a suffering Messiah to the nation; the more difficult it proved to bring it home even to the disciples themselves; the more it needed to be slowly developed by the facts of Christ's life and death,⁴⁸ to secure 48 Matt. 16. 21. its being understood; the more justified is the thought of a special revelation, throwing light into the Baptist's soul, on the full meaning of ancient prophecy.⁸

It must not be thought, however, that, with all these heavenly revelations, the knowledge of John was as minute and defined as that of those whose minds the teachings of

CHAP. XXVIII. Jesus afterwards illuminated from above. A generation later, some disciples of John, living at Ephesus, when asked by Paul, "If they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed?" answered that they had not so much as heard of there being any Holy Ghost at all.⁴⁹ The Jews of John's day thought of the Holy Spirit only vaguely, as the "Spirit of Jehovah"⁵⁰—the effluence of the divine power and grace, and we owe it to the Gospels and the Epistles that we now have clearer conceptions.

⁴⁹ Acts 20. 2.

⁵⁰ Buch d. Jubilaen, c. 25. 11, 28.

John had pointed to Jesus as "the Lamb of God," and had thus, doubtless, fixed the attention of those around him on one associated with a symbol so sacred and tender. But he did not confine himself to a title not yet familiar, as addressed to the Messiah, and added one which had already been appropriated to Him in the literature of the nation—"I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."⁵¹ The Sibylline verses,⁵² the Book of Enoch,⁵³ and the Fourth Book of Esdras,⁵⁴ had, for generations, applied this title to the expected Messiah, and, thus, there could be no misapprehension in the mind of any who heard it given to Jesus.

⁵¹ John 1. 34.

⁵² iii. 775.

⁵³ 105. 2.

⁵⁴ 13. 32; 14. 9.

⁵⁵ On the use of the title "Son of God" in the Gospels, see Westcott's Introduction, 120.

It was His formal proclamation by the appointed herald.⁵⁵ It seemed as if this wondrous testimony had been lost on those who heard it, but though the multitude took little heed of it, there were some hearts in which it found a worthy response. The next day, as John was standing with two of his disciples, Jesus again passed, and was again proclaimed in the same words. Fixing his eyes earnestly⁵⁶ on Him, John called on his companions to "behold the Lamb of God." It was enough. They might not realize the full import of the name, but they felt the divine attractiveness of Him to whom it was given. They were waiting with anxious hearts for the Messiah, and they heard John proclaim that Jesus was He, and, forthwith, left John, to follow Him whom he thus honoured.

⁵⁶ ἐμβλέψας.

Jesus, Himself, now about to begin His public ministry, was ready to receive disciples. He had permanently abandoned His obscure life of Nazareth, and was, henceforth, to be a Rabbi in Israel.

The teachers of the day had round them an inner circle

of disciples, able, in some measure, to represent them in public, in their own absence, by speaking in the synagogues, answering questions, or undertaking missionary journeys,⁵⁷ CHAP. XXVIII. Nork, cx. cix. and these were to be the special duties of the disciples of Jesus. They were to be trained by Him in the mysteries of the Kingdom, as those of the Rabbis were in the mysteries of the Law. No teacher assumed his office in Israel without a group of such followers round him, for it was reckoned a grave sin for a Rabbi to be at any time without some one to instruct in the Law,⁵⁸ and even their scholars were required to converse habitually on this one study of their lives. "When two scholars of the wise," says the Talmud,⁵⁸ "are making a journey together, and do not make the Law the subject of their conversation, they deserve to be burned alive, as is written in 2 Kings ii. 11." It was, therefore, only an adoption of the custom of the day which Jesus now followed. Nork, cxcv.

The two who now joined Him seem to have hitherto formed part of such an inner circle round John, and were the beginning of a group of trusted friends, with whom He could associate, and of assistants in His great work, while, also, a centre round which others might gather. He drew them to Him, however, in a way new and significant, for He did not wait till they asked leave to follow Him, and did not court their aid, but called on them to follow Him, retaining, thus, a relation of superiority even in this detail.

He could, hence, more freely admit them to the most endearing and familiar intimacy; and speak of them, before long, as His friends, His brethren, and even His children and little ones, though, also, His servants. He had chosen them, not they Him; and thus He could the better train them to be teachers in His own society, alluring the world to it by the example of their lives, or spreading it by their ministrations. Standing towards them in a relation so dignified, they were at once His friends, and the servants whom He could employ as diligent fishers of men, and labourers in the great vineyard of the kingdom of God.⁵⁹ Keim, II. 205.

Though, like the Rabbis, a teacher of the nation, in the streets, in the houses, and in the synagogues, as the custom

CHAP. XXVIII. of the day required, Jesus did not try to gain His immediate followers from their order, or from their disciples, for He had little sympathy with them. He rather sought simple children of the people, free, as far as possible, from prejudice and self-sufficiency, and marked only by their sincerity, humility, intellectual shrewdness, and religious sensibility. The less they knew of the schools, the less they would have to unlearn; the more they derived from Him, the more undoubting their loyalty to Him. He found the class He wanted, mostly in lowly fishermen and countrymen.

Of the first two disciples, the one was Andrew, a fisherman, from Bethsaida on the Lake of Galilee; the other, doubtless, was John himself, a native of the same town—though, with his wonted modesty, he withholds his name.⁶⁰ No wonder he remembered every incident of his introduction to Christ, so minutely, after many years, for it was the birth-hour of his religious life. Very probably the proposal to join the new teacher came from him, and, if so, he was the first to follow Jesus, as he was the last to leave Him. The two had heard him announced as the Lamb of God, and as such they sought Him. Can we wonder that the name became such a favourite with him, who, hereafter, was the beloved disciple, that we find it in his writings alone, or that he repeats it in the Apocalypse more than thirty times?⁶¹

The two followed Jesus, anxious to speak to Him, but in modest difficulty how to approach Him.⁶² Their embarrassment, however, was brief, for Jesus, hearing their footsteps behind Him, and judging, with the quick instinct of sympathy, that He was being sought for the first time, turned and spoke to them. Asking them what they seek, He is answered in their confusion, by the counter-question,—“Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?” The multitudes attending such gatherings as John’s preaching, were wont to run up temporary booths of wattled boughs, with a striped abba, or outer cloak, thrown over, for cover, and some one had given Jesus a share in such a shelter, for it is not likely that there were houses near. Rabbis on their journeys were always welcome to

⁶⁰ Ewald’s *Geschichte*, v. 322.

⁶¹ Hanna’s *Earlier Years of our Lord*, 228.

⁶² Jeremy Taylor’s *Life of Christ*, Part II., Appen. to section x. 2.

hospitality, and He was regarded as one,⁶³ by at least a few, already. The title had been given even to John,⁶⁴ as it now was to Jesus, for although the authorities at Jerusalem discountenanced those who had not studied in the schools, and the people half distrusted any teaching which did not address them on school authority, the recognition was never withheld where evident knowledge of the Law, or worthiness to teach, was seen. Jewish traders and Galilæan teachers, who had no diploma from the schools of Jerusalem, were accepted as Rabbis in Rome; and in Palestine, the dignity and wisdom of Jesus drew forth towards Him the title of Rabbi and Teacher, not only from the people and the disciples, but even from the Pharisees and Rabbis themselves.^{bb}

The simple words of invitation, "Come and see," were enough to open the relationship between Jesus and hearts so eager to know more of Him, and, presently, they were with Him, where He dwelt. The day passed quickly, for they did not mark the hours, as they stretched on from noon, when they had come, till towards night.^{cc} His discourse, His teaching, and His whole Being, excluded all other thoughts. If any doubt respecting Him had remained, it soon passed away. Both were, henceforth, His followers, and both equally recognized in Him the promised Messiah. The night approached, but neither was willing to leave. They had found rest to their souls. All day long, and into the quiet watches of the night, they had listened to His first opening of His great message of mercy from the Father, and they would fain hear still more. But, as Jeremy Taylor puts it—"in accidents of the greatest pleasure, our joys cannot be contained within the limits of the possessor's thoughts." Andrew had a brother, Simon, and longed to bring him to Jesus.^{dd} Retiring, therefore, for a time, he soon returned with him in company. It was a matter of the gravest moment, on the one side, that a right choice of disciples should be made, and it was no less momentous on the other, that there should be no self-deception; but on neither side was there long hesitation, or cautious inquiry, or demand for evidence of character, or crafty

CHAP. XXVIII.

⁶³ Meyer, *in loc.*⁶⁴ John 3. 21.

CHAP. XXVIII. wariness. Everything was simple and direct, in all the fulness of mutual confidence and trust. To see Jesus, and hear Him speak, was enough, and He, on His part, "needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man."⁶⁵ Looking steadfastly ⁶⁶ at Simon, He saw in him, as in John and Andrew, the characteristics He required in His followers. The rare unbending firmness of purpose, the tenacious fidelity, the swift decisiveness, the Galilaean fire and manliness, and the tender religiousness of spirit, which marked him to the end of his life, were read at once. Jesus had found in him His firmest, most rock-like servant and confessor; the man who, from this first moment—except for one sad instant—amidst all changes and trials, and the ever-growing storms of the world, would never be untrue to Him.⁶⁷ "Thou art Simon," said He, "the son of Jonas. Henceforth thou shalt be called 'The Rock.'" No wonder that he is best known as Cephas, or Peter, the Aramaic and Greek equivalents of this honourable distinction.⁶⁸ The Christian Church was already founded in these three disciples.

⁶⁵ John 2. 25.
⁶⁶ ἐμβλέψας

⁶⁷ Ewald, vol. v
322.

With the fine modesty of his nature, John says nothing of himself in relation to a day so eventful in his history. The kingly soul of Jesus evidently enchained him at once. Henceforth, he was altogether His, though, for a time, dismissed to his home. But, once more permitted to follow Him, he is ever found at His side, forgetting himself in his love for his Master, and lost in the contemplation of His life and words. We do not know the stages by which, from this moment, onwards, his faith in the Saviour grew, till it reached that blending of soul with soul, in inmost love, which made him, to the end of his long life, the ideal disciple. Writing last of all, he allows himself to be seen only twice in the story of his Master—now, when he came with Andrew, as the first to join Christ, and at the close, on Calvary, when he lifts the veil for a moment from the unique relation in which he stood to his Lord.

The earliest traditions join his brother James with John, as one of the very first disciples, for though John, from the same delicacy as shrank from speaking of himself, does not

mention his brother's name, the other three Gospels always number him with the earliest adherents of Jesus. There can be little question that, as Andrew went to seek his brother Simon, John, also, brought James to Jesus. The intimation that Andrew went first on his errand of love, seems to leave us to infer that he himself went next.

The four disciples had it in common that they belonged to the same town, Bethsaida,⁶⁸ that they were of the fisher population, and that both families were in a comparatively prosperous position.⁶⁹ We know nothing of the father of Andrew and Simon, but James and John were the sons of one Zabdai, and we know, from comparison of texts, that their mother was Salome, so honourably mentioned in the Gospels.⁷⁰ Writers so acute as Ewald⁷¹ have seen in her a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and, if so, John and James were cousins of their Master. If it be correct to honour Salome thus, she was present with Mary at the crucifixion.⁷² In any case, she belonged to the number of pious souls ready to accept a Messiah such as Jesus, and hence her sons must have received the priceless blessing of a godly training and example. It seems as if we could almost trace the beloved disciple in the character of a mother, who "ministered to Jesus of her substance" while He lived,⁷³ and did not forsake Him even when He hung on the cross.⁷⁴

To begin His public career in a way so humble and unostentatious, was in strict keeping with the work and character of Christ. It was easier for Him to train a few, and gradually raise them to the high standard required in His immediate followers. That His first adherents were attracted only by religious considerations, tended to guard against any seeking to join Him who were not moved to do so by a true spiritual sympathy—itself the pledge of their fitness for disciples. To have drawn around Him great multitudes, by a display of supernatural powers, would have destroyed all His plans, for He could have found no such sympathy in crowds thus gathered. Having, therefore, begun with the lowly band of four, He turned His thoughts once more towards home, and set out, with them, to Galilee, next day. A fifth disciple joined Him on the homeward

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⁶⁸ John 1. 44.⁶⁹ Mark 1. 20.
Luke 5. 10.⁷⁰ See Mark 15.
40; 16. 1, com-
pared with
Matt. 27. 56.⁷¹ Geschichte v.
239.
⁷² John 19. 25.⁷³ Luke 8. 3.⁷⁴ Mark 15. 40.

CHAP. XXVIII. journey—Philip, a townsman of the others. Nothing is told of the circumstances, though there can be no doubt that he had heard of Jesus, either from the Baptist, to whom, like the others, he seems to have gone out; or from the four, as they travelled with him on his own return. The simple words "Follow me," so often uttered afterwards, were enough to add him to the others.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ On the character of Philip see a Sermon by Dr. Newman, Plain and Parochial Sermons, ii, 333.

The family of Mary, in which we no longer hear any mention of Joseph—now, apparently, dead for a number of years—seen at this time to have left Nazareth for a short sojourn at Cana, a village a few miles directly north of their own town, on the other side of the hills behind it. A little later, Capernaum was chosen instead, but it was to Cana, not Nazareth, that Jesus returned from the Jordan. It lay upon an almost isolated hill, rising proudly above the pasture-land of the little valley of El Battauf, and was afterwards a place of some importance, in the last Jewish war, from its strong position.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Jos. Vita, 16. Ant. xiii. 15, 1. Bell. Jud. l. 17 §. 4.7. Furrer in Bibel Lex. Art. "Kana."

Jesus and His companions had scarcely reached it, before Philip, full of natural joy at his discovery of the Messiah, in Jesus, sought out a friend who lived in Cana, Nathanael by name, to let him know that he had found Him "of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph."⁷⁷ Nazareth was only a few miles off, but so privately had Jesus lived in it that the name was new to Nathanael, and the town, besides, had a questionable name. "Can any good thing," asked he, "come out of Nazareth?"

⁷⁷ Jo:hn 1 45.

Jesus had won Peter by the greeting which had made him feel, that, by a knowledge beyond human, He had already fixed his eye on him, before His coming, as a future disciple. A similar display of superhuman knowledge now kindled faith in Nathanael. As he approached, Jesus greeted him as "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." A glance had been enough to show that he was one whose simplicity and uprightness of spirit marked him as a member of the true Israel of God. Nathanael felt that he was known, but wondered how Jesus could have learned about him. A few words more, and he was won for ever. He had been sitting alone, under the fig-tree before his house,

or in his garden, hidden, as he thought, from all, when Philip spoke to him. "Before that Philip called thee," said Jesus, "when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." "The first words had struck him, but these, recalling the moments just gone, when, very likely, in his fancied seclusion, he had been pondering the misery of Israel, and longing for the Great Deliverer,—showed that his inmost soul had been, all the while, open to the eye of Jesus, and completed the conquest of his soul. "Rabbi," said he, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."^{eg} He felt that the heart of the Messiah of God had turned tenderly towards him, even before they had met.

The simple, prompt faith of Nathanael was no less pleasing to Jesus than honouring to himself. There was something so fresh, so fervent, so full-hearted in the words, now at the very beginning of Christ's public work, that they won a reply alike gracious and sublime. "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." Far higher grounds of faith would, henceforth, be granted, for, from this time,^{hh} "the heavens would be seen, as it were, open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,"—the name consecrated to the Messiah from the days of Daniel—and now permanently chosen as His own. When He begins His work in its full activity, there will be no longer a momentary opening of heaven, as lately on the Jordan, but a constant intercourse between it and earth, as of old in the vision of Jacob; heavenly ministrations bringing countless blessings down, and bearing back the tidings of the work of mercy, in reconciling man to God. Language like this is, of course, metaphorical. It may be understood literally, in one or two cases, in the Saviour's history; but He cannot have referred to these. He, rather, spoke of the connection between earth and heaven, which He had opened. They would be no longer isolated from each other. Intercourse between them was henceforth renewed, never again to cease; intercourse, at first, between Him and His Father, but gradually spreading over the earth, as men caught His image, and reproduced His spirit. The angels

CHAP. XXVIII. descending from heaven with gifts for the Son of Man to dispense to His brethren, would be visible to all who saw the results, in His kingdom over the earth.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Schleiermacher's *Predigten*, iii. 173.

Nathanael's name does not occur in the list of the apostles, but it has been assumed from the earliest times that he was Bartholomew,ⁱⁱ who is always named next to Philip. It was a Jewish custom to change the name when a public profession of religion was made. "Four things," says R. Isaac, "have power to change a man's destiny—alms, prayer, change of heart, and change of name."⁷⁹ We have instances of such change of name in Simon, who is also indifferently mentioned as Peter, and as the son of Jonas, and in Barnabas, whose proper name was Joses.⁸⁰ Nathanael may have been the personal name, while Bartholomew was simply an allusion to him as the son of Talmai.^{kk}

⁷⁹ Nork, excl.

⁸⁰ Acts 4. 36.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE OPENING OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

THE plain of El Battauf, on a hill in which rose the village of Cana, now utterly forsaken, stretches out in a pleasant rolling green sea, embayed in a framework of softer or steeper hills. On the south, the whitewashed tomb of a Mohammedan saint marks the top of the hill behind Nazareth, and a little to the west of this, the ruined tower of Sepphoris rises from a lower ridge. Entering the plain from the north, the first village is Kefr¹ Menda, with its deep spring, the water of which is carefully kept for use in the hot summer; rain water, collected in an open pool, being used at other times. The flat roofs of many of the poor cottages show frail shelters of wattled wands and twigs, the sleeping places of the inmates below, in the sultry summer nights. They are, doubtless, the counterparts of the booths of branches of olives, pines, myrtles, palms, and other trees, which the ancient Jews, in Nehemiah's day, made on their house-roofs in Jerusalem, at the Feast of Tabernacles.²

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¹ Kefr is the Arab. for village.² Neh. 8. 15, 16.

The plain undulates in alternate grass and grain fields, between two and three miles, from Kefr Menda to Sefuriyeh, the ancient capital of Galilee, the "bird-like" Sepphoris. Several broad caravan roads, which lead to the fords of the Jordan, cross it; groves of figs and olives fringe the southern edge, and parts of the slopes, of the hill on which Sefuriyeh stands. One overtakes asses bearing heavy loads of rich grass to the village, some of them, perhaps, with an ear cropped off; the penalty allowed to be inflicted by any peasant who has caught it feeding in his unprotected patch of grain. Sefuriyeh is, even still, a large and prosperous village, stretching out on the western and southern slopes of

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its hill. A half-fallen tower, of great antiquity, crowns the height, and from its top the eye ranges over a pleasant landscape—the soft green plain, the fig and olive groves fringing it, Kefr Menda to the north, Cana of Galilee a little further east, and, to the south-east, the white tomb on the hill of Nazareth; a southern sky, with its deep blue, overarching all.³ It is a delightful idyllic picture, on the small scale that marks everything in Palestine.^a

³ Furrer's *Wanderungen*, 301.

^a קנע (kanēh), a reed.

Cana—the reedy place⁴—as, no doubt, the first settlers found the plain below it, before it was drained and cultivated, is now so utterly desolate that it is the favourite hunting ground of the neighbourhood; even leopards being shot at times among its broken houses, while the wild boar and the jackal find haunts in the thick jungle of oak coppice, on the slopes of the wady's around.⁵ The houses are built of limestone, and some of them may have been inhabited within the last fifty years. Sepp found the whole space on which the village seemed to have stood, only about a hundred paces, each way. “I met,” says he, “not a living soul; not even a dog: the watchman one never misses in Palestine was not there to give a sound. My step echoed through the deserted little street and open square, as if in the dead of night; only flies held their marriage rejoicings in the sunshine; while a splendid rainbow stretched over the ruined tower of Sepphoris.”⁶

⁵ Land and Pook, 427.

⁶ Sepp, II. 103.

It was very different in the days when Jesus came to it from His visit to the preaching of John, on the Jordan. A marriage was afoot in the circle of Mary's friends; possibly of her connections.^b That Mary and Jesus were invited to the usual rejoicings, and that they accepted the invitation, marks the worth of those who had given it, for the presence of the saintly mother and her Son at such a time, are a pledge that all that was innocent and beautiful characterized the festivities.^c

A marriage in the East has always been a time of great rejoicing. The bridegroom, adorned and anointed, and attended by his groomsmen, “the sons of the bridechamber,”⁷ went, of old, as now, on the marriage day, to the house of the bride, who awaited him, veiled from head to foot,⁸ alike

⁷ Matt. 9. 15. John 3. 29.

⁸ Gen. 24. 15; 28. 14, 15. Rev. 19. 8.

from Eastern ideas of propriety, and as a symbol of her subjection as a wife.⁹ A peculiar girdle—the “attire” which a bride could not forget¹⁰—was always part of her dress, and a wreath of myrtle leaves, either real, or of gold, or gilded work—like our wreath of orange blossoms—was so indispensable that it came to be used as a term for the bride herself.¹¹ Her hair, if she had not been married before, was left flowing; her whole dress was perfumed, and she glittered with as many jewels as the family boasted, or, if poor, could borrow for the occasion.¹² Her bridal dress, her special ornaments, the ointment and perfumes for her person, and presents of fruit and other things, had been sent in the earlier part of the day by the bridegroom; the bride, on her part, sending him, as her prescribed gift, a shroud, which he kept and wore, as she did hers, on each New Year’s Day and Day of Atonement.¹³ The Rabbis had fixed Wednesday as the day on which maidens should be married, and Friday for widows,¹⁴ so that, if the bride at Cana was now married for the first time, we know the day of the week on which the ceremony took place. She might be very young, for girls become wives in the East when twelve or fourteen, or even younger. The bridegroom and bride both fasted all day before the marriage, and confessed their sins in prayer, as on the Day of Atonement.¹⁵ When the bride reached the house of her future husband’s father, in which the marriage was celebrated, the bridegroom received her, still deeply veiled, and conducted her within, with great rejoicings.¹⁶ Indeed, he generally set out from his father’s house in the evening to meet her, with flute-players or singers before him; his groomsmen, and others, with flaring torches or lamps, escorting him amidst loud rejoicing, which rose still higher as he led her back. Neighbours thronged into the streets.¹⁷ Flutes and drums and shrill cries filled the air, and the procession was swelled as it passed on, by a train of maidens,¹⁸ friends of the bride and bridegroom, who had been waiting for it. The Talmud has preserved a snatch¹⁹ of one of the songs sung by the bridesmaids and girls as they danced before the bride, on the way to the bridegroom’s house. In a free translation it runs something like this:—

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⁹ 1 Cor. 11. 10.¹⁰ Jer. 2. 32.¹¹ קַלְהָהּ, kallah.¹² Ps. 45. 8.
Isaiah 49. 18;
61. 10.
Rev. 21. 2.¹³ Talmud;
quoted in
Sepp, ii. 193.¹⁴ Sepp, ii. 195.¹⁵ Ginsburg, *Art.*
“Marr. age.”
Kittó’s *Cyclo.*
3rd edition.¹⁶ Sepp, *Jerus.*
n. d. *Heil.*
Land, i. 21.¹⁷ Cant. 3. 11.¹⁸ Matt. 25. 1.¹⁹ Quoted by
Sepp, ii. 197.

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"Her eyelids are not stained with blue,
 Her red cheeks are her own;
 Her hair hangs waving as it grew,
 Her grace were wealth, alone!"

In the house of the bridegroom's father, which was, for a time, the home of the young couple, things went merrily, for a feast was provided, to which all the friends and neighbours were invited.²⁰ It was an essential part of the ceremony, for even so early as Jacob's day, "to make a feast" had become the common expression for the celebration of a marriage.²¹

The bride did not sit at this feast, however, but remained apart, among the women, shrouded in the long white veil of betrothal; unseen, as yet, even by her husband. Nor did she take any part in the festivities, or appear at all. It was only when husband and wife were finally alone, that the veil was, for the first time, removed.^d

Meanwhile, the family rejoicings went on apace. The feast was provided at the cost of the bridegroom,²² and continued, usually, for seven days,²³ with the greatest mirth.²⁴ The bridegroom wore a crown, often of flowers—the crown with which, in the Song of Solomon, it is said,²⁵ "his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, in the day of the gladness of his heart,"—and sat "decked, like a priest, in his ornaments;"²⁶ the bride sitting apart among the women, "adorned with her jewels." Singing, music, and dancing,²⁷ merry riddles, and the play of wit, amused the house, night after night, while the feast was prolonged, and it was only after it had worn itself out, that life settled down again into colourless monotony.

It was to some such festivity that Jesus had been invited with His five disciples. The earthen floor and the ledge round the wall would be spread with carpets, the walls hung with garlands; the spirits of all bright and cheerful as the decorated chamber, and the modest rejoicings in no way clouded by the presence of Mary's Son and His followers.²⁸ There was no excess, we may be sure, but the flow of harmless entertainment brightened all faces. John had been an ascetic—the highest form of religious life

²⁰ Gen. 29, 22.
 Matt. 22, 1—10.
 Luke 14, 8.

²¹ Gen. 29, 22.
 See also
 Esther 2, 18.
 Matt. 22, 4;
 25, 10.
 Luke 14, 8.

²² Judges 14, 10.
 John 2, 9, 10.

²³ Judges 14, 12,
 15, Tobit 11,
 20.

²⁴ Jer. 7, 34;
 16, 9.

²⁵ Ch. 3, 11.

²⁶ Isaiah 61, 10.

²⁷ Jer. 25, 10.

²⁸ John 2, 10.

hitherto known in Israel. He had spent his days in penitential austerity and wilderness seclusion; had drunk no wine, had eaten no pleasant food, and had kept apart from human affairs and relationships. But a new and higher ideal of religion was now to be introduced. Jesus came to spiritualize the humblest duties of life, and sanctify its simplest incidents, so as to ennoble it as a whole. Henceforth, pleasures and enjoyments were not to be shunned as unholy; religion was not to thrive on the mortification of every human instinct, and the repression of every cheerful emotion. It would mix with the crowd of men, affect no singularity, take part in the innocent festivities of life, interest itself in all that interested men at large, and yet, amidst all, remain consecrated and pure; *in* the world, by sympathy and active brotherhood, but not *of* it; human in its outward form, but heavenly in its elevation and spirit.

The rejoicings had continued for some evenings, when a misfortune happened that threatened to disgrace the bridegroom and his family for life in the eyes of their neighbours. The supply of wine ran out. As in all wine-growing countries, the population were not only temperate, but simple in their whole living, beyond what the natives of a colder climate can imagine. Yet wine was their symbol of joy and festivity. Jotham, in the far-back days of the Judges, had praised it as "cheering God and man,"²⁹ and among other passages, a Psalm had spoken of it as making glad the heart,³⁰ though its immoderate use had been condemned³¹ in many Scriptures. "Wine is the best of all medicines," said a Hebrew proverb: "where wine is wanting, doctors thrive."³² "May there be always wine and life in the mouth of the Rabbi," was one of the toasts at their festivities.³³ But, withal, this referred only to its moderate use. Among the parables in which the people delighted, one ran thus—"When Noah planted his vineyard, Satan came and asked him what he was doing? 'Planting a vineyard,' was the reply. 'What is it for?' 'Its fruits, green or dry, are sweet and pleasant: we make wine of it, which gladdens the heart.'³⁴ 'I should like to have a hand in the planting,' said Satan. 'Good,' replied Noah. Satan

²⁹ Judges 9. 13.³⁰ Ps. 104. 15.³¹ Prov. 20. 1; 23. 29, 30. Isaiah 28. 7. Hosea 4. 11, &c. &c.³² Dukes' Rab. Blumenlese, 132.³³ Dukes, 161.³⁴ Ps. 104. 15.

CHAP. XXIX. then brought a lamb, a lion, a sow, and an ape, killed them in the vineyard, and let their blood run into the roots of the vines. From this it comes that a man, before he has taken wine, is simple as a lamb, which knows nothing, and is dumb before its shearers; ³⁵ when he has drunk moderately he grows a lion, and thinks there is not his like; if he drink too much, he turns a swine, and wallows in the mire; if he drink still more, he becomes a filthy ape, falling hither and thither, and knowing nothing of what he does."

The good and the evil of wine were thus familiar, but we may be certain that only its better side, as enjoyed among a people at once simple and sober, who held excess in abhorrence, and in a household where licence was not to be thought of—was seen at the marriage in Cana, and this temperate use of it Jesus cheerfully sanctioned. Mary, with her gentle womanly feeling for the shame of seeming inhospitality that threatened the host, indulged the hope that He whose mysterious birth, honoured by a special star, and the songs of angels, and whose changed look and bearing, since His Jordan visit, could not have escaped her, would now put forth the hidden powers she might well believe Him to have, to brighten the family circle, in whose life this feast was so great an event. She had, however, to learn, by a gentle rebuke, that His human relation to her was now merged and lost in a higher. ³⁶ Using an every-day form of words, of immemorial age in the nation, ³⁷ with a look of love and tenderness, He waived her implied solicitation aside—"Woman, what is there to me and thee? Mine hour is not yet come." There was no disrespect in the word "woman," for He used it afterwards to her, when on the cross, in His last tender offices of love. It was as if He had said, "Our spheres lie apart. Hitherto you have known me as your Son. Henceforth, I am much more. My divine powers are only for divine ends: at the call of my Father alone, for His glory only. He fixes my hour for all the works He wills me to do, and in this case it has not yet come."³⁸ "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," said Mary, on hearing His answer—for it had no harshness to her.

³⁶ Fillicott's *Life of our Lord*, 121. Neander's *Life of Christ*, 175.

³⁷ Josh. 22. 24. Judges 11. 12. 2 Sam. 16. 16; 19. 22. 1 Kings 17. 18. 2 Kings 3. 18. Matt. 8. 29; 27. 19. Mark 1. 24. Luke 8. 28.

³⁸ John 5. 36.

The superstitious dread of ceremonial uncleanness, among the Jews, made ample provision necessary in every household, for constant washings of vessels, or of the person. No one ate without washing the hands; each guest had his feet washed on his arrival, for sandals were left outside and only naked feet allowed to touch a host's floor; and the washing of "cups, and jugs, and bottles," as the Talmud tells us, "went on the whole day."³⁹ Six great jars of stone, ³⁹ Lightfoot, iii. 126. therefore, for such purifications, stood ranged outside the door, or in the chamber; their narrow mouths likely filled with green leaves, as is still the custom, to keep the water cool. "Fill the waterpots with water," said Jesus, adding, when they had carefully filled them to the brim, "Draw out, and take supplies to the governor of the feast." But the water was now glowing wine. His words to His mother and the servants had been unnoticed by the company, and the fresh supply, when tasted first, as the fashion was, by the chief man of the feast,^e on whom it fell to see to the entertainment of the guests, was found so good, that he goodhumouredly rallied the bridegroom on keeping the best to the last.^f

The "glory" of Jesus had always shone, to those who had eyes to see it, in the spotless beauty of His life, but this was a revelation of it in a new form. It was "the beginning" of His miracles, wrought, as was fitting, in stillness and privacy, without display,—to cheer and brighten those around Him. His presence at such a feast showed His sympathy with human joys, human connections, and human relationships.⁴⁰ He taught by it, for the first time, that common life in all its phases, may be raised to a religious dignity, and that the loving smile of God, like the tender blue above, looks down on the whole round of existence.^g He had not been invited as the chief guest, or as in any way distinguished, for He was not yet The Teacher, famed throughout the land, nor had His miracles begun to reveal His higher claims. But He took the place assigned Him as one among the many, as naturally as the lowliest of the company, and remained unknown till His divine glory revealed Him.

His miraculous power, indeed, was only one aspect of this

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⁴⁰ Robertson's Sermons, ii. 279. Schleiermacher's Predigten, i. 292.

CHAP. XXIX. "glory." In a far higher sense it was "manifested" in His Person. It was, doubtless, amazing to possess such powers, but, that One whose word, or mere will, could command the obedience of nature, should mingle as a friend in an humble marriage festivity, a man amongst men, was still more wonderful. Nothing could better illustrate His perfect manhood, than His identifying Himself thus with the humble incidents of a private circle. He had grown up under the common ordinances of human existence, as a child, a son, a brother, a friend, and a neighbour. As a Jew, he had shared in the social, civil, and religious life of His nation. His presence at this marriage, showed that He continued the same familiar relations to His fellow-men, after His consecration as before it. Neither His nationality, nor education, nor mental characteristics, nor natural temperament, narrowed His sympathies. Though burdened with the high commission of the Messiah, He retained a vivid interest in all things human. With us, any supreme pre-occupation leaves only apathy for other things. But in Christ, no one faculty or emotion appeared in excess. His fulness of nature suited itself to every occasion. Strength and grace, wisdom and love, courage and purity, which are the one side of our being, were never displayed so harmoniously, and so perfectly, as in Him, but the incidents of this marriage feast show that the other side, the feminine gentleness and purity, which are the ideal virtues of woman, were no less His characteristics.⁴¹ They throw light on the words of St. Paul, "In Him is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female." He could subdue Pilate by His calm dignity, but He also ministered to the happiness of a village festival. He could withstand the struggle with the Prince of Darkness in the wilderness, and through life, but he wept over the grave of Lazarus. He could let the rich young ruler go his way to perish, if he would, but He sighed as He healed the man that was dumb.⁴² He pronounced the doom of Jerusalem, with a lofty sternness, but He wept as He thought how it had neglected the things of its peace. He craved sympathy, and He showed it with equal tenderness: He was calm amidst the wildest popular tumult, but He sought the

⁴¹ Robertson's Sermons, II. 270.
Ullmann's Sündenlosigkeit, 49.

⁴² Mark 7. 31.

lonely mountain for midnight prayer. He sternly rebuked Peter for hinting a temptation, but He blamed His sleep in Gethsemane on the weakness of the flesh. He gave away a crown when on the cross, but He was exceedingly sorrowful unto death in the garden. He never used His miraculous powers to relieve Himself, but He provided for the multitude in the wilderness. His judges quailed before Him, but He forgot His dying agonies, to commend His mother to the lifelong care of a friend. He rebuked death, that He might give her son back to the widow; and He took part in the rejoicings of an humble marriage, that He might elevate and sanctify human joys. In the fullest sense He was a man, but not in the sense in which manly virtues are opposed to those of woman, for He showed no less the gentleness, purity, and tenderness of the one sex, than the strength and nobility of the other. He was the Son of Man, in the grand sense of being representative of humanity as a whole. Man and woman, alike, have in Him their perfect ideal.⁴³

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An Indian apologue tells us that a Brahmin, one of whose disciples had been perplexed respecting miracles, ordered a flower-pot filled with earth to be brought him, and having put a seed into it before the doubter, caused it to spring up, blossom, and bear fruit, while he still stood by. "A miracle," cried the young man. "Son," replied the Brahmin, "what else do you see done here in an hour than nature does more slowly round the year?" The wine which the guests had drunk from the bridegroom's bounty, and possibly from the added gifts of friends, had been slowly matured from the vine by mysterious elaboration, from light, and heat, and moisture, and the salts of the earth, none of which had more apparent affinity to it than the water which Jesus transformed. The miracle in nature was not less real or wonderful than that of the marriage feast, and strikes us less, only by its being familiar. At the threshold of Christ's miraculous works it is well to realize a fact so easily overlooked. A miracle is only an exercise, in a new way, of the Almighty power we see daily producing perhaps the same results in nature. Infinitely varied forces are at work around us every moment. From the sun to the atom, from

⁴³ On the name "Son of Man," see Kelm's *Christus*, 105.

CHAP XXIX. the stone to the thinking brain and beating heart, they circulate sleeplessly, through all things, for ever. As they act and react on each other, the amazing result is produced which we know as nature, but how many mysterious inter-relations, of which we know nothing, may offer endlessly varied means for producing specific ends, at the command of God? Nor is there anything more amazing in the works of Christ than in the daily phenomena of nature. The vast universe, embracing heavens above heavens, stretching out into the Infinite—with constellations anchored on the vast expanse like tiny islet clusters on the boundless ocean, is one great miracle. It was wonderful to create, but to sustain creation is, itself, to create anew, each moment. Suns and planets, living creatures in their endless races, all that the round sky of each planet covers—seas, air, sweeping valleys, lofty mountains, and the million wonders of the brain and heart, and life, of their innumerable populations, have no security, each moment, that they shall commence another, except in the continued expenditure of fresh creative energy. Miracles are only the momentary intercalation of unsuspected laws which startle by their novelty, but are no more miraculous than the most common incident of the great mystery of nature.

The beginning of the public career of Jesus as Messiah at a time so joyful as a household festival was appropriate. His bounteous gift fitly marked the opening of His kingly work, like the fountains flowing with wine at the coronation of earthly kings.⁴⁴ But a king very different from earthly monarchs was now entering on His reign. No outward preparation is made: He has no worldly wealth or rich provision to lavish away. Yet, though He has no wine, water itself, at His word, becomes wine, rich as the finest vintage. Till His hour has come, He remains passive and self-restrained, awaiting the moment divinely appointed for His glory shining out among men. Once come, the slumbering power, till now unrevealed, breaks forth, never to cease its gracious work of blessing and healing, till the kingdom He came to found is triumphant in His death.

⁴⁴ Ewald's
Geschichte,
v. 329.

The age of Jesus at His entrance on His public work has

been very variously estimated. Ewald supposes that He was about thirty-four, fixing his birth three years before the death of Herod.⁴⁵ Wieseler, on the contrary, supposes Him to have been in His thirty-first year, setting His birth a few months before Herod's death.⁴⁶ Bunsen,⁴⁷ Anger, Winer, Schürer, and Renan agree with this: Lichtenstein makes Him thirty-two.⁴⁸ Hausrath and Keim, on the other hand, think that He began His ministry in the year A.D. 34, but they do not give any supposed date for His birth, though if that of Ewald be taken as a medium, He must now have been forty years old, while, if Wieseler's date be preferred, He would only have been thirty-seven.^h The statement of the Gospel,⁴⁹ that He was "*about* thirty years of age when He began" His public work, is so indefinite as to allow free conjecture. In any case, He must have been thirty-one at His baptism, from His having been born before Herod's death. It was even supposed by Irenæus,⁵⁰ from the saying of the Jews,⁵¹—"Thou art not yet fifty years old," and from His allusion to the forty-six years during which the Temple had been building, that He was between forty and fifty at His death. Amidst such difference, exactness is impossible, and it seems safest to keep to the generality of St. Luke, by thinking of Jesus as *about* thirty—though not younger—at His baptism.

The stay at Cana seems to have been short. It may have been only a family visit, or it may have been, that, from some cause, Mary had gone for a time to live there; but, in either case, Jesus very soon removed from a locality so little suited to His work, from its isolation, and remoteness from the centres of life and population. He had resolved to make Galilee, in which He was at home, the chief scene of His labours. He was, moreover, safer there than either in Judea or Perea, for the hierarchy could reach Him more easily in the one, and the tyranny of Antipas was less restrained in the wild territory of the other. The kingdom He came to set up must grow silently, and by slow, peaceful degrees, like the mustard seed, to which He compared it, and it could not do so in any part so well as in Galilee. Far away from turbulent Judea, He escaped the excitements,

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⁴⁵ Ewald's *Geschichte*, vii. 522.⁴⁶ Herzog, xxi. 543.⁴⁷ *Bibelwerk*, ix. 195.⁴⁸ *Art.* "Jesus Christ," in Herzog.⁴⁹ Luke 3. 23.⁵⁰ (A.D. 202) ii. 22. 5.⁵¹ John 8. 57 2. 20.

CHAP. XXIX. more or less political, the insurrections, and wild dreams of national supremacy, ever fermenting at Jerusalem, and avoided exciting suspicion, or having His spiritual aims perverted by the revolutionary violence of the masses.⁵² His kingdom was not of this world, like the Messianic dominion fondly expected by the nation, but the far mightier reign of "The Truth."

Galilee was, however, in some respects, an unfavourable centre. The morose and self-sufficient Jerusalemites ridiculed its population, and affected to think that no prophet had risen in it, though Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, and Nahum,—the first, the greatest of the prophets,—had been Galilæans.⁵³ The wits of the capital, moreover, ridiculed them for their speech, for they substituted one letter for another, and had a broad pronunciation. Their culture, and even their capacity⁵⁴ were contemned, though so many prophets had risen amongst them, though they could boast of Barak, the conqueror of the Canaanites, and of many famous Rabbis, and though the high-minded Judas, the Zealot, had shed honour on them, in Christ's own day, as the great apostle Paul, sprung from a Gischala family, was to do hereafter.⁵⁵ But hatred, or jealousy, like love, is blind.

It is hard to know how early the Rabbinical fancy of two Messiahs arose, but, if it had already taken any shape in Christ's lifetime, it must rather have hindered than helped His great work. The Messiah of the House of Joseph was to appear in Galilee, and, after gathering round him the long-lost ten tribes, was to march, at their head, to Jerusalem, to receive the submission of the Messiah of the House of David, and, having united the whole kingdom once more, was to die by the hands of Gog and Magog, the northern heathen, as a sacrifice for the sins of Jeroboam, and of the nation at large.¹ But these fancies took a definite form only in a later age, and we find no trace of them in the New Testament. Who can tell, however, how old their germs may have been? They show, at least, what the application of passages from the prophets to Christ's first appearing in Galilee⁵⁶ also implies, that the Galilæans cherished the great promise of the Messiah. Frank, high-

⁵² John 6, 15.

⁵³ John 7, 52.

⁵⁴ Matt. 26, 69,
73.
John 1, 46;
19, 19.
Acts 2, 7.

⁵⁵ Kelm, *Der
Geschichtl.
Christus*, 74.

⁵⁶ Matt. 4, 14.
Isaiah 9, 1.

spirited, and comparatively unprejudiced, they were more ready than other Jews to listen to a new teacher, and the thousands who had rekindled their zeal on the banks of the Jordan, under the preaching of John, had already on their return, spread around them the excited expectation of an immediate advent of the Messiah, which the Baptist had announced. But though the soil was thus specially favourable for His earlier work, the fame of Jesus was hereafter to spread, in spite of all local prejudices, till, at last, He should hear Himself proclaimed by the multitude, even in the streets of Jerusalem, as Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.⁵⁷

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Nazareth, itself, like Cana, lay too far from the centres of population for Christ's great work, and there was, besides, the inevitable drawback of its having known Him during the long years of His humble privacy. He, doubtless, felt, from the first, what He afterwards expressed with so much feeling, that "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."⁵⁸ His fellow towns-⁵⁹ men, and even His own family, could not realize that one whose lowly position and unmarked career, they had had before them through life, could be so much above them. It was, in infinitely greater degree, the same pettiness, and inability to estimate the familiar justly, that, in our own age, made John Wilson write,⁶⁰ that as "the northern Highlanders do not admire 'Waverley,' so, I presume, the south Highlanders despise 'Guy-Mannerling.'" The Westmoreland peasants think Wordsworth a fool. In Borrowdale, Southey is not known to exist. I met ten men in Hawick who do not think Hogg a poet, and the whole city of Glasgow think me a madman." With such counteracting prejudices, Nazareth was altogether unsuited for the longer residence of Jesus, and hence He seems never to have returned to it, after His baptism, except for a passing visit.

He chose for His future home the shores of the Lake of Galilee, at that time the most populous, as they are still the most delightful, part of Palestine. Henceforth, the "jewel" of its banks—Capernaum—became "His own city,"⁶⁰ and for a time, at least, His mother and His "brethren" seem also

⁵⁷ Matt. 21. 11.
Kelm, i. 592.

⁵⁸ Matt. 13. 57.

⁵⁹ Professor
Wilson's Life,
i. 201.

⁶⁰ Matt. 9. 1; 13.
1, 36. Mark 2.
1; 3. 19, 31;
7. 17.

CHAP. XXIX. to have made it their home,⁶¹ though a little later, we find Jesus living permanently as a guest in the house of Peter, as if they had once more left it, and returned to Nazareth.⁶² From this centre His future work was carried on. From it He set out on His missionary journeys, and He returned to it from them to find a welcome and a home.

Capernaum lay on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, at the spot, a little way from the head of the Lake, where the shore recedes in a more westerly arc, forming a small cape, from which the view embraces the whole coast, in every direction. It could never have been very large, for Josephus only once mentions it,⁶³ as a village to which he was carried by his soldiers, when hurt by a fall from his horse, which had stuck in the marsh at the head of the Lake. The name does not occur in the Old Testament. Capernaum,^k was the boundary town between the territory of Philip and Antipas, and, as such, had a custom-house⁶⁴ and a garrison.⁶⁵ One of the officers stationed for a time in it, a foreigner, and, doubtless, a proselyte, had, in Christ's day, built a fine synagogue, as a mark, at once of his friendly feeling to the Jewish nation, and of homage to Jehovah. The whitewashed houses were built of black basalt or lava, which still lies in boulders, here and there, over the neighbourhood, and gives the ground a dark appearance when the tall spring grass has withered and left it bare. The synagogue, however, was of white limestone. Great blocks of chiselled stone, finely carved, once its frieze, architrave, and cornices, still lie among the waving thistles, where the town once stood. The walls are now nearly level with the surface, most of the pillars and stones having been carried off to build into house walls, or burn for lime, though some of its once double row of columns, hewn in one block, and of their Corinthian capitals, and massy pedestals, still speak of its former splendour. Round the synagogue, and stretching up the gentle slope behind, stretched the streets and squares, covering an area of half-a-mile in length, and a quarter in breadth, the main street running north, to the neighbouring Chorazin.

At the north end of the town, two tombs yet remain;

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⁶¹ John 2. 12.

⁶² Mark 1. 29.

⁶³ Vita, 72.

⁶⁴ Mark 2. 14.

Luke 5. 27.

Matt. 9. 9.

⁶⁵ Luke 7. 5.

one built of limestone, underground, in an excavation hollowed out with great labour in the hard basalt; the other, a rectangular building, above ground, large enough to hold a great number of bodies, and once, apparently, white-washed,⁶⁶ to warn passers by not to defile themselves by too near an approach to the dead. CHAP. XXIX.
Matt. 23. 27.

Capernaum, in Christ's day, was a thriving, busy town. The "highway to the Sea,"⁶⁷ from Damascus to Ptolemais,—now Acre, but still known by the former name, in the seventeenth century,⁶⁸—ran through it,⁶⁹ bringing no little local traffic, and also opening the markets of the coast to the rich yield of the neighbouring farms, orchards, and vineyards, and the abundant returns of the fisheries of the Lake. The townsfolk, thus, as a rule, enjoyed the comfort and plenty we see in the houses of Peter and Matthew, and were even open to the charge of being "winebibbers and gluttonous," which implied generous entertainment. They were proud of their town, and counted on its steady growth and unbounded prosperity, little dreaming of the ruin which would one day make even its site a question. Isaiah 9. 1.
Matt. 4. 13.
Quaresmius,
a Franciscan,
quoted by
Kelm, l. 397.
Kiepert's
Handkarte
von Palästina,
1876.

It was in this town that Jesus settled, amidst a mixed population of fisher-people, grain and fruit agents, local tradesmen, and the many classes and occupations of a thriving station on a great line of caravan traffic. It was a point that brought Him in contact with Gentile as well as Jewish life. Households like that of Peter, proselytes like the centurion, and the need of a large synagogue, imply a healthy religiousness in not a few, but the woe pronounced on the town by Jesus, after a time, shows that whatever influence He may have had on a circle, the citizens as a whole were too much engrossed with their daily affairs to pay much heed to Him.⁷⁰

An hour's walk behind the town leads to gentle hill slopes, which, in April, are thinly covered with crisp grasses, and stalks of weeds. From their top, the eye follows the course of the Jordan as it enters the Lake in two streams, through a marshy delta, the favourite pasture ground for herds of huge, ungainly, fierce, and often dangerous black buffaloes, which delight to wallow by day in such marshy places, up 70 Matt. 12. 23.

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to the neck in water or mud, and return at night to their masters, the Arabs of the Jordan valley. Jesus must often have seen these herds luxuriating idly in this swampy paradise, for they are not used for labour in the district round the Lake, though they are sometimes set to drag the plough in the parts near the Waters of Merom.⁷¹ The Lake itself, stretched out, north and south, like a pear in shape, the broad end towards the north; or like a lyre, from which, indeed, it got its ancient name of Chinneroth.^m Its greatest width, from the ancient Magdala on the west side, to Gergesa on the east, is six and three-quarter miles, and its extreme length, a little over twelve. There are no pine-clad mountains, no bold headlands, no lofty precipices; the hills,—except at Khan Minyeh, the ancient Tarichæa, a little below Capernaum, where there is a small cliff,—rise gradually, in a dull uniform brown, from the Lake, or from a fringe of plain; on the south and east, to about 1,000 feet, on the north-west to about 500. No prominent peak breaks the outline, but the ever-changing lights, and the rich tints of sunrise and sunset, prevent monotony. From the south of the Lake, the top of Hermon, often white with snow, stands out sharp and clear, in the bright sky, as if close at hand, and, towards the north, the twin peaks of Hattin crown a wild gorge, a little way below Capernaum. On the eastern side the hills rise in a barren wall, seamed with a few deep ravines, black basalt predominating, though varied here and there by the lighter grey limestone. No trees, no village, no spots of cultivated land, break the desolation which spreads like a living death over the landscape, except along the narrow stripe of green, about a quarter of a mile in breadth, that fringes the Lake. It was among these waste and lonely hills that Jesus often retired to escape the crowds which often oppressed Him. The hills on the western side slope more gently, and rise and fall in rounded tops, such as mark the softer limestone. The line of the shore, in the upper part of the lake, is broken into a series of little bays of exquisite beauty.

⁷¹ Furrer, *l.c.*
"Büffel."
Tristram, *Nat.*
Hist. of Bible,
72.

The Rabbis were wont to say that God had made seven seas in the land of Canaan, but had chosen only one for

Himself—the sea of Galilee.⁷² Josephus rightly called the land on its borders, “the crown” of Palestine. The plain of Gennesareth begins at Khan Minyeh, about two miles below Capernaum, filling in the bow-like recess, which the hills make from that point to Magdala. It is as romantic as beautiful, for the ravine at its southern end leads, at a short distance, to the towering limestone cliffs of Arbela, on whose heights numerous eagles now build, among the airy caverns, once the fortress alternately of robbers and patriots, to whom the valley offered a way to the Lake. Gennesareth was the richest spot in Palestine; five streamlets from the neighbouring hills quickening its rich dark volcanic soil into amazing fertility. It measures only about two and a half miles from north to south, by about a mile in depth,⁷³ but, in the days of Christ, it must have been enchantingly beautiful. “Its soil,” says Josephus, “is so fruitful that all kinds of trees grow in it. Walnuts flourish in great plenty; there are palm-trees also, which require heat, and figs and olives, which require a more temperate air. Nature seems, as it were, to have done violence to herself, to cause the plants of different lands to grow together. Grapes and figs ripen for ten months in the year, and other fruits fill up the other months.”⁷⁴

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⁷² Sepp, II. 170.
Lightfoot,
Chor. Cent.
144.

⁷³ Maps of Lieut.
Anderson,
R.E. (from
actual
survey).
Recovery of
Jerusalem,
348, 339.

⁷⁴ Bell. Jud. iii.
10. 8.

No wonder the fruits of Gennesareth put to shame all else in the markets of Jerusalem. Its soil is still fertile in the extreme, and it lies between five and six hundred feet below the Mediterranean, which makes it very warm. Wheat, barley, millet, rice, melons, grapes, the common vegetables, tobacco, and indigo flourish, and date-palms, figs, citrons, and oranges are not wanting. Gennesareth melons are exported to Damascus and Acre, and are greatly prized. The oleanders, and wild figs, palms, &c., rise, here and there, in rank luxuriance, and there can be no doubt that, in former times, when the whole soil was carefully tilled, few semi-tropical plants would have failed to grow. The climate of the lake shore, generally, is so mild even in winter, that snow seldom falls. In summer, on the other hand, it is oppressively hot, for, except at the plain of Gennesareth, which enjoys cool breezes from Lebanon, the hills shut out

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CHAP. XXIX. the west wind, which almost alone abates the intensity of the summer in Palestine, and hence the people of Tiberias are glad to sleep in shelters of straw or leaves on their roofs, during the hot months. Melons ripen four weeks earlier than at Acre and Damascus, and though wheat is not so early ripe as at Jericho, where the harvest is in May, it is ready for the sickle in June. A spot so charming, could not, however, escape some drawback. This sultry moist heat causes, along the marshy lake edge, a prevalence of fever, and sometimes brings the pestilence, and ophthalmia and sickness of various kinds are only too common.

The shores of the plain are white with myriads of little shells, over which the transparent, crystal-like waters rise and fall with the wind, and the side next the hills is shut in by a fringe of oleanders, rich, each May, in red and white blossom. In the days of Christ the whole landscape was full of life. Busy towns and villages crowded the shores, and the waters swarmed with boats, employed in the fisheries, which even gave their names to several of the towns. South of Capernaum lay the busy city of Tarichæa, or "Pickling Town,"⁷⁵—the great fish-curing port—which had boats enough to meet the Romans, a generation later, in a deadly sea-fight on the Lake,⁷⁶ and had to see eight thousand of its citizens, and of those who had taken refuge in it, slain, and nearly forty thousand sold as slaves.⁷⁷ It and Tiberias were the two ports in which the fishermen of Capernaum and Bethsaida found a ready sale for their freights. A little further south rose the houses of Magdala, or Migdal-El—"the Tower of God"—now Medschel,—the home of the Mary who bears its name. Then came Tiberias, with its splendid palace, grand public buildings, huge arsenal, and famous baths, glittering in the bright sunshine; its motley, busy population; and, beyond, rose, still, town beyond town. To the north, on the slope of the hills, a short way off, lay Chorazin, named, it might seem, from the "Corâcin" fish mentioned by Josephus as found in its neighbourhood. At the head of the Lake,⁷⁸ on the other side of the Jordan, Bethsaida—"the Fisher's Town"—rebuilt, and re-named Julias, by the tetrarch Philip, was fresh from the hands of

⁷⁵ Ruetschl, *Art.*
"Gennesaret,"
in Herzog, v.
7.

⁷⁶ Bell. Jud. iii.
10. 9.

⁷⁷ Bell. Jud. iii.
10. 9; 10. 10.

⁷⁸ Bell. Jud. i. iii.
10. 8.

the masons and sculptors, and along the eastern shore lay CHAP. XXIX. Gergesa, Gamala, Hippos, and other swarming hives of men. The landscape is now very different. The thickly peopled shore is almost deserted. Tiberias, then so magnificent, has shrunk into a small and decaying town, like every place under Turkish rule; the white towns and villages, once reflected in the waters, have disappeared; the fleets of fishing boats are now replaced by one solitary crazy boat;° the richly wooded hills are bare; the paradise-like plains are overgrown with thorns and thistles. The shore, varied by stretches of sand, intervals of white tiny shells, shingle with larger shells, here and there, and great beds of black basalt, which show the volcanic nature of the district, as do, also, the warm baths at Tiberias, is silent. Next the water, reeds and rushes grow in long reaches, in the flatter swampy parts—a favourite haunt of the pelican, and many other birds, but, above all, of the turtle-dove—the bird dearest from of old to the Jew. The whole must have been beautiful, however, in former days, to make the Emperor Titus compare it with the Lake of Neufchâtel, in Switzerland,⁷⁹ though, nowadays, the comparison seems fanciful.^p

⁷⁹ Freculph. Chron. ii. 3.

It was in Capernaum that Jesus chose His home, in the midst of this life and beauty, beside the gleaming Lake, embosomed deep on this, its western shore, in soft terraced hills, laughing with fruitfulness; the higher hills of Upper Galilee rising beyond, and the majestic Hermon closing the glorious landscape. The view over the waters showed the steep slopes,—now yellow limestone, now black basalt,—which led up to the Gaulonitis country. Capernaum was the town of His three chief apostles, Peter, John, and James, and also of Andrew. Here He healed the centurion's slave,⁸⁰ and raised the daughter of Jairus;⁸¹ called Matthew from the booth where he took the customs dues, and healed the mother-in-law of Peter. From a boat near the shore, close by, He preached to the crowds,⁸² and it was in the waters off the town that He vouchsafed to Peter and his brother the miraculous draught of fishes.⁸³

⁸⁰ Luke 7. 1.

⁸¹ Luke 8. 41.

⁸² Luke 5. 3.

⁸³ Luke 5. 4.

The whole neighbourhood, indeed, is sacred to the memory of Jesus. The Lake of Galilee had been chosen by God for

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Himself, and honoured above all seas of the earth, in a sense which the Rabbis little dreamed. The men, the fields, the valleys round it, are immortalized by their association with the Saviour. There were the vineyards, on the hill slopes, round which their lord planted a hedge, and in which he built a watch-tower, and dug a wine-press.⁸⁴ There were the sunny hills, on which the old wine had grown, and the new was growing, for which the householder would take care to provide the new leather bottles.⁸⁵ The plain of Gennesareth was the enamelled meadow, on which, in spring, ten thousand lilies were robed in more than the glory of Solomon,⁸⁶ and where, in winter, the grass was cast into the oven. It was on such pastures as those around, that the shepherd left the ninety-and-nine sheep, to seek, in the mountains, the one that was lost, and bring it back, when found, on his shoulders, rejoicing.⁸⁷ The ravens, that have neither storehouse nor barn,⁸⁸ daily sailed over from the cliffs of Arbela, to seek their food on the shore of the Lake, and from the same cliffs, from time to time, flew forth the hawks, to make the terrified hen gather her chickens under her wings.⁸⁹ The orchards were there in which the fig-tree grew, on which the dresser of the vineyard, in three years, found no fruit,⁹⁰ and in which the grain of mustard seed grew into so great a tree that the fowls of the air lodged in its branches.⁹¹ Across the Lake, rose the hills of Gaulonitis, which the idly busy Rabbis watched for signs of the weather. A murky red, seen above them in the morning, was a text for these sky-prophets to predict "foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering,"⁹² and it was when the sun sank, red and glowing, behind the hills in the west, that the solemn gossips, returning from their many prayers in the synagogue, made sure that it would be "fair weather to-morrow."⁹³ It was when the sea-cloud was seen driving over the hill-tops from Ptolemais and Carmel that neighbours warned each other that a shower was coming,⁹⁴ and the clouds sailing north, towards Safed and Hermon, were the accepted earnest of coming heat.⁹⁵ The daily business of Capernaum, itself, supplied many of the illustrations so frequently introduced into the discourses of Jesus. He might

⁸⁴ Matt. 21. 33.⁸⁵ Luke 5. 37.⁸⁶ Luke 12. 27, 28.⁸⁷ Luke 15. 4.⁸⁸ Luke 12. 24.⁸⁹ Matt. 23. 37.⁹⁰ Luke 13. 7.⁹¹ Luke 13. 19.⁹² Matt. 16. 3.⁹³ Matt. 16. 2.⁹⁴ Luke 12. 54.⁹⁵ Luke 12. 55.

see in the bazaar of the town, or on the street, the rich travelling merchant, who exchanged a heavy load of Babylonian carpets for the one lustrous pearl⁹⁶ that had, perhaps, found its way to the Lake from distant Ceylon. Fishermen, and publicans, and dressers of vineyards passed and re-passed each moment. Over in Julias, the favourite town of the tetrarch Philip; below, in Tiberias, at the court of Antipas, lived the magnates, who delighted to be called "gracious lords," and walked in silk robes.⁹⁷ The young Salome lived in the one town; her mother, Herodias, in the other; and the intercourse between the two courts could not have escaped the all-observing eye of Jesus, as He moved about in Capernaum.⁹⁸

It was this town, on the border between the districts of Philip and Antipas, on the great highway of commerce and travel, by the shore of the Lake, in the midst of thickly sown towns and villages, that Jesus selected as His future home. He seems, at first, to have lived with His mother and His brethren, and the few disciples He had already gathered, but His stay, at this time, was short,⁹⁹ for He presently set out on His first Passover journey to Jerusalem.¹⁰⁰ On His return, He appears to have made His abode, as often as He was in the town, in the house of Peter,¹⁰¹ who lived with his brother Andrew and his mother-in-law. It had a courtyard before it,¹⁰² and was on the shore of the Lake,¹⁰³ but it was, at best, only the home of a rough-handed fisherman's household.

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⁹⁶ Matt. 13. 46.⁹⁷ Luke 22. 25.⁹⁸ See a very striking passage in Hausrath, I. 343, 346.⁹⁹ John 2. 12.¹⁰⁰ John 2. 13.¹⁰¹ Mark 1. 29.

Matt. 17. 24.

¹⁰² Mark 2. 4;

2. 2.

¹⁰³ Mark 2. 13;

4. 1.

CHAPTER XXX.

VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

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THE choice of Capernaum by Jesus as His future centre was significant. John had chosen the "terrible wilderness," with its "vipers and scorpions, and drought."¹ Jesus selected the district spoken of as "the garden of God," and "Paradise."² John had lived amidst the silence of desolation: Jesus came to a centre of business and travel, to live amidst men. John kept equally aloof from priest, prince, or governor, from Rome and from Jerusalem; Jesus settled in a garrison town, noted for business, and near Tiberias, with its Idumean prince, the future murderer of the Baptist, and its gay courtiers. The contrast marked the vital difference between His work and that of His herald. He was to wear no prophet's mantle like John, but the simple dress of other men:³ to lay no stress on fasts, to enforce no isolation from any class, for He came to all men irrespective of class or nation.

Jesus had come, in fact, to preach a Gospel of which the glorious panorama around Him was the fit emblem. The "old wine" of Judaism, which had in a measure characterized the spirit of John, was to be replaced by the "new wine of the kingdom of God."⁴ John had sought to establish that kingdom anew on a Jewish foundation, by trying to blend together the spiritual and the external. While breaking away in some respects from the old theocracy, he had sought to build up a new outward constitution for Israel alone, and had imposed it, with its burden of fastings, washings, and endless legal requirements, in part, on the nation at large, and in all its severity, on himself and his disciples. He had proposed to heal the wounds of mankind by an unnatural withdrawal from the world, and by the austerities

¹ Deut. 8. 15.² Lightfoot, l. 155.³ Matt. 9. 20.⁴ Mark 14. 25.

of ascetic observance. For this religion of endless, hopeless, struggle after legal purity, which carried with it no balm for the heart, and enforced morbid isolation, Jesus, by His settling in Capernaum, substituted that of peace and joy, and of a healthy intercourse with mankind, and citizenship in the great world. The religion of John was national, local, and unsatisfying, and marked by the spirit of caste: that of Jesus offered the splendid contrast of a faith which rose high over all that had hitherto been known. Suited alike for the peasant and the prince, it cared nothing for outward position, or the changes of states or nationality, but sought only to meet the wants and longings of man, in the inner infinite world of the heart and spirit, which no Herod could reach. Recognizing all good, wherever found, it gladly drew to itself all that was true and pure, and rejoiced to ally itself with the gifts which dignify human nature. The friend of man, it saw in every soul a pearl, hidden or visible, and ennobled every honourable human calling by enlisting it in the service of God. It lifted men above care for the world or inclination to seek it, because it was not a religion of outward forms, of harsh legalities, or unnatural self-infliction and isolation, but the religion of peace and joy in reconciliation with God, and the calm of jarring nature within—a religion which gave calmness amidst all want, and reflected the untroubled image of heaven in the soul, amidst suffering and trial—a religion which laid the agitations and cares of the bosom to rest, by the pledge of divine love and pity. The sweet fancy of the Portuguese mariner, who, after rounding Cape Horn, amidst storm and terrors, found that the ocean on which he had entered, lay, as if hushed asleep before him, and ascribed its calm to the glittering form of the southern cross shining down on it, was to be turned into fact, in the stillness of the hitherto troubled soul under the light of the Star of Bethlehem.

The stay of Jesus in Capernaum at this time was very short.⁵ He had resolved to attend the Passover,⁶ and only waited till it was time to do so.^a No details have been left us of this earliest ministry, but it could hardly have been encouraging, for even at a later date its recollections waked

⁵ John 2. 12.⁶ John 2. 13, 25.

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⁷ Matt. 11, 20, 24.
Luke 10, 13, 15.

painful thoughts.⁷ The determination to carry His message beyond the narrow and ungracious circle of Capernaum, and the towns around, to a wider sphere, would be only strengthened by this result. Jerusalem, with its schools and Temple, was the place fitted beyond all others for His working with effect. He did not wish to be openly recognized as the Messiah as yet, but it was imperative now, at the opening of His ministry, that he should visit the great centre and heart of the nation, and unostentatiously open His great commission. The whole country looked to Jerusalem as its religious capital, and an impression made there would react everywhere.

⁸ The old name of the month was Abib—an ear of corn.⁹ Its later name was Nisan—the month of flowers.¹⁰ Deut. 32, 14.

The month of April, on the eve of the 15th of which the Passover was eaten, was the bright spring month of the year. The plains were covered with rich green, for it was the “earing month,”⁸ and the grey hills lit up with red anemones, rock roses, red and yellow,—the convolvulus, marigold, wild geranium, red tulip, and a hundred other glories, for it was the “month of flowers.”⁹ The cuckoo, unseen, as here, was heard around: our thrush and sweet-voiced blackbird flew off at the approach of a passer by: the voice of the turtle was heard in the land: the song of the lark flooded a thousand acres of upper air, and the pastures were alive with flocks and herds. The roads to Jerusalem were already crowded when the month began. Flocks of sheep, goats, and cattle from Bashan,¹⁰ daily passed over the fords of the Jordan, towards the Holy City, and shepherds with their flocks, from “the pastures of the wilderness,” between Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, and the Dead Sea, or from the south country stretching away from Bethlehem, were in great excitement to bring their charge safely to the Temple market, for one hundred thousand lambs, alone, were needed, besides thousands of sheep and oxen. The roads and bridges on the main lines of travel through the whole country had been repaired; all tombs whitewashed, to guard those coming to the feast from defilement, by unconscious approach to them: the fields examined, to weed out whatever illegal mixtures of plants defiled the land: and the springs and wells

cleansed for the wants of the pilgrims, no less than to secure their legal purity.¹¹

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¹¹ Steltz, in Herzog, xi. 147.

Jerusalem was in its glory. The whole population was astir from the earliest morning, to enjoy the cool of the day and the excitements of the season. The hills of Moab were hardly purple with the dawn before the Temple courts were crowded, and by the time the sun rose from behind the Mount of Olives, leaving the morning clouds to float off and lose themselves in the deep valley of the Dead Sea, the business of the day had fully begun. The golden roofs and marble walls of the Temple reflected a dazzling brightness; the King's Pool, beyond the Tyropæon, seemed molten silver, and the palms, cypresses, olives, and figs, of the palace gardens, and among the mansions of the rich, on Zion and round the city, bent in the soft air. The concourse at the hour of morning prayer was immense, but it grew even greater as the day advanced. The streets were blocked by the crowds from all parts, who had to make their way to the Temple, past flocks of sheep, and droves of cattle, pressing on in the sunken middle part of each street reserved for them, to prevent contact and defilement. Sellers of all possible wares beset the pilgrims, for the great feasts were, as has been said, the harvest time of all trades at Jerusalem, just as, at Mecca, even at this day, the time of the great concourse of worshippers at the tomb of the Prophet, is that of the busiest trade among the merchant pilgrims, who form the caravans from all parts of the Mohammedan world.¹²

Inside the Temple space, the noise and pressure were, if possible, worse. Directions were posted up to keep the right or the left, as in the densest thoroughfares of London.¹³ The outer court, which others than Jews might enter, and which was, therefore, known as the Court of the Heathen, was in part, covered with pens for sheep, goats, and cattle, for the feast and the thank-offerings. Sellers shouted the merits of their beasts, sheep bleated, and oxen lowed. It was, in fact, the great yearly fair of Jerusalem, and the crowds added to the din and tumult, till the services in the neighbouring courts were sadly disturbed.

¹² Burckhardt's *Travels in Arabia*. Milman's *Christianity*, 79. Steltz, Herzog, xi. 147.

¹³ Middoth, c. 2. 2, quoted by Sepp, iii. 37.

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¹⁴ B. Sanhed.
xl. 1.

Sellers of doves, for poor women coming for purification, from all parts of the country,¹⁴ and for others, had a space set apart for them. Indeed, the sale of doves was, in great measure, secretly, in the hands of the priests themselves: Hannas, the high priest, especially, gaining great profits from his dove-cots on Mount Olivet. The rents of the sheep and cattle pens, and the profits on the doves, had led the priests to sanction the incongruity of thus turning the Temple itself into a noisy market. Nor was this all. Potters pressed on the pilgrims their clay dishes and ovens for the Passover Lamb; hundreds of traders recommended their wares aloud; shops^b for wine, oil, salt, and all else needed for sacrifices, invited customers, and, in addition, persons going across the city, with all kinds of burdens, shortened their journey by crossing the Temple grounds. The provision for paying the tribute, levied on all, for the support of the Temple, added to the distraction. On both sides of the east Temple gate, stalls had for generations been permitted for changing foreign money. From the fifteenth of the preceding month money-changers had been allowed to set up their tables in the city,¹⁵ and from the twenty-first,—or twenty days before the Passover,—to ply their trade in the Temple itself. Purchasers of materials for offerings paid the amount at special stalls, to an officer of the Temple, and received a leaden cheque for which they got what they had bought, from the seller. Large sums, moreover, were changed, to be cast, as free offerings, into one of the thirteen chests which formed the Temple treasury.¹⁶ Every Jew, no matter how poor, was, in addition, required to pay yearly a half-shekel—about eighteen pence—as atonement money for his soul, and for the support of the Temple. As this would not be received except in a native coin, called the Temple shekel,¹⁷ which was not generally current, strangers had to change their Roman, Greek, or Eastern money, at the stalls of the money-changers, to get the coin required. The trade gave ready means for fraud, which was only too common. Five per cent. exchange was charged, but this was indefinitely increased by tricks and chicanery,^c for which the class had everywhere earned so

¹⁵ Mischna,
Schekalim,
i. 3.¹⁶ Mark 12. 41.
Luke 21. 1.¹⁷ Derenbourg,
136.

bad a name, that, like the publicans, their witness would not be taken before a court.¹⁸

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¹⁸ Sepp, III. 41.

Jesus was greatly troubled by this monstrous desecration of His Father's house. He was a young unknown man, and a Galilæan: He had no formal authority to interfere, for the Temple arrangements were under the priests alone, but the sight of such abuses, in a place so holy, roused His inmost spirit. Entering the polluted Temple space, and gazing round on the tumult and manifold defilements, He could not remain impassive. Hastily tying together some small cords, and advancing to the sellers of the sheep and oxen, He commanded them to leave the Temple, with their property, at once, and drove them and their beasts out of the gates. The sellers of doves were allowed to take their cages away, but they, too, had to leave. The money-changers fared worst, as they deserved. Their tables were overturned, and they themselves expelled. After long years the Temple was once more sacred to God.

That one man should have effected such an amazing act may have been due, as St. Jerome says, "to the starry light which shone from His eyes, and to the divine majesty which beamed from His features,"^a but it is not necessary to suppose such a miraculous aid. The weakness of a guilty conscience on the one side, and the grandeur of a supreme enthusiasm on the other, account for it. All were under a spell for the moment. It was an act such as Mattathias or Judas Maccabæus might have done, and prophet-like as it was, in such a place, and in such a cause, its unique heroism secured its triumph.

The authorities, who were responsible for the abuse so astoundingly corrected, were no less paralyzed than the multitude at large, by the lofty zeal for God shown thus strangely. Rules of a strictness hitherto unknown were ere-long announced,^e and, for the moment, put in force, though, three years later, things had become as bad as ever. No one could henceforth go up to "the hill of the Lord" with a staff in his hand, or with his shoes on his feet, or with money in his girdle, or with a sack on his shoulder, or even with dust on his feet, and no one might carry a burden of any kind

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¹⁹ Middoth, ii. 2.
Berachoth,
ix. 5. Jos. c.
Aplon, ii. 8.

It was felt that religion had received a deadly injury by the evils against which the Galilæan stranger had thus signally protested, and a vain effort was made to restore the prestige they had themselves so fatally injured.

It was wholly in keeping with His office to act as Jesus had done. As His Father's House, the Temple was supremely under His care, and He only exercised His rights and duties, as the Messiah, in cleansing it as He did. It was a sign and commencement of the spiritual cleansing He came to inaugurate: a note struck which disclosed the character of His future work. Zechariah²⁰ had said that in the days of the Messiah "the trader would no more be in the House of Jehovah,"^f and thus even the prophets, whom the nation honoured, seemed to endorse His act.

²⁰ Ch. 14. 21.

The priests could say nothing condemnatory, but could only raise the question why *He* should have taken it upon Him to assume authority which they claimed. They were irritated beyond bounds, and doubtless indulged their scorn at a "prophet," who took on Himself the duties of the Temple police. Yet the people, by their silence, showed that they approved the act, though it implied condemnation of the high priest and his colleagues, and had attacked a custom sanctioned by age, established by formal authority, and identified with the interests of the Temple and its services. The crowds of pilgrims also honoured the act of the young Galilæan, of whom strange rumours had reached them from the Jordan, instinctively feeling that it was right. Jesus had made His entrance on public notice, in a way that struck the popular imagination,—as a true prophet, who witnessed fearlessly for God, against the desecration of His house. The feeling towards Him was half enthusiastic, half respectful; His enemies were confused and paralyzed. He was the valiant soldier of the Lord of Hosts, and it might have seemed as if the way to an easy triumph were to be expected forthwith.

But He and the people had wholly different conceptions of the office of the Messiah. He had acted as He had done from no personal end. His disciples saw that it was con-

suming zeal for His Father's glory, that had animated Him;²¹ a welling up of holy indignation. He had exercised the prophet's office, of striking for the true, and the pure; a right which has been used in all ages, by lofty natures, when instituted means, and the low morality of the times, fail to stem growing corruption.²² Such an act could not be done, without overpowering, unreflecting earnestness, and zeal kindled into a flame, but this divine earnest zeal was not unworthy of the purest, for without it, in fallen times, nothing great can be done.²³ Yet He was the Prince of Peace. It was not His nature to strive, or to make His voice heard in the streets.²⁴ To have taken the tide of popular feeling at the full, would have led Him to triumphs for which He had no desire, and would have been fatal to His views, instead of advancing them. Numbers were, perhaps, willing to have believed that he might be the Messiah, had He announced Himself as such, but the Law had been given of old amidst thunderings and lightnings, and they expected the Kingdom of the Messiah to be proclaimed with equal sublimity. Unostentatious illustrations of divine power, such as healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, or the ears of the deaf, were not enough. They desired public and national miracles, which would glorify Israel, and astonish the world. But it was no part of His plan to attract the wonder of the crowd, or to minister to national pride, or inaugurate a dispensation of fear or force. His Kingdom was in the hearts of men, not in their outward suffrages; in the calm realms of truth, not in those of political strife.

The authorities could take no violent measures, and contented themselves with asking Him for some "sign," to justify His act by its divine authority, and incidentally reveal His claim on their homage, if, perchance, He might prove the Messiah. The question must have raised the sense of His supreme right as consecrated Son of God, and involved the condemnation of those by whom such a state of things had been allowed. Why had they, the appointed guardians of the Temple, been so powerless or negligent against such desecration? If they had thus failed, who but

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²¹ John 2. 17.²² Lücke, Komment. *in loc.*²³ Ullmann's Sündlosigkeit. 136.²⁴ Matt. 12. 19.

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No utterance ever fell from the lips of Jesus, of which He

²⁵ Under the Procuratorship of Albinus, in A.D. 63. Jos. Ant. xx. 9, 6.

²⁶ 2 Macc. 9.

did not foresee the full effect, and this answer, as He knew, was a veiled anticipation of His earthly end. The cry that the Temple was in danger would at any moment rouse the whole race to revenge the insult with the fury of despair, or perish in the attempt. The resentment felt at such words, may therefore be judged. Three years later it was by their perversion that the high priests sought His death, and they were coarsely flung as a taunt against Him, when He hung on the Cross. Nor were they forgotten even afterwards, for they were made an aggravation of the charges against the first martyr, Stephen, as His follower.²⁷

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But they meant something of deepest significance to the Jews themselves. Though, doubtless, in their direct import a concealed announcement of His own death and resurrection, they had wider applications. "Your whole religion," they implied, "in as far as it rests on this Temple, is corrupt and sunken, but He is already here, who, when that Temple passes away, as pass away it must, will restore it in unspeakably greater glory, and His doing so will be the sign He gives."²⁸ All this lay in His veiled sentence. "Do you really wish a sign from me, of my divine authority over this Temple? You shall have the highest. Destroy this Temple, which will surely one day fall, though, while it stands, I wish it to be pure and worthy: destroy it, if you choose, and with it let all your corrupted religion perish: I shall, presently, rebuild it again, with far greater glory than it can now boast, for this Temple is the desecrated and fallen work of men's hands, but mine will be pure: a Temple of the religion of Spirit and truth, which will be established by my resurrection, on the third day, and will be immortal and indestructible."

²⁷ Mark 14. 58;
15. 29.

²⁸ Ewald,
Geschichte,
v. 387.

In the answer of Jesus, indeed, lay, already, the whole future of His Church. The history of His life and of His work is linked to this earliest utterance. The magnificent Temple He that day cleansed was soon to be destroyed, mainly through the guilt of those who sought so fanatically to preserve it, with all its abuses. But, even before it rose in flames from the torch of the Roman soldier, or fell, stone from stone, before his tools, another temple, far more

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wonderful, had risen silently, in the spirits of men, to take its place—a temple pure and eternal, which He had now dimly foreshadowed, at this first moment of His public career. Yet, even the Church was, in no such high sense the Temple of God as the mysterious person of Jesus Himself—the holiest tabernacle of God amongst men ever vouchsafed—the true Shekinah—the visible Incarnation of the Divine.²⁹ After the crucifixion, and the resurrection,³⁰ the exact fulfilment of His words, in these two great events, struck the imagination of the disciples more than any other meaning they might have. “He spoke of the Temple¹ of His body.”³¹ True in other senses, it was pre-eminently so in this.

With such an old-prophet-like first appearance, followed up, as it was, by acts of miraculous power, equal, no doubt, in character and greatness, to the examples elsewhere recorded in the Gospels, it is no wonder to learn that many believed on Him.³² Yet He received no one into the circle of His closer personal following from those thus impressed. No Scribe or Rabbi, no wealthy citizen, not even a common townsman of Jerusalem, was called to follow Him. “He did not trust Himself to them,” nor honour any of them with the confidence He had shown in some of His Galilæan disciples. Nor did He relax this caution at any future time, for though he gained many friends in Judea, as we discover incidentally, He surrounded Himself with Galilæans to the end of His life. The people of Jerusalem contrasted unfavourably with the simpler peasants of the north: they were curious and excitable, rather than deep and earnest, and the wisdom of the schools, which flourished especially under the shadow of the Temple, was pre-eminently unfitted to understand Him, or ally itself closely with Him. The keen glance of Jesus saw this from the first. There were, doubtless, many of the rich and influential men of Jerusalem who felt the shortcomings of the prevailing school-wisdom and priestly system, and, fretting uneasily under the rule of a Herod, or of a Roman governor, were well inclined to join a true Israelitish king; many, possibly, who even secretly admired Jesus, and were ready to recognize Him as the

²⁹ John 1. 14;
2. 8.
Col. 2. 9; 1. 19.

³⁰ John 2. 22.

³¹ John 2. 21.

³² John 2. 23.

Messiah, as soon as they could do so safely. But John, who was himself a Galilæan, and knew that Jesus had made only Galilæans His confidential friends, reveals, in his sententious epigrammatical way, His estimate of such doubtful support. "He did not trust Himself to them, because He knew all men, and because He needed not that any should bear witness respecting Him, as man." A cheerful witness to Him as the Son of God He always welcomed, when it came freely; but as to the other—He knew men's hearts. He could see that they were willing to honour Him as a human king, and *that*, only from His wonderful works and miracles, and they, unmistakably, expected a human kingdom at His hands. To rule, as a man, over men, it would have been needful to seek the support of the powerful, who would lend themselves for personal ends, and act on mere human maxims. But such men would be no counsellors, helpers, or servants in founding and spreading the Kingdom of Truth.

Among the upper class of citizens, however, there was one, the representative of many whose names are unrecorded,³³ John 12. 42. who was deeply moved by the words and acts of the young Galilæan. He bore the Greek name Nicodemus,ⁱ and was a ruler, or foremost man, in the religious world of Jerusalem, a member of its governing class, and, in sentiment and party, a Pharisee. He was, moreover, wealthy, and, thus, in many respects, one whose support, at such a time, would have been eagerly grasped at, had Jesus proposed to found a kingdom in which the aids of human expediency were admitted, as in political systems. He was a man of advanced years and high position, and might, no doubt, have done good service to Christ's worldly interests among the influential classes, and have even helped towards a coalition of the priests and Pharisees with Him, had his aims been national, and religio-political, like theirs. There was, inevitably, a strong prejudice in Jerusalem against a movement which had begun in Galilee, and was supported by Galilæans, and Nicodemus might have helped to counteract it. It was a condition of his connection with Jesus, however, that it should be secret. Constitutionally timid, he

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could not brave the social proscription and ridicule, which would follow an open adherence; for, though no overt hostility to the New Teacher had yet broken out in the class to which he belonged, it was clear that its doing so was only a question of time. He was honest, and earnest, but could not yet make the sacrifice an open alliance demanded. Indeed, his caution clung to him to the end of Christ's life, for in the only two instances in which his name re-appears, his weak indirectness is plainly shown. At a later period, when the rulers had determined to use violence against Jesus, we find him trying to turn them aside from their purpose, by a general question which did not commit himself;³⁴ and when all was over, it was not till he had caught spirit enough from the example of one of his own class, Joseph of Arimathea that he ventured to own his reverence for the dead Saviour, by bringing his bountiful gift of spices to embalm Him.³⁵ At his first interview, he did not venture to visit Jesus openly, but came to Him by night.

³⁴ John 7. 50.³⁵ John 19. 39.

As a Rabbi, Nicodemus was, necessarily, skilled in the subtle expositions of the Law for which his order was famous, and must have been familiar with the Scriptures throughout, but he had been trained in the artificial explanations of the schools, and was profoundly unconscious of their deeper meaning. Like others, he supposed that the Messiah would set up a theocracy distinguished by zealous fulfilment of the Law; every Israelite, as such, forming a member of it. Greeting Jesus as one whom he, and others in his position, acknowledged to be a Rabbi, he opened the interview by a compliment, intended to lead to the point he had at heart. Any question as to his own admission to the Messiah's kingdom had not crossed his mind. The traditions of his brother Rabbis had taught him that while "the nations of the world would be as the burning of a furnace in the great Day of Judgment, Israel, as such, would be saved;" that "there was a part allotted to all Israel in the world to come," or, in other words, in the kingdom of the Messiah. "God had sanctified Israel to Himself for ever," and made every Jew, as such, on a footing, as to His love and favour, with "all the Angels of the Presence, and all the Angels of Praise,

and with all the Holy Angels that stand before Him."^{36k} Hence, he only wished to know the duties required of him as a member of the Messianic kingdom, which Jesus appeared to be sent from God to set up. Christ, in an instant, saw into the speaker's heart. So far from making any attempt to win him, or from abating His demands, as a compromise in favour of one whose support might be so advantageous, He cut him short by a statement which must have thrown his whole thoughts into confusion. Trusting implicitly to his being a Jew, as a divine title to citizenship in the new theocracy, and thinking only of formal acts by which he might show his devotion, and increase his claim to the favour of God, here and hereafter, he is met by an announcement, that neither national descent, nor the uttermost exactness of Pharisaic observance, nor any good works, however great, as such, availed at all to secure entrance into the kingdom of God. He had supposed Jesus a Rabbi, and had expected to hear some new legal precepts, but he is told that not only has he no title whatever, as a Jew, to share in the new kingdom, but that he cannot hope to earn one. Jewish theology knew nothing higher than an exact equivalent in good or evil, for every act. "An eye for an eye," both here and hereafter, was its only conception. A legal precisian had a right to heaven; the neglect of Levitical righteousness shut its gates on the soul.

Jesus broadly told him that his whole conceptions were fundamentally wrong. "Every man, whatever his legal standing, must be born again, if he would see the kingdom of God.¹ To do so is not a question of outward acts, legal, or moral, but of their motive." The idea of being "born again" should not have been incomprehensible to a Jewish Rabbi, for it was a saying of the Scribes that "a proselyte is like a child new born,"³⁷ and "circumcision of the-heart,"³⁷ and the "creating a clean heart and renewing a right spirit,"³⁸ are expressions that must have been familiar to him in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms. But the full meaning of such terms had been lost in the prevailing externalism. He took the words in their literal sense. In his perplexity, he supposed that what was

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^{36k} Buch
Hemoch. c. ii.
15. Talmud,
quoted in
Lightfoot, iii.
265, 269.

³⁷ Jeramoth.
62. 1; 92. 1.
Sepp, iii. 68.
Lightfoot, iii.
265.

³⁸ Deut. 30. 6.
Ps. 51. 10.
Jer. 4. 4.

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Jesus saw his embarrassment, and forthwith explained His meaning more fully. "The kingdom of God," He told him, "was none the less a true kingdom that it stood aloof from politics, and had none of the outward characteristics of earthly states. It had no civil judges, but it had its laws, and by these all its subjects would hereafter be tried, beyond the grave. It had its conditions of acceptance, also, and these were belief in Himself as its Founder, Legislator, and future Judge, and open confession of that belief by the rite of Baptism, with which Nicodemus was already familiar, from the ministry of John. There could be no admission of any one, high or low, at a secret interview, to be followed by concealment of the relation thus formed with Himself. There must be personal homage and submission to Him, but it must also be frankly and publicly avowed."

Nor was Nicodemus left to suppose that any outward and formal act, even if inclusive of these demands, would alone suffice. Baptism was but the symbol of a spiritual revolution so complete that it might well be described as a new birth. All men were by nature sinful, and needed a moral transformation, which would make them as naturally seek the pure and holy as they had sought the opposite. Citizenship in His kingdom was a gift of God Himself; the re-creation of the moral nature by His Spirit, as the result of which the soul hungered after good, as, before, after sin.

Nor was Nicodemus to wonder at such a statement. God's influence on the heart was like the flowing wind³⁹—free, felt, and yet mysterious. It came as it listed, its presence was felt by its results, but all besides was beyond our knowledge.^m

Teaching so fundamentally different from all his previous ideas, and involving conceptions so unique and sublime, was for the time incomprehensible. The startled listener could only mutter, "How can these things be?" Nicodemus, it seems very probable, was one of the chief men of the religious world in Jerusalem, for the three officers of the Sanhedrim,

³⁹ Schleiermacher's *Predigten*, i. 479.

while it existed, were the President, the Vice-President, and the "Master," or wise man,⁴⁰ and Jesus appears to address him as "Master," in subdued reproach at his perplexity. "Art thou," He asked, "*the* teacher,"—well known and recognized as such—the wise man—even by title, "and dost not know these things? I speak only what I know and have seen, in the eternal world, and you hesitate to believe Me. If I have told you thus of what is matter of experience, and runs its course in the human heart during this earthly life, and you think it incomprehensible, how will you believe if I tell you the higher truths of the kingdom—those heavenly mysteries which concern the plan of God for the salvation of man? No other can reveal such matters, for no man has ever ascended to heaven to learn them; but I am He—the Messiah, foretold, as the Son of Man, by your prophet Daniel,—who have come down from heaven, and, even now, have there my peculiar home and seat. Let Me vouchsafe you some glimpses of the true nature of my kingdom. I come not as a triumphant earthly monarch, but to suffer. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, to save those who believed in it, so must I be lifted up—how, you shall know hereafter—that all who believe in Me may not perish, but have eternal life. I have come to carry out, as a suffering Messiah, the high purpose of God's eternal love for the salvation of man."

"You seek eternal life: it can be had only by believing on Me. He who does so, has his reward even here, in the love, light, and peace which flow from the gift of the Spirit, and are the earnest of future glory. I have not come to judge men, for to judge would have been to condemn. I come to save. They who reject Me are, indeed, judged and condemned already, for when I, the Light, have come to them, they have shown their character by preferring the darkness of sin. Men separate themselves into good and evil, before God, by their bearing towards Me. The evil wish not to be disturbed, and to be let stay in moral darkness, to follow out their sinful desires, but he who seeks the truth comes to Me to have more light." Thus, the evil stand self-condemned: the good rejoice in their growing light, as an earnest of heaven."

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⁴⁰ Scholl, quoted
by Lücke,
1. 527. John
3. 10—21.

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The astonishing originality of such language is altogether unique. At His first appearance, though still a young man, without the sanction of success, or the weight of position, or the countenance of the schools, Jesus bears Himself, with calm unconsciousness of effort, as altogether superior to His visitor. A born Jew, He speaks as the Lawgiver of a new theocracy which He has come to found, in place of that of Moses, whom they almost worshipped. He lays down conditions of unbending strictness as indispensable to an entrance into the new community thus to be established, though He has nothing to offer but privation and self-denial, as the earthly result of joining it. He moves at His ease amidst subjects the most august and mysterious: demands the personal homage of those who would enter His kingdom, and promises eternal life as the reward of sincere acceptance of His claims. Repudiating the aids to which others might have looked, seeking no support from the powerful, or from the crowd, to facilitate His design; He speaks of Himself, even now, when obscure and alone, as a king, and shows a serene composure in extending His royalty over even the souls of men. In the presence of a famous Rabbi, he claims to be the light^e to which all men, without exception, must come, who love the truth. His first utterance anticipates the highest claims of His last. An humble Galilæan, easy of access, sympathetic, obscure, He calmly announces Himself as the Son of Man, whose home is heaven: as knowing the counsels of God from eternity: as the only-begotten Son of the Eternal, and the arbiter of eternal life or death to the world. It is idle to speak of any merely human utterances, even of the greatest and best of our race, in the presence of such thoughts and words as these: they are the voice of a higher sphere, though falling from the lips of one who walked as a man amongst men.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FROM JERUSALEM TO SAMARIA.

THE stay of Jesus in Jerusalem was short, for He had come up only to attend the Passover, and to open His Great Commission in the religious centre of the nation, before the vast throngs of pilgrims frequenting the feast. Nor were the results disappointing, for "many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did" during the week.¹ With the departure of the multitudes, however, He, also, left, to enter with His disciples on His first wide circuit of preaching and teaching, for, though a beginning had already been made in Galilee,² it had been on a much smaller scale.

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John 2. 23.

Acts 10. 37.

The district thus favoured embraced the whole of Judea, which extended, on the south, to the edge of the wilderness at Beersheba, far south of Hebron; to the lowlands of the Philistine plain, on the west; to the line of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, on the east, and, on the north, to Akrabbim, the frontier village of Samaria, which lay among the hills, twenty-five miles, as the crow flies, from Jerusalem.^a We have the authority of the Apostle Peter, who very likely shared the journey, that it extended "throughout all Judea,"³ but we have no record of the towns and villages thus early favoured with the Message of the New Kingdom.

Acts 10. 37.

How long the tour lasted we do not know, but it must have occupied some months, for He "tarried" from time to time, at different points, He Himself preaching and teaching, and His disciples baptizing the converts gained. It was not fitting that Jesus should Himself administer the rite which admitted citizens to His spiritual kingdom. Baptism,

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which had been introduced by John as a symbol of repentance and spiritual renewal, in expectation of the coming Messiah, had now acquired the far grander significance of a profession of faith in Jesus, as the Messiah already come. John's baptism had implied a vow to live in the strict and painful Jewish asceticism of washings, fasts, and legal observances; that of Jesus transformed this life into one of

⁴ Ewald, v. 345. divine liberty and loving joy.⁴ The material baptism, moreover, was but the symbol, and might well be left to His disciples, Himself retaining the far grander ministry of the dispensation of the Spirit, which cleansed the moral nature, as water did the body. They had the emblem: He, as became a King, kept in His own hands the substance and reality. To preach the Gospel, not to baptize, was hereafter, even in St. Paul's view, the special commission of an Apostle.⁵ Humbler agencies could be left to perform the rite: to the higher office, Jesus devoted His higher rank.

The introduction of baptism at the beginning of our Lord's ministry, is mentioned only by St. John. It may be that this is only an instance of the omissions of the Evangelists, and that careful examination would find indirect indications that it not only began with the opening of Christ's ministry, but continued, throughout, till the close. Yet, both St. Matthew and St. Mark mention the command given by Jesus immediately before His ascension, to baptize all nations, without any indication of its being the continuance of an existing custom, rather than the re-introduction of what had been for a time in abeyance. Possibly, the

⁶ Ewald, v. 347. extension of the rite to all nations,⁶ may have been the special reason of its being thus prominently noticed, but, more probably, the opposition of the ecclesiastical

⁷ John 4. 1. authorities, which broke out into active hostility⁷ as soon as the new movement grew popular, and forced Jesus to leave Judea, made it necessary to disarm opposition by suspending the practice.

⁸ John 1. 19. 24. The ecclesiastical world of the day—priests, elders, and scribes—had rejected the mission of John. They had

⁹ Matt. 3. 7.
John 3. 25;
4. 1. Mark 2.
18. Matt. 9. 4. inquired into his claims,⁸ attended his preaching,⁹ and held

intercourse with his disciples,¹⁰ but they had not been baptized. They "rejected the counsel of God against themselves," and even went so far, in order to discredit John with the multitude, as to insinuate that he "had a devil." His real offence was having stood aloof from them—the established religious authorities—and he had shocked their self-complacency, and impeached their theology, by declaring the worthlessness, before God, of mere nationality. But Jesus was already treading in the same steps, and had gone even further in independence of the priests and Rabbis, in His acts and teachings; in His cleansing the Temple, and in His discourse with Nicodemus. Before long, moreover, His movement assumed greater importance than John's, and threatened to draw the whole nation from allegiance to the dignitaries of Jerusalem. The fate of John, moreover, was, probably, in great part, due to his being under official censure, and it is not improbable, if Salim were in Judea, or even in Samaria, as many suppose, that the machinations of the authorities had contributed to his arrest, and to his being handed over to Antipas.¹¹ He had fled for safety to the west side of the Jordan, to be under Roman law, but it is wholly in keeping with Pilate's treacherous nature to believe, that in his dread of the priests and Rabbis, the Roman governor consented to seize the prophet, and deliver him up to death, as he afterwards did with Jesus Himself.¹² With such a catastrophe in mind, it would have been opposed to the calm prudence with which Jesus at all times acted, to have sought the publicity and excitement soon developed in connection with His early baptismal gatherings.

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¹⁰ Luke 7. 20, 23.¹¹ Sepp, iii. 106.

¹² Döllinger thinks Antipas put John in Machaerus partly to protect him from the violence of Herodias. Christenthum u. Kirche, 4.

It is a question, besides, whether the official opposition which made any action inexpedient that tended to agitate the public mind, did not, also, compel delay in the outward organization of the new communion which Jesus came to found. His spiritual kingdom could be proclaimed, its laws and privileges made known, and citizens gained, as disciples, in detail, but their final enrolment as a distinct society would likely have resulted in the instant arrest of their leader. The air was too full of political rumours, in

CHAP. XXXI. connection with a national Messiah, to have made that organization practicable while Jesus lived, which was at once announced after His death. If this were so, baptism, as the symbol of entrance into the new society, might be well deferred till that society was actually begun, on the day of Pentecost.¹³

¹³ See on this point Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 130. Lange, ii. 342.

¹⁴ Matt. 3. 2; 4. 17; 10. 7. Mark 1. 15

The burden of Christ's preaching, while journeying throughout Judea, was, no doubt, the same as that of His Galilean ministry a little later, and as that of John's—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹⁴ The time had not yet come for His openly proclaiming Himself as the Messiah, though He acted from the first as such, without formally assuming the title. To have done so would have arrested His work at once, while His acts and words, without compromising Him with the authorities, were such as forced men, and even the spirits He cast out, to own His true dignity.¹⁵ Indeed, the very nature of a spiritual kingdom like His, founded necessarily only on the free convictions of men, not on assertion or authority, demanded this reticence. The heart of man, which was to be the seat of His empire, could be won only by the spiritual attractions of His life and words. Faith and loving obedience could only spring from sympathy with the truth and goodness His life and words displayed, and this sympathy must be spontaneous in each new disciple, and was often of slow attainment. The kingdom, to use His own illustrations, must grow from almost unperceived beginnings, in slow development, like the mustard seed, and spread by silent and slow advance, like leaven. It was, in its very nature, to come "without observation,"¹⁶ unmarked, for it was not political, like earthly kingdoms, but the invisible reign of truth in the souls of men—a growth of opinion—a kingdom not of this world.¹⁷

¹⁵ Mark 3. 11. Luke 4. 34, 41; 9. 20. Matt. 16. 16; 14. 33. John 6. 69.

¹⁶ Luke 17. 20.

¹⁷ John 18. 36.

In this opening period John still continued his great preparatory work. He had crossed from the eastern to the western side of Jordan, and was baptizing at Enon, near Salim—a place, the position of which is not positively known.^b He had, apparently, expected Jesus to begin His work as the Messiah, by an open assumption of the title,

and seems to have been at a loss to account for a comparative privacy, so different from his anticipations. The idea of a great national movement, with Jesus at its head, was natural to him, nor does he seem to have realized that the sublimest self-proclamation our Lord could make was by the still small voice of His divine life and words. He was waiting calmly for a signal to retire, which had not yet been given. Nor was it a superfluous work to continue to point the multitudes to the Lamb of God, and thus prepare them, by the weight of a testimony so revered, for accepting Him to whom He thus directed them.

Human nature, however, is always the same: ready to show its weakness, even in connection with what is most sacred. The grand humility of John—inaccessible to a jealous thought—was contented to be a mere voice, sending men away from himself to his great successor. But his followers were not, in all cases, so lowly, and occasion soon offered which gave their feelings expression. A Jew,^c who had, apparently, attended the ministry of both John and Jesus, had shown the common bias of his race by getting into a discussion with some of John's disciples, about the comparative value of their master's baptism, as a means of purification, perhaps both morally and levitically, as compared with that of Jesus. A theological controversy between Jews, as between Christians, is dangerous to the temper, and, indeed, the Rabbis denounced quietness and composure in such matters as a sign of religious indifference. Warmth and bitterness were assumed to prove zeal for the Law.¹⁸ Hence, no doubt, there was abundant heat and wrangling on an occasion like this, the whole resulting in a feeling of irritation and jealousy on the part of the champions of John, against One who had thus been set up as his rival. In this spirit they returned to their master, and proceeded to relieve their minds by telling him that He who was with him beyond Jordan, to whom he had borne witness, and to whom he had thus given a standing and influence, had Himself begun to baptize. It appeared like unfair rivalry, and was creating just such a sensation as John had caused at first, for now all

¹⁸ *Nork, cxcv.*
See also
Titus 3, 9.
John 3, 25—26.

CHAP. XXXI. were flocking to the new Rabbi, as, formerly, to the banks of the Jordan.

The greatness of the Baptist could not have been shown more strikingly than in his reply to a complaint so fitted to touch his personal sensibilities. "You are wrong," said he, "in thinking thus of Him to whom you refer. If He meet such success, it is given Him from God, for a man can receive nothing except it have been given him from heaven. You can yourselves bear witness that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but am sent before Him.'" John was regarded by the nation at large as a prophet, and, as such, he was venerated so greatly, that, even after his death, many explained the miracles of Jesus by supposing that He was John, risen again from the dead, clothed with the transcendent powers of the spirit world from which he had returned.¹⁹

¹⁹ Mark 8. 28.

Later still, the ecclesiastical authorities were afraid the people would stone them if they spoke of his baptism as merely human. He was now the foremost man in the land, but his splendid humility never for a moment deserted him. "He may make no kingly show," he continued, "and may have raised no excitement, but He is far above me. You know how the friend of the bride leads her home to the bridegroom—how he goes before the choir of companions that escort her, and brings her, with loud rejoicings, to her lord. I am only that friend, the Kingdom of God is the bride, and Jesus the Heavenly Bridegroom."²⁰

²⁰ Nork. 167.
Sepp. iii. 109.
Ewald, v. 347.
Meyer and
De Wette,
in loc.

²¹ Matt. 9. 15;
23. 1.

²² Rev. 19. 7.

The prophets of old have foretold the espousals of heaven and earth: they are fast approaching: the kingdom of the Messiah is even now at hand, and will fulfil the promise.²¹ Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.²² The friend listens for the bridegroom's voice, to obey His commands, and promote his joy, and rejoices to hear it, when he has led the bride to him. My joy is fulfilled, in having stirred up the multitude to flock to the ministrations of the Lamb of God, and I rejoice in His being so near me that I seem to catch His voice. He must increase; I must decrease. I am but the morning star; He, the rising sun. He comes from above, and is, thus, above all; I am only a man

yourselves, of the earth, and speak as a man, what I have been sent by God to utter. He is the Messiah from heaven, and speaks what He has seen and heard in the eternal world—speaks from His own direct knowledge. I only repeat what may be revealed to me, here below. My mission is well-nigh over, and I now only finish my testimony before I finally vanish. But, though thus worthy of all honour, few receive His witness: it is an evil generation²³ that seeks a Messiah very different from the holy Messiah of God. He who believes in Him glorifies the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises to send salvation to man. For the Gospel He proclaims is but the utterance of the precious words of God the Father to our race, and, thus, in believing His Son, we honour Him who sent Him. Prophets, and even I, the Baptist, receive the Spirit only in the measure God is pleased to grant, but God pours out His gifts on Him without measure."

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²³ Luke 3. 7.

Such thoughts filled the speaker's heart with tender adoration, which embodied itself in closing words of wondrous sublimity. "You may well believe on Him," said he, "for the Father has given all things into His hand,—eternal life and outer darkness. He has not only the divine anointing of the Messiah, but the awful power. To be saved by the works of the Law is, moreover, hopeless: faith in Him is the one Salvation. It is momentous, therefore, that you receive Him, for to reject Him is to perish. Blessed is he who believes in Him: he has, even now, the beginnings in his soul of the divine life²⁴ which survives death and never dies. Woe to him who will not hear His voice. He shall never see life; but the wrath of God will burn against him abidingly!"

²⁴ Winer's Grammatik, 249.

Jesus had now remained in Judea about nine months, from the Passover, in April, to the winter sowing time, in December or January.²⁵ The crowds that came to hear Him, though rarely to receive His "witness,"²⁶ grew daily larger,²⁷ and His fame spread far and near, even to Galilee. His very success, however, in attracting numbers, made His retirement to another district necessary, for in Judea He was under the keen and unfriendly eyes of the bigoted religious

²⁵ John 4. 35.²⁶ John 3. 32;

4. 45.

²⁷ John 3. 26.

CHAP. XXXI. world of Jerusalem, who saw in Him a second rival, more dangerous than the Baptist. His bearing towards them had been seen in the cleansing of the Temple, and His miracles were likely to give Him even more power over the people than John had had, and to lead them to a revolt from the legal slavery to Rabbinical rules, in which the Jerusalem Scribes and Pharisees held them. There had, as yet, been no open hostility, but it was not in keeping with the spirit of Jesus to provoke persecution. His hour had not yet come, and to brave danger at present, when duty did not demand it, would have been contrary to His whole nature. Hereafter, when duty called Him to do so, He would voluntarily come, not to Judea alone, but to Jerusalem, though He knew it meant His death.

²⁸ John 4. 1. But, apart from the kindling jealousy of the Pharisees,²⁸ the people themselves were sufficient explanation of the return of Jesus to Galilee. He was no mere popularity hunter, flattered by the idle curiosity that drew crowds to see what wonder He might perform. He had numbers, but yet His mission, in the only light in which He regarded results, had been little better than sowing on the wayside, or the stony place, or among thistles and thorns. He had made so few disciples, that John could speak of them as none.²⁹ The fame He had gained might serve Him elsewhere, but He measured the claims of a locality on His ministrations, not by the numbers who came to Him, but by the proportion won to God.

³⁰ Herzog, iv. 667. The direct road to Galilee ran through the half-heathen country of Samaria, and this Jesus resolved to take, though men of His nation generally preferred the circuitous route by Perea, rather than pass through the territory of a race they hated.³⁰ It ran north from Jerusalem, past Bethel, between the height of Libona on the left hand, and of Shiloh on the right, entering Samaria at the south end of the beautiful valley, which, further north, stretches past the foot of Mounts Gerizim and Ebal.³¹ He must have started in the early morning, to reach Sychar by noon, and must have been near the boundary to have done so at all, in the short morning of a winter's day. The road was proverbially

³¹ Herzog, xv. 164.

unsafe for Jewish passengers, either returning from Jerusalem or going to it, for it passed through the border districts where the feuds of the two rival peoples raged most fiercely. The paths among the hills of Akkrabbim, leading into Samaria, had often been wet with the blood of Jew or Samaritan, for they were the scene of constant raids and forays, like our own border marches between Wales or Scotland, in former days. It had been dangerous even in the days of Hosea,³² 27 Hosea 6. 9. eight hundred years before, but it was worse now. The pilgrims from Galilee to the feasts were often molested, and sometimes even attacked and scattered, with more or less slaughter;³³ each act of violence bringing speedy reprisals 33 Ant. xvi. 1. Luke 9. 53. from the population of Jerusalem and Judea, on the one side, and of Galilee on the other; the villages of the border districts, as most easily reached, bearing the brunt of the feud, in smoking cottages, and indiscriminate massacre of young and old.³⁴

The country, as He approached Samaritan territory, was gradually more inviting than the hills of Southern Judea.

"Samaria," says Josephus,³⁵ "lies between Judea and Galilee. It begins at a village in the great plain (of Esdraelon) called Ginea (Engannim), and ends at the district, or 'toparch,'³⁶ 35 Bell. Jud. iii. 3. 4. of Akkrabbim,³⁷ and is of the same character as Judea. Both countries are made up of hills and valleys, and are moist for agriculture, and very fruitful. They have abundance of trees (mostly long since cut down), and are full of autumnal fruit, both wild and cultivated. They are not naturally watered by many rivers, but derive their chief moisture from the rains, of which they have no want. As to the rivers they have, their waters are exceedingly sweet. By reason, also, of the excellent grass, their cattle yield more milk than those of other places, and both countries show that greatest proof of excellence and plenty—they are, each, very full of people." In our days, Samaria is more pleasant than Judea. The limestone hills do not drink in the waters that fall on them like those of the south. Rich level stretches of black soil, overflowed in the wet season, form splendid pastures, which alternate, in the valleys, with fertile tracts of corn-land, gardens, and orchards. Grape-vines,

CHAP. XXXI.

³¹ Bell. Jud. ii. 12. 4. Vita, 52.³² Bell. Jud. iii. 3. 4.

CHAP. XXXI. and many kinds of fruit-trees, cover the warm slopes of the limestone hills, and groves of olives and walnuts crown their rounded tops. The meadows of Samaria have always been famous.³⁶ The prophets, already, speak of the pastures on its downs, and of the thickets of its hill-forests.³⁷ As Josephus tells us, the supply of rain was abundant on the hills, and made them richly wooded. The climate was so good and healthy, that the Romans greatly preferred the military stations in Samaria to those of Judea.³⁸ Yet the landscape is tame and monotonous compared to that of Galilee. Its flat valleys, and straight lines of hills, all rounded atop, and nearly of a height, contrast unfavourably with the bold scenery of the Galilean highlands—the home of Jesus.

Having reached the top of the steep hill, up which the path stretches, the large and fertile plain of Mukhna, running north and south, lay beneath Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, the giants of the mountains of Ephraim, which rose midway on its western side, while low chains of gently sloping hills enclosed it, as a whole. The path descends towards the hills which skirt the western side of the plain, and runs along their base, rising and falling in long undulations. Picturesque clumps of trees still dot the hill-sides, and bare, precipitous faces of rock rise above the green fields and olive-yards, which, more or less, cover the slopes, mingling, at last, with trees above. Half-way up the plain, a small valley opens to the west, between Ebal and Gerizim,^f which rise, steep and precipitous on the side next the plain, to the height, respectively, of 1,250 and 1,100³⁹ feet, both, as seen from below, equally sterile. The path enters the valley by a gentle rise, and a brook of fresh, clear water, which turns a mill on its way, flows out with a pleasant murmur, into the plain. On the left, Gerizim rises in rugged and bold masses; on the right, Ebal, which, though steep, is terraced to a considerable height, with gardens fenced by the fig cactus; other terraces, planted with corn, rising, in some parts, even to the summit.

The town of Nablûs—the ancient Shechem—is about a mile and a-half from the mouth of this side valley, in which

³⁶ See, above, from Josephus.

³⁷ Isaiah 9, 18; 28, 1. 1 Sam. 14, 25. 2 Sam. 18, 6. Jubil. cap. 34.

³⁸ Plin. Hist. Nat. v. 14. Strabo, xvi. 2.

³⁹ Pal. Fund. Rep., 1873, 66.

it stands. Luxuriant gardens, richly watered, girdle it round outside its old and dilapidated walls, whose gates, hanging off their hinges, are an emblem of all things else, at this day, in Palestine. The valley, at the town, is so narrow, that a strong man might almost shoot an arrow from the one hill to the other. The houses of Nablûs are stone—a number of them of several stories—with small windows and balconies, and low doors, over which texts of the Koran are often painted, as a sign that the householder has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is a very small place, stretching from east to west; with narrow covered streets, running north and south from the two principal ones. Their sides are raised, so as to leave a filthy, sunken path, in the middle, for cattle; but, as a set-off to this, many copious fountains and clear rivulets, flow through those on the west of the town.

To this ancient town, then in its glory, and very different from its present condition—along this path—Jesus was coming, no doubt agreeably impressed by the beauties of a spot unequalled in Palestine for its landscape. Clumps of lofty walnut trees, thick groves of almond, pomegranate, olive, pear, and plum trees adorned the outskirts, and ran towards the opening of the valley. The weather was bright and warm, and the brightness would fill the many-coloured woods and verdure, with the melodious songs of birds. The clear, sweet notes of our own blackbird; the loud thrill of the lark, high overhead, and the chirping of finches, in each copse, rose then, as now. The brooks of clear mountain water then, as to-day, played, and splashed, and murmured, past. Thousands of flowers enamelled the grass on the slopes, for the “blessings of Joseph”⁴⁰ reached their highest in the valley of Shechem.^s “The land of Syria,” said Mahomet, “is beloved by Allah beyond all lands, and the part of Syria which He loveth most is the district of Jerusalem, and the place which He loveth most in the district of Jerusalem is the Mountain of Nablûs.”⁴¹ The contrast with nature was only an anticipation of the brighter spiritual prospect. But before Jesus came to the town, He halted for a time to rest.

CHAP. XXXI.

⁴⁰ Gen. 49. 26.⁴¹ Fundgr. des
Orient, II.
130.

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Close under the eastern foot of Gerizim, at the opening of the side valley from the wide plain, on a slight knoll, a mile and a half from the town, surrounded, now, by stones and broken pillars, is Jacob's well.^h The ruins are those of an old church, which stood over the well as early as the fifth century, but has long ago perished in the storms of the times. Over the well, a few years since, were still to be seen the remains of an alcove, such as is built beside most Eastern wells, to give a seat and shelter to the tired wayfarer. There is no question that the name of the ancient patriarch is rightly given. Thirty or forty springs are found in the neighbourhood, but they were, doubtless, already, in Jacob's day, private property, so that he had no alternative but to sink a well for himself. Nor was it a slight undertaking, for it is dug through the alluvial soil, to an unknown depth, and lined, throughout, with strong rough masonry. It is still about seventy-five feet deep, but so recently as 1838 it was thirty feet deeper, each year helping to fill it up, from the practice of all who visit it, both natives and travellers, to throw in stones, to hear their rebound. This custom, which may be recent, adding to the accumulations of over two thousand years, has filled it⁴² up perhaps one-half. The shaft is seven and a half feet in diameter, and the whole work must have been the labour of years. It is exactly on the watershed of the district,ⁱ but as it depends on rain water only, it is, now, often dry, though, perhaps, when of a greater depth, always more or less full. Lieut. Anderson descended it in 1866 and found it quite dry, but an unbroken pitcher at the bottom showed that there was water in it at some seasons. Latterly, it has been buried under a great heap of stones, hiding its mouth, which Lieut. Anderson found in a sunken chamber twenty feet deep, the opening being just large enough to admit a man's body.

Tired with His long mountain walk, and by the heat of noon^k—for it was midday, and noon in Palestine, even in December, is often warm—Jesus was glad to turn aside, and rest by Jacob's well. It was, moreover, the hour for refreshment,⁴³ and He resolved to stay in the grateful shade of the trees and the alcove, till His disciples went up

⁴² Mill's Nablûs, 45.
Lieut. Anderson, in *Our Work in Palestine*, 201.
Palest. Fund Rep., 1871, 73.

⁴³ Winer, ii. 47.

the little valley to the town to buy food. The funds supplied by friends, who delighted to minister to Him,⁴⁴ CHAP. XXXI. Luke 8. 2. provided the ready means.

While thus resting, a Samaritan woman, from Sychar,¹ which may have been the same place as Shechem, or, perhaps, was the village near the well, now known as Askar, approached, with a water jar on her head, as is the custom, and a long cord in her hand, with which to let the jar down the well. Few sought the place at that hour, for evening was the common time for drawing water, and thus Jesus and she were alone. To ask a draught of water is a request no one in the East thinks of refusing, for the hot climate makes all feel its value. Hence, under ordinary circumstances, it might have been expected, on Jesus asking this favour, that it would be granted as a matter of course. His dress, or dialect,⁴⁵ however, had shown the woman that He was a Jew, and the relations between Jews and Samaritans made His seeking even such a trifling courtesy from her seem strange, for the two nations were mortal enemies. After the deportation of the ten tribes to Assyria, Samaria had been repeopled by heathen colonists from various provinces of the Assyrian empire,⁴⁶ by fugitives from the authorities of Judea, and by stragglers of one or other of the ten tribes, who found their way home again. The first heathen settlers, terrified at the increase of wild animals, especially lions, and attributing it to their not knowing the proper worship of the God of the country,⁴⁷ sent for one of the exiled priests, and, under his instructions, added the worship of Jehovah to that of their idols⁴⁸—an incident in their history, from which later Jewish hatred and derision taunted them as “proselytes of the lions,” as it branded them, from their Assyrian origin, with the name of Cuthites. Ultimately, however, they became even more rigidly attached to the Law of Moses than the Jews themselves. Anxious to be recognized as Israelites, they set their hearts on joining the two tribes, on their return from captivity, but the stern puritanism of Ezra and Nehemiah admitted no alliance between the pure blood of Jerusalem and the tainted race of the north. Resentment at this affront was natural, and excited resentment in return,

⁴⁴ For the peculiarities of the Samaritan Dialect, see Herzog, xiii, 374.

⁴⁵ 2 Kings 17. 24.

⁴⁷ 2 Kings 17. 26.

⁴⁸ 2 Kings 17. 33.

CHAP. XXXI. till, in Christ's day, centuries of strife and mutual injury, intensified by theological hatred on both sides, had made them implacable enemies. The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim, to rival that of Jerusalem, but it had been destroyed by John Hyrcanus; who had also levelled Samaria to the ground.^m They claimed for their mountain a greater holiness than that of Moriah; accused the Jews of adding to the word of God, by receiving the writings of the prophets, and prided themselves on owning only the Pentateuch as inspired; favoured Herod because the Jews hated him, and were loyal to him and the equally hated Roman; had kindled false lights on the hills, to vitiate the Jewish reckoning by the new moons and thus throw their feasts into confusion,⁴⁹ and, in the early youth of Jesus, had even defiled the very Temple itself, by strewing human bones in it, at the Passover.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ De Sacy, *Chrestom.* i. 158.

⁵⁰ Jos. Ant. xviii. 2. 2. A.D. 10.

Nor had hatred slumbered on the side of the Jews.ⁿ They knew the Samaritans only as Cuthites, or heathen from Cuth. "The race that I hate is no race," says the son of Sirach.⁵¹ It was held that a people who once had worshipped five gods could have no part in Jehovah. The claim of the Samaritans that Moses had buried the Tabernacle and its vessels on the top of Gerizim, was laughed to scorn. It was said that they had dedicated their temple, under Antiochus Epiphanes, to the Greek Jupiter.⁵² Their keeping the commands of Moses even more strictly than the Jews, that it might seem they were really of Israel, was not denied; but their heathenism, it was said, had been proved by the discovery of a brazen dove, which they worshipped, on the top of Gerizim.⁵³ It would have been enough that they boasted of Herod as their good king, who had married a daughter of their people; that he had been free to follow, in their country, his Roman tastes, so hated in Judea: that they had remained quiet, after his death, when Judea and Galilee were in uproar, and that a fourth of their taxes had been remitted and added to the burdens^c of Judea, for their peacefulness. Their friendliness to the

⁵¹ Wisdom 50. 27.

⁵² Ant. xi. 2. 8; xii. 2. 1; xii. 2. 5.

⁵³ Talmud; quoted by Cohen, 144.

ⁿ II. 47.

shⁿ quiet only by the sternest severity, and strove to the

utmost against the introduction of anything foreign, the Samaritans rejoiced in the new importance which their loyalty to the empire had given them. Shechem flourished : close by, in Cæsarea, the procurator held his court : a division of cavalry, in barracks at Sebaste—the old Samaria—had been raised in the territory. The Roman strangers were more than welcome to while away the summer in their umbrageous valleys.

The illimitable hatred, rising from so many sources, found vent in the tradition that a special curse had been uttered against the Samaritans, by Ezra, Serubbabel, and Joshua. It was said that these great ones assembled the whole congregation of Israel in the Temple, and that three hundred priests, with three hundred trumpets, and three hundred books of the Law, and three hundred scholars of the Law, had been employed to repeat, amidst the most solemn ceremonial, all the curses of the Law against the Samaritans. They had been subjected to every form of excommunication ; by the incommunicable name of Jehovah ; by the Tables of the Law, and by the heavenly and earthly synagogues.⁵⁴ The very name became a reproach. "We know that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil," said the Jews, to Jesus, in Jerusalem.⁵⁵ "There may be friendliness between Samaria and Jerusalem," said a young Rabbi, summing up the points in dispute between his nation and the Samaritans, "when the Cuthites have no more to do with Mount Gerizim ; when they praise Israel, and believe in the resurrection of the dead—but not till then."⁵⁶ No Israelite could lawfully eat even a mouthful of food that had been touched by a Samaritan, for, "to do so was as if he ate the flesh of swine."⁵⁷ No Samaritan was allowed to become a proselyte, nor could he have any part in the resurrection of the dead. A Jew might be friendly with a heathen, but never with a Samaritan, and all bargains made with one were invalid.⁵⁸ The testimony of a Samaritan could not be taken in a Jewish court, and to receive one into one's house would bring down the curse of God.⁵⁹ It had even become a subject of warm controversy how far a Jew might use food or fruit grown on Samaritan soil. What

⁵⁴ Tanchuma, xvii. 4
Pirke Eliezer, c. 38, in
Godwyn (18).
Sepp, iii. 148.
Lightfoot, iii. 274.

⁵⁵ John 8. 48.

⁵⁶ Hausarth, l. 18.

⁵⁷ Lightfoot, iii. 275.

⁵⁸ Gitin, f. 10. 1.
Sanhedrin, f. 104. 1.

⁵⁹ Pirke, R. El., c. 38.

CHAP. XXXI. grows on trees or in fields was reckoned clean, but it was doubtful respecting flour or wine. A Samaritan egg, as the hen laid it, could not be unclean, but what of a boiled egg? Yet interest and convenience strove, by subtle casuistry, to invent excuses for what intercourse was unavoidable. The country of the Cuthites was clean, so that a Jew might, without scruple, gather and eat its produce. The waters of Samaria were clean, so that a Jew might drink them or wash in them. Their dwellings were clean, so that he might enter them, and eat or lodge in them. Their roads were clean, so that the dust of them did not defile a Jew's feet.⁶⁰ The Rabbis even went so far in their contradictory utterances, as to say that the victuals of the Cuthites were allowed, if none of their wine or vinegar were mixed with them, and even their unleavened bread was to be reckoned fit for use at the Passover. Opinions thus wavered, but, as a rule, harsher feeling prevailed.^o

⁶⁰ Hieros. Avodah Tar. xlv. 4; quoted by Lightfoot, iii. 273.

Jesus was infinitely above such unworthy strifes and prejudices, and His disciples had caught something of His calm elevation, for they had already set off to the city for food, when He spoke to the woman. She could only, in her wonder, ask, in reply, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" Her frankness and kindly bearing had its reward. With His wondrous skill in using even the smallest and commonest trifles to lead to the highest and worthiest truths,⁶¹ He lifts her thoughts to matters infinitely above the mere wants of the body. By an easy transition, He tells her of living water, the gift of God, which He has to give,—so precious, that, if she knew what it was, and who He was who spoke with her, she, in her turn, would ask Him to allow her to drink. He meant, of course, the divine grace and truth given by Him to those who sought it, the true living water, ever fresh in its quickening power, and efficacy to satisfy the thirst of the soul. Such a metaphor was exactly fitted to arrest her attention, but, like Nicodemus, she rises no higher than the literal sense. "You cannot mean the water in the well here," says she: "you cannot give me that, for you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.

⁶¹ See Sermon by Schleiermacher, i. 291. John 4. 9—30.

Whence, then, can you get this living water of which you speak? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well? It was good enough for him and his to drink from, and you speak as if you had other and better!" Samaritan tradition had traced the well to the gift of Jacob, though it is not mentioned in Genesis; and Jacob—to a Samaritan, as to a Jew—was almost more than a man.⁶² Her curiosity was now fairly roused, and her willingness to hear was evident. "This water is, no doubt, good," replied Jesus, "but any one who drinks it will thirst again, whereas he who drinks the water that I give will never thirst, but will find it like a well of water in his soul, springing up into everlasting life." More and more interested, the woman craves some of this miraculous water, that she may not thirst, nor need to come all the way thither to draw. She still thinks only of common water.

CHAP. XXXI.

⁶² Petermann, *Art. "Samaritanen," Herzog.* xiii. 861.

But now followed a question which, while, apparently, of no moment, showed her that she was before one who knew the secrets of her life, and, while it woke a sense of guilt, opened the way for penitence. "Go, call thy husband." She answered that she had none. "You are right," replied Jesus, "for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband." The five had either divorced her for immorality, or were dead: to the sixth she was not married.

The light, half-bold mood of the woman was now entirely past. "My lord," said she, "I behold that Thou art a prophet," and, doubtless, the conviction flashed with it through her breast the kindred thought, that the Jewish religion, which He seemed to represent, must be the true one. Then, perhaps half wishing to turn the conversation—with a glance at the holy hill, towering eight hundred feet above them—she added, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

To the Samaritans, Gerizim was the most sacred spot on earth. It was their sacred mountain, and had been, as they believed, the seat of Paradise, while all the streams that water the earth were supposed to flow from it. Adam had

CHAP. XXXI. been formed of its dust, and had lived on it. The few Samaritans still surviving, show, even at this day, the spot on which he built his first altar, and that on which, afterwards, the altar of Seth, also, was raised. They fancied that Gerizim was Ararat, fifteen cubits higher than the next highest and next holiest mountain on earth—Mount Ebal, and that it was the one pure and sacred spot in the world, which, having risen above the waters of the flood, no corpse had defiled. Every Samaritan child of the neighbourhood could point out the places on it where Noah came out from the ark, and where he built his altar, and show the seven altar steps, on each of which Noah offered a sacrifice. The altar on which Abraham bound Isaac, and the spot where the ram was caught in the thicket, were amongst its wonders. In the centre of the summit was the broad stone on which Jacob rested his head when he saw the mystic ladder, and, near it, the spot where Joshua built the first altar in the land, after its conquest, and the twelve stones he set up, on the under side of which, they believed, the Law of Moses had been written. On this sacred ground their Temple had stood for two hundred years, till destroyed by the Jews a hundred and twenty-nine years before Christ.⁶³ Towards Gerizim every Samaritan turned his face when he prayed, and it was believed the Messiah would first appear on its top, to bring from their hiding-place in it the sacred vessels of the Tabernacle of Moses.⁶⁴ It was unspeakably sacred to the nation, as the one spot on earth where man was nearest his Maker. The simple Samaritan woman, with whom Jesus talked, had been trained up in the undoubting belief of all these legends, and her very mention of Jerusalem, respectfully, as a place sacred in the eyes of the Jew, showed a spirit ready to be taught.

She was only a humble woman, and withal, of poor antecedents, but it was the characteristic of Jesus to recognize the better self, even in the outcast and lost. The hope and joy of the triumphant future of His kingdom rose in His soul as He discoursed with her.⁶⁵ No narrow intolerance had place in His breast; no haughty Jewish nationality prejudiced Him against man as man. Away from the close

⁶³ Win. v. i. 390.
Art. "Gerizim."

⁶⁴ P. Iermann,
Samarita, in
H. r. xiii.
378, 379.
Id. H. r. x, III.
279.

⁶⁵ H. r. e, Leben
J. e. u. 131.

stifling bigotry, and fierce self-righteousness of Judea, He CHAP. XXXI. breathed more freely. To the Samaritans He always seems to have felt kindly, for it is a Samaritan whom He chose to illustrate the law of neighbourly love in His immortal parable; ⁶⁶ it was a Samaritan who, alone, of the ten lepers 66 Luke 10, 30. He healed, returned to give glory to God; ⁶⁷ and, now, it 67 Luke 17, 15. was a Samaritan woman who, by opening her heart to His words, first cheered His spirit, after the cold unbelief of Judea. ⁶⁸ The influences of the spot, moreover, had, doubtless, 68 John 3, 32. their effect on one so much in communion with nature. The towering hills on each side—steep—well-nigh precipitous, and, as seen from the well where He sat, naked and sterile; the undulating valley between them, with its bubbling brook; the busy and prosperous Shechem, embowered in gardens and orchards; the great plain, ten miles in length and half as broad, outside, with its corn-fields, vineyards, and olive groves, spread far and near; the framework of hills enclosing it round; the whole flooded by the bright Eastern noon, must have touched His delicate sensibility, as they could not have affected duller natures. The very associations of the scene must have breathed a sacred inspiration, for, here, Jacob had wandered; for the very ground on which this well had been dug, he had paid a hundred pieces of money; ^p and here, Joseph, his famous son, lay buried, within the bounds of his father's purchase. Here Joshua had gathered the tribes to hear the Law from the rounded hill-tops above, and Gideon, and a long roll of judges and kings, had made it the centre of their rule. The plain before Him had been the gathering place of the hosts of Israel, and now He, the greater Joshua, a mightier judge than Gideon, and the true "Prince of God," ⁶⁹ was about to summon the peaceful soldiers of the spiritual Israel to a loftier struggle than ever earth had seen—for Truth and God. A divine enthusiasm filled His soul, and the vision of the sacred future He came to inaugurate for man rose before Him, when the local, national, and transitory in religion, should have passed away before the universal, spiritual, and eternal. "Believe me," said He, "an hour comes, when ye shall neither in this mountain,

69 "Israel"—the name given by the angel to Jacob.

CHAP. XXXI. nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship God without knowing Him—ignorantly. Your Temple, when it stood, was without a name;⁷⁰ still worse, your forefathers, after a time, dedicated it to idols.⁷¹ You have rejected the prophets and all the Scriptures after Moses, and, thus, are not in living connection with the earlier history of the kingdom of God; have no intelligent knowledge of the advancing steps by which God has revealed Himself, but rest on dark traditions and fancies, natural in a people whose religion began with the worship of strange gods, along with Jehovah. We, Jews, worship that which our having received the Scriptures, has taught us to know. The Messiah and His salvation must come from among the Jews. They have cherished the firm, pure, and living hope of Him, revealed more and more fully in the prophets, and their Temple, which has always been sacred to Jehovah alone, has kept this hope ever before them. But, though the Jews be right, as against the Samaritans, in so far as relates to the past, both are on equal footing as to the far more glorious future. An hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeketh such as worship Him thus.^a God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Words like these marked an epoch in the spiritual history of the world; a revolution in all previous ideas of the relation of man to his Maker. They are the proclamation of the essential equality of man before God, and show the loftiest superiority to innate human prejudice or narrowness. Christ speaks, not as a Jew, but as the Son of Man; the representative of the whole race. The bitter controversy between race and race is only touched, in passing, with a divine mildness. Rising high, not only above His own age, but even above the prejudices of all ages since, He gives mankind their charter of spiritual liberty for evermore. Jerusalem and Gerizim are only local and subordinate considerations. The worth of man's homage to God does not depend on the place where it is paid. The true worship has its temple in the inmost soul, in the spirit and heart. It is the life of the soul; it is communion with God; the reverend

⁷⁰ Ant. xii. 5. 5.

⁷¹ Ant. xii. 5. 5.

espousal of our nature to truth. It is spiritual and moral, not outward and ritual, springing from the great truth, rightly apprehended, which Jesus had first uttered, that God is a Spirit. The revelation of this, in the wide application now given it, was the foundation of the New Religion of all Humanity. The isolation and exclusiveness of former creeds were swept away by it for ever. Religion was henceforth no tribal privilege jealously kept within the narrow bounds of mere nationality. The universal presence of a spiritual God made the whole world alike His shrine. The veil of the Temple was first rent at Jacob's Well, and He Who, till then, had, as men thought, dwelt only in the narrow limits of the chamber it shrouded, went forth thence, from that hour, to consecrate all the earth as one great Holy of Holies. Samaritans, Heathen, Jews, were, henceforth, proclaimed children of a common heavenly Father, and Jesus, when He, presently, claimed to be the Messiah, announced Himself as the SAVIOUR of the WORLD.⁷²

⁷² Schenkel, 175.

Perplexed to understand words so lofty, the simple-minded woman was fain to put off any attempt to solve them, till He came, for whom, in common with the Jews, she waited. She felt hardly convinced, and wished to leave the question about Gerizim and Jerusalem till the Great Prophet appeared. "I know that Messiah comes, who is called Christ; when He shall come, He will tell us all things." Even the Samaritans had their hopes of a great deliverer, expecting Him to restore the kingdom of Israel, and renew the worship at Mount Gerizim, but they thought of him only as acting by human agencies for inferior ends.*

Jesus was far from recognizing her as right in all she meant by such an answer, but she had shown a modest and docile spirit, such as He always loved. She had acknowledged Him as a prophet, had listened eagerly to His words, and shown how she hoped that the Messiah, when He came, would set the long controversy to rest. Her honest wish to know the truth; her interest in the standing of her people to God and the Law, and her anxious yearning for the coming of the Messiah, revealed a frame of mind fitted to receive further light. "You need not wait," said He, "I

CHAP. XXXI. that speak unto thee am HE." The first great revelation of the Saviour was to humble shepherds. The first direct disclosure of Himself as the Messiah was to an humble Samaritan woman ! ⁷³

⁷³ Schielermacher, Predigten, 1. 399.

Meanwhile, the disciples had returned from the city, and wondered to find him talking with a woman. The relations of the sexes, even in common life, were very narrow and suspicious among the Jews. That a woman should allow herself to be seen unveiled was held immodest, and for any woman to let herself be heard singing a song was almost unchaste. In Judea a bridegroom might be alone with his bride, for the first time, an hour before marriage, but in Galilee even this was thought unbecoming. Trades which brought the two sexes in any measure into contact were regarded with suspicion, and no unmarried person of either sex could be a teacher, lest the parents of the children might visit the school. ⁷⁴ ^s In Rabbis especially, even to speak with a woman in public was held indecorous in the highest degree. "No one" (that is, no Rabbi), says the Talmud, "is to speak with a woman, even if she be his wife, in the public street." ⁷⁵ It was forbidden to greet a woman, or take any notice of her. ⁷⁶ "Six things," we are told, "are to be shunned by a Rabbi. He must not be seen in the street dripping with oil (which would imply vanity) : he must not go out at night alone : he is not to wear patched shoes (which in certain cases would be carrying a burden, when it was unlawful to do so) : he must not speak with a woman in a public place : he must shun all intercourse with common people (for, not knowing the Law, they might be 'unclean') : he must not take long steps (for that would show that he was not sunk in the study of the Law) : and he must not walk erect (for that would betray pride.)" ⁷⁷ Though higher in position and respect among the Jews than in other Eastern nations, woman, at the time of Christ, was treated as wholly inferior to man. "Let the words of the Law be burned," says Rabbi Eleazer, "rather than committed to women." ⁷⁸ "He who instructs his daughter in the Law," says the Talmud, "instructs her in folly." ⁷⁹ But He who came to raise mankind to spiritual freedom and moral purity, included woman, as well

⁷⁴ Delitzsch's Handwerkerleben, &c., 40.

⁷⁵ Joma, 66.

⁷⁶ Kidushim, lxx. 1.

⁷⁷ Derachoth, xliii. 2. Nork, 171. Lightfoot, iii. 286, 287.

⁷⁸ Lightfoot, iii. 287.

⁷⁹ Delitzsch's Handwerkerleben, 40.

as man, in His grand philanthropy, and treated with silent contempt the prudery by which it was sought to humble the one sex to exalt the other. He was a teacher not for an age, but for all time, and woman owes her elevation to social equality with man to the lofty respect shown her by Jesus of Nazareth. To have the courage of one's opinions is rare, and it is rarer still to retain, with it, a modest humility, and simple worship of truth. With most of us it is, rather, supercilious contempt of inferior judgments than lowly homage to conviction. In Jesus alone is it found as an instinctive and never-failing characteristic, with no blemish or qualification of attendant weakness. He acts, at all times, as before God alone, and as if unconscious of the presence or opinions of man.

Strange as the incident must have seemed to the disciples, the awe and reverence which Jesus had already excited in their minds checked any expression of surprise. Meanwhile the woman, leaving her pitcher, hurried off to the city, to make known the presence of the wonderful stranger, and urge as many as she could, to go to Him, and see if He were not the expected Messiah. In her absence, the disciples, once and again⁸⁰ invited Jesus to take some⁸⁰ refreshment.⁸¹ But His soul was too full of other thoughts, which drove away all sense of hunger. "I have food to eat," said He, "that ye know not of,"—words, which to their dull material range of mind, seemed only to refer to food brought in their absence. "My meat," said He, seeing their misconception, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Then, lifting His eyes, and looking up the stretching valley, or round the wide sweep of the plain, in both of which, doubtless, the busy peasants were scattering the seed for the harvest, then four months distant, He caught sight of a multitude coming, under the guidance of the woman, to hear His words. Fired at the sight, He went on,—"You say, 'After four months will come the harvest.' But I say, look yonder at the throng coming towards us. *They* are the noblest harvest, and their coming shows that you have not to wait to reap *it*, as they have to reap the seed now sowing, for their souls, like autumn fields, are already white

⁸¹ They address Him as Rabbi. In the English version it is translated Master.

CHAP. XXXI. for the sickle. And how rich the reward for you, my disciples, who will be the reapers! You will gather fruit, not like the harvest of earth, but fruit unto life eternal. You and I, the Sower and the reapers, may well rejoice together in the parts assigned us by God. Think of the final harvest home, when Heaven, the great garner, shall have the last sheaf carried thither! The sower and the reaper are indeed distinct, as the proverb has it, speaking of common life. I have prepared and sown the field; you shall, hereafter, do the labour that is needed as it grows, and reap the sheaves as they ripen. Your work will be real of its kind, but to break up the soil, and cast in the seed, is harder than to watch the rising green. I send you to enter on the fruit of my toil."

Judea had yielded no harvest, but the despised people of Shechem were better spiritual soil. There was no idle thronging around, as in Judea, in hopes of seeing miracles: none were asked, and none were wrought. The simpler and healthier natures, with which He here came in contact, were satisfied in many cases, by the words of the woman alone. Gathering to hear, His words deepened the convictions of those impressed already, and roused the hearts of others. At their request, two days were spent in teaching. To have stayed longer might, perhaps, have compromised the future, by raising Jewish prejudice. Meanwhile, the work, thus auspiciously begun, could not fail to spread. "We believe," said the new converts, after the two days' intercourse with Jesus, "not because of the woman's saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is, indeed, the Saviour of the world."⁸² Jews might have acknowledged Him as the Messiah, but only Samaritans, with their far more generous conceptions of the Messianic Kingdom, could have thought of Him as the Saviour of mankind.

⁸² The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. omit "the Christ."

Thus, naturally, from the most indifferent trifle of daily life, had come the disclosure of the highest truths, as a legacy to all ages. The well of Jacob had become the seat of the Great Teacher, before whose words, then spoken to an humble woman of Samaria, the most embittered enmities of nations and religions will, one day, pass away.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OPENING OF THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE.

A NATURE like that of Jesus, as sensitive as strong, ^{CHAP. XXXII.} must have felt the pleasure which only first successes can give, at His hearty reception by the Samaritans. Rejected in Judea, he had found willing hearers in the despised people of Shechem. A nucleus of His kingdom had been formed, and it must, by its nature, spread from heart to heart. Intensely human in His sensibility, He now enjoyed the happiness He had called forth in others, as, before, He had been depressed by its absence. He neither expected nor desired noisy popularity, for He knew that His Kingdom could grow only by the secret conviction of soul after soul.

Yet, in one sense, it was already complete in each new disciple, for each heart that received Him was a spot in which it was fully set up—its laws accepted, and the will and affections entirely His. To each new adherent He was more than king, for He reigned over their whole nature, with a majesty such as no other king could command. The highest bliss of each was to have no thought or wish apart from His, for in the measure of likeness to Him, lay their spiritual purity, peace, and joy. They felt that to become His disciples, was to anticipate the brightest hopes of the eternal world, for it was to have their bosoms filled with the light and love of God. Earth never saw such a king, or such a kingdom.

But He could not stay in Samaria. His work lay in Israel. No other people were so fitted for it, by the training of two thousand years, by cherished hopes, and by the possession of the oracles of God, the one grand treasure of eternal

CHAP. XXXII. truth in the hands of man. They, alone, of all mankind realized the idea of a true kingdom of God; they, alone, were a-glow for its advent. Misconceptions removed, they were fitted above all other races, to be the apostles of the new religion, which, in reality, was only the completing and perfecting of the old.¹

¹ Bauraptly calls Christianity "Spiritualized Judaism." Gesch. d. Christlichen Kirche, i. 16.

² Samaria is 1,551 feet above the Mediterranean.

After a stay of two days, therefore, at Shechem, or near it, Jesus went on northwards, towards Galilee. The road passes through Shechem, to Samaria, which lies on its hill,² at three hours' distance, on the north-west. It was then in its glory, as Herod had left it; no longer the old Samaria, but the splendid Sebaste, named thus in compliment to Augustus.³ Its grand public buildings, its magnificent temple, dedicated in blasphemous flattery of Augustus, its colonnades, triumphal arches, baths, and theatres, and its famous wall, twenty stadia in circuit,^b with its elaborate gates,³ enclosing the whole—were before Him as He passed on. At Engannim—the Fountain of Gardens—on the southern slope of the great plain of Esdraelon, He crossed the Samaritan border, and was once more in Galilee.

³ Ant. xv. 8. 5.

Avoiding Nazareth, with a wise instinct that a prophet had no honour in His own country,⁴ He continued His journey to Cana, across the green pastures and corn-fields of the plain of Battauf. He had, indeed, felt, before leaving Samaria, that a district where He had been familiarly known in His earlier life would be less disposed to receive Him than others in which He was a stranger, but this could only apply to the immediate bounds of Nazareth or Capernaum. On the other hand, the news of His popularity in Judea, and of His miracles and discourses in Jerusalem, had been carried back to Galilee, by pilgrims who had returned from the feast,⁵ and had, doubtless, secured Him a much better reception in the province at large than, as Himself a Galilæan, He would otherwise have found. But even had He felt that He would be rejected in Galilee as He had been in Judea, His homage to duty, and grand self-sacrifice to its demands, would have so much the more impelled Him to carry His great message thither. Personal feelings had no place in His soul. It would have been only one more, added

⁴ John 4. 44.

⁵ John 4. 45.

to His life-long conflicts with human perversity and evil, to brave foreboded indifference and neglect, and offer even to those who slighted Him the proofs of His divine dignity and worth. The prophet had foretold that the Great Light of the Kingdom of God would shine in Galilee of the Gentiles,⁶ and amidst whatever humiliation and pain of heart in anticipated rejection, He, its King, would have gone thither to proclaim it, and honour the divine prediction.^c

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^a Matt. 4. 15.
Isaiah 42. 7.

The first return of Jesus to Galilee, from the Jordan, had been marked by the miracle at the wedding feast at Cana, as if to rouse the general mind, and now, His second return was proclaimed in the same way.⁷ He, perhaps, had gone to live for a time with the friends for whom He had turned the water into wine, or, it may be, He was a guest of Nathanael, as, in Capernaum, of Peter. His reception, as He passed on His way to Cana, had been cheering in the extreme, for the reports from the south had raised Him to an undefined greatness in the popular eyes. They had learned to be proud of Him as their countryman, when they found Him so famous elsewhere. That crowds had followed Him in Judea, secured him favour, so far, among the multitude in the north.⁸ His return had risen to the dignity of a public event, and passed from lip to lip through the whole district.

^r John 4. 54.^s John 4. 45.

It had thus speedily become known in Capernaum that He was once more in Cana, after His nine or ten months' absence from Galilee. His miraculous power over sickness and physical evil, as shown in Jerusalem,^d had become a subject of universal report, finding its way even into the gilded seclusion of mansions and palaces. Among others, a high officer of the court of Herod Antipas, whose mansion was in Capernaum, had heard of the wonderful Teacher. We know how the miracles of Christ reached the ears of Antipas himself;⁹ that Manaen,^e his foster-brother, actually became an humble follower of Jesus,¹⁰ and that Johanna, the wife of Choudza, the house steward or manager of the private affairs¹¹ of Antipas, was one of many¹² devoted female disciples and friends, of the richer classes,—and can, thus, easily fancy how such a dignified official had learned

⁹ Matt. 14. 1.¹⁰ Acts 13. 1.¹¹ ἐπιτρόπος
(epitropos).
See Matt. 20. 8.¹² Luke 8. 3.

CHAP. XXXII. respecting the new wonder-working Rabbi.^f The close heat of the borders of the Lake of Galilee, with their fringe of reeds and marsh, though then tempered by the shade of countless orchards, and wooded clumps, now wholly wanting, has in all ages induced a prevalencè of fever, at certain seasons, and the malady had now seized his only son,¹³ who was still a child.¹⁴ He had been led to look on Jesus as a wonderful Healer, by the cures reported to have been wrought by Him, but he had not, apparently, thought of Him as more. Hearing of His arrival at Cana, the hope that He might save his son, instantly determined him to go thither and ask His aid. The child, he said, was at the point of death, would Jesus come down ^g and heal him?

¹³ The article before υιος (son) shows this.

¹⁴ Verse 49.

There was something in the poor man's bearing, however, that showed the superficial conception he had formed of Christ's character and work. Miracles, with Jesus, were only means to a higher end, credentials to enforce the reception of spiritual truth. That truth was its own witness, and had sufficed to win a ready homage from the despised people of Sychar. To be the Healer of souls, not of the body, was His great mission, but the nobleman had, as yet, no idea of Him except as a Hakim or Ropha,^h who had proved His power to overcome disease. He had been led to Him not by the report and acceptance of the great truths He taught: only the rumour of His miracles had created interest enough to pass through the land. That he was utterly unconscious of the spiritual death from which he himself needed to be rescued, touched the sympathy of Jesus. "How is it," asked He, in effect, "that you come to me only for outward healing, and believe on me only as a worker of signs and wonders? Have you no sense of sin: no craving for spiritual healing: no inner sympathy with the teaching of my life and words?" Without moral preparation in his own mind, the healing of his son might confirm belief in the power of the Healer; but would bring no spiritual reception of the truth, to heal the soul. Apparently repelling him for the moment, Jesus was, in fact, opening his eyes to the far greater blessings he might freely obtain. With royal bounty He wished to give the greater while He gave the less, for it

was His wont, after needed reproof, to give more than had been asked. Meanwhile, the only thought of the parent's heart was his dying boy. "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus knew that he would believe if his son were healed, but wished to raise a higher moral frame, which would do so from kindled sympathy with spiritual truth without such an outward ground. To believe His word, from its own internal evidence, showed higher faith than that which only followed miracles. It showed a recognition of the truth from interest in it: a sensibility of soul to what was pure and holy. But belief as the result of miracles was not discountenanced: it was only held inferior.

The nobleman had assumed that Jesus would go back with him to Capernaum, and heal the child, but he was before One to whose power distance offered no hindrance. With the easy, unaffected dignity of conscious superiority, he is told to "go his way; his son lived:" words few and simple, but enough to let him know that the Speaker had, on the instant, healed the child. Nor could he doubt it. To have spoken with Jesus assured him that he might believe His word. Forthwith he addressed himself to return.

It was about twenty miles from Cana to Capernaum, and the miracle had been wrought an hour after noon.¹⁵ Resting by the way, at early nightfall, as he well might on a road so insecure, he set out again next morning, but ere long met some of his own slaves, sent to tell him the good news that the boy was convalescent, and to prevent his bringing Jesus any further. "Your son," said they, "is not dead, but is getting better. The fever has left him." "When," asked the father, "did he begin to amend?" "Yesterday, about one o'clock the fever broke." It was the very time when Jesus had told him that the boy would live. What could he do but accept Him as what he now knew He claimed to be—the Messiah. "Himself believed and his whole house."

How long Jesus remained in Cana is not known, but that He was for a time unattended by the small band of disciples who had accompanied Him to the Passover, is certain. They had remained with Him, in Judea, and had returned

CHAP. XXXII. with Him, through Sychar, to Galilee, but, after so long an absence from home, He had let them go back to the Lake of Galilee, to their occupations, till He should once more call them finally to His service.

He had retired to the north before the rising signs of opposition from the Pharisees,¹⁶ who had at last found means to get John imprisoned,¹⁷ by their intrigues with Antipas, and might, at any moment, have effected His own arrest. An interval of some months now elapsed,¹⁸ perhaps in stillness and privacy, the time not having yet come, for some reasons unknown to us, for His final and permanent entrance on His public work. His mother and the family had returned to Nazareth¹⁹ from their short stay at Capernaum, and, it is most probable, therefore, that He, once more, sought the seclusion of His early home, to await the decisive moment of His reappearance. The fate of the Baptist may have made it necessary to avoid for a time giving any pretext of political alarm to Herod by His at once taking John's place. That one so venerated had been thrown into the dungeons of Machaerus doubtless spread to the farthest valleys. Men almost hoped that the mighty preacher would soften the heart even of Antipas, and, in any case, could not credit that a man so cowardly and politic would dare to take the life of the honoured prophet.²⁰ This and that measure of the tyrant were attributed by the credulous multitude to John's influence.²¹ The whole country was agitated, day by day, by rumours respecting him.

Nor were other subjects of popular excitement wanting. In the autumn of that, or the year before, apparently at the Feast of Tabernacles, there had been a fierce struggle between the Roman garrison at Jerusalemⁱ and the pilgrims from Galilee, ever excitable and ready to fight. In the heat of the contest the soldiers from Antonia had pressed into the very courts of the Temple, and had hewn down the Galilæans at the great altar, beside their sacrifices, mingling their blood with that of the slain beasts.²² The sons of Judas the Galilæan, the famous leader of the zealots in their first great insurrection against Rome,²³ had, moreover, grown

¹⁶ John 4. 1.

¹⁷ Matt. 4. 12.
Mark 1. 14.

The word is
παράδοθηαι
—the delivering
up of John.

¹⁸ Lichtenstein
thinks it was
nine months.
Jesus
Christus.
Herzog, vi.
569.

¹⁹ Mark 6. 3.

²⁰ Matt. 14. 5. 9.

²¹ Mark 6. 20.

²² Luke 13. 1.

²³ Ant. xvii. 5. 2;
xx. 5. 2.

up to manhood in the neighbourhood of Jesus, and cherished in their own breasts, and kept alive among the people, their father's fierce scheme for the erection of the kingdom of God by the sword, a fatal inheritance for which they were one day, like Christ, to be crucified. The whole land heaved with religious fanaticism like an ever-threatening volcano. Above all the tumult of such a state of things, however, the imprisoned prophet was the one thought of the country. Laments over him, mingled, doubtless, with fierce mutterings, filled every market-place and every home. It was a sign of the glowing religious sensibility of the times, and a summons to Jesus to take up the great work thus interrupted. The tyrant in Perea had silenced the voice that had proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God, but He, whose herald John had been, was at hand to take it up again, with grander emphasis, on a more commanding theatre. Isaiah, the son of Amoz, had once seen a vision of Jehovah in the Temple,²⁴ and had recognized his summons²⁵ as a prophet, when, amidst the chants of the Levites and the clouds of incense, and the blasts of the sacred trumpets, the house was filled with smoke, and the very earth seemed to tremble. The Spirit came on Amos, the shepherd, as he followed his flocks on the lonely pastures, when he thought how the Syrians had threshed Gilead with iron sledges, and how Tyre had sold the sons of Israel to Edom as slaves; and he seemed to hear Jehovah call to him from Zion, and thunder from Jerusalem, and forsook his hills, to be a shepherd to Israel.²⁶ The loud universal lamentations over John were such a final divine call to Jesus.²⁶

Finally leaving His early home, therefore, He bent His steps once more towards Capernaum, which was, henceforth, to become "His own city," and the centre of his future work. The prophet had, ages before, painted the joyous times that should efface the memory of the Assyrian invasion,²⁷ and in the appearance of Christ in these regions, their full realization had now come. The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali; the country towards the Sea of Galilee; the districts beyond the Jordan; and Galilee of the Gentiles, in the far north, towards Tyre and Syria—the people that

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²⁴ Isaiah 6. 1.²⁵ Amos 1. 2;
7. 14.²⁶ Haezerath, l.
341.²⁷ B.C. 740.

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²⁸ Isaiah 8. 23;
9. 1.

sat in darkness,—saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, a light sprang up.^{28k} Galilee was to be pre-eminently the scene of the ministry of Jesus, and it is curious that even the Rabbis, in their earliest traditions, express the belief that it would be that of the manifestation of the Messiah. To this day, Jews gather in Tiberias, one of their four holy cities, from all parts of the earth, to wait for the coming of the Messiah, or, at least, to be buried there, in expectation of His advent.¹

²⁹ Matt. 4. 17.
Mark 1. 14.

It would seem as if Jesus had, for a time, been alone. The country was densely peopled, and He may have passed on, slowly, from village to village, opening His mission. The burden of his preaching was the same as that of John's. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent and believe in the Gospel."²⁹ But though alike in form, the import of the words in the mouth of Jesus was very different from that of their earlier utterance by His herald. John had striven to reform Israel by demanding strict outward observances, as well as morals, but Jesus went deeper, and required a revolution of the will and affections, flowing from changed relations to God. He would have no new pieces on old garments ; no new wine in old bottles, no religious reform on the basis of a compromise with formal Judaism. Israel had sunk into spiritual death, in spite of its zeal for the precepts of the Rabbis, and the letter of the Scriptures : its piety had degenerated largely into hypocritical affectation, and merely lip and outward assent to the requirements of God's law. Its mission to the great heathen world had become a failure. A wholly new principle was needed to take the place of the now decayed and obsolete dispensation of Moses : the principle of direct personal responsibility to God, and spiritual freedom, instead of priestly mediation, and theocratic slavery. The Baptist was, throughout, an upholder of the ceremonial law, and had no adequate conception of a purely spiritual religion.³⁰ It was reserved to Jesus to teach that only a religious and moral new-birth of Israel and of humanity could avail. He was the first who founded a religion, not on external precepts, or on a priesthood, or on sacrificial

³⁰ Hagenbach,
i. 37.

rites, but in the living spirit; in individual personal conviction; in the free, loving surrender of the will to God, as the eternal Truth and Good: a religion which looked first, not at mere acts, but at what men were, and set no value on acts apart from the motive from which they sprang.³¹

³¹ Schenkel, in
Bibel Lex.
III. 274.

Hence, the call to repentance was addressed to all without exception. He recognized the difference between man and man, and acknowledged the existence of possible good even in the apparently hopeless. He spoke of the good and evil, the righteous and unrighteous, the just and unjust, those who had gone astray and those who had not; of the sound and the sick; of the pure and the impure; of green trees and dry; of a good and an evil eye, and of good soil and bad. Surveying men, as a whole, with a calm and searching insight, He rejoiced in the light which shone in some souls, in the midst of darkness around and within them, and acknowledged its worth. No cold fear of compromise damped His ardour; frank joy and radiant hopefulness, that detected good with instinctive quickness, cheered His spirit to greater effort. It is, indeed, His glory that He led not only the humble and penitent, but the openly evil, to a higher and purer life.

Yet, though thus wide in His charity, He had a standard by which all men alike were pronounced sinful, and in need of repentance. In the highest sense, God alone was good. Tried by this awful test of comparison with Him, all men were "unclean," "corrupt," "dark," "blind," "lustful," "selfish," worldly in thought, word, and act, dry trees, dead and lost.³² All are pronounced in danger of the wrath of God. They may be more or less sinful in degree; but all alike must seek forgiveness; all must repent and be changed, or perish.

³² Matt. 9, 2, 13;
26, 43; 7, 11;
6, 22; 12, 39;
15, 20; 16, 6;
17, 17; 6, 23;
15, 14; 23, 16;
5, 28; 16, 23;
7, 17; 12, 39;
8, 22; 10, 6.

Thus, when comparing men with men, He recognized better and worse, but before God, and in relation to citizenship in His kingdom, He acknowledged no difference, but condemned all alike as sinners. Before the One who alone is pure and holy, He humbles all. He will suffer no empty pride in the presence of the Creator. In His sight no one is to be called good. All are guilty, and even the best

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³³ Mark 2. 17.
Kehm II. 80.

need pardon. In this view of man He declared that He had not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.³³ Even the best of men, though righteous before their fellows, are guilty before God. It is the unique characteristic of the teaching of Jesus, that while He distinctly proclaims the moral differences between man and man, He insists with supreme and unchangeable earnestness on the infinite moral distance and contrast between the creature and the Creator. All before Him are evil, or have evil in them. There may be good among the bad, but sin is not wanting even in the best. The repentance He preached was the child-like humility which has no claim to merit, but, conscious of its own weakness, resigns its will to the guidance of God, and seeks His forgiveness. It has already entered His kingdom.

³⁴ Luke 5. 1.

Nothing is told respecting the extent of this first northern missionary tour, beyond the incidental remark that it embraced the towns and villages thickly studded round the western shore of the Lake of Galilee.^m The fame of His doings at Jerusalem had everywhere preceded Him, and attracted large crowds wherever He came.³⁴ As yet He was alone, for His early followers had returned to their calling of fishermen, at Bethsaida and Capernaum. Reaching this neighbourhood after a time, an incident occurred which once more drew them from their nets, and transformed them into future apostles.

³⁵ Luke 5. 1—11.
Matt. 4. 18—22.
Mark 1.
16—20.

Jesus had risen early in the morning,³⁵ as is the custom with Orientals, and had gone out to the shore of the Lake, which was close at hand. The stillness of the morning promised temporary relief from the crowds who daily thronged Him, and a much needed interval for peaceful solitude. But there was, henceforth, no rest for the Son of Man. The people were already afoot, and had hurried out to the beach, in numbers, "to hear the Word of God," for they recognized Him as speaking with divine authority, like John, or one of the prophets. Unable to go on, and willing to feed these "sheep of the House of Israel," He turned towards two boats drawn up on the white beach; the fishermen having come ashore, after a fruitless night's labour, to wash and mend their nets. The one boat was that of His old

disciples Peter and Andrew, the other, that of James and John, who, with their father Zebedee, and some hired men, were busy preparing for the next evening's venture. To meet again must have been as pleasant to their Master as themselves, and their lowly occupation must have lost its charm at the recollection of the time when they had shared His society. Entering into Peter's boat, and asking him to thrust out a little from the land, that He might have freedom to address the people, He sat down, as was usual with the Rabbis when they taught, and spoke to the crowd standing on the shore. The clear rippling water playing gently round the boat; the fields, and vineyards, and olive groves behind; the eager listeners, with their varied and picturesque Eastern dress; the wondrous Preacher; the calmness and delicious coolness of morning, and, over all, the cloudless Syrian sky, must have made the scene striking in the extreme.

The public addresses of the Rabbis were always very short, and so, doubtless, were those of Jesus. The people were soon dismissed, and wandered off, to discuss, as Jewish congregations always did, the sayings they had heard. But Jesus had received a service in the use of His strange pulpit, and wished to repay it, as only He could. Telling Peter, the steersman of the boat, to push off into the deep water, He bade him and his brother let down the net. It was a circular one,³⁶ cast from the boat, and then dragged slowly behind, towards the shore. The fish in the Sea of Galilee must always have been very abundant, even when the fisheries were so active, for, at this day, their number can scarcely be conceived by those who have not been on the spot. The shoals frequently cover an acre of the surface, or even more, and the fish, as they slowly move along the surface, with their back fins just seen on the level of the water, are so crowded, that it looks, a short way off, like a heavy shower of rain.³⁷ But Simon and his brother had had no success, though they had spent the night, when fishing is best, in fruitless efforts. There was no hesitation, however, in obeying the command, and they had hardly done so, when they swept into a shoal, and had to beckon to James and John,

³⁶ ἀμφιβληστρον,
Matt. 4. 18.

³⁷ Tristram's Nat. Hist. of the Bible, 285. For the whole scene, see The Land and the Book, 356.

CHAP. XXXII. their partners, to come quickly, and save their net from breaking with the catch. Even then, however, the two boats were loaded to the water's edge, and seemed as if they would sink.

Peter, ever impulsive, could not restrain his feelings at such an incident—so unexpected, so grateful. He who had wrought so great a wonder must have unknown and inconceivable powers, before which man, guilty as he feels himself, might well be afraid. Falling down at the feet of Jesus, he could only utter the words—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Nor were his companions less astonished at the miracle. But Jesus had a high purpose with these simple, open-hearted friends. They had shown their sympathy of spirit with Him already, and now He designed to attach them permanently to His service. "Fear not," said He, "come after me; from henceforth I will make you fishers of men. You catch the fish to their death; you will take men alive,³⁸ to save them from death, and give them eternal life." It was enough. Words so apt had their effect. From that moment the four were His devoted followers.ⁿ The rich gain they would have prized so highly, but an hour before, had lost its charm. Called to decide, there and then, as a proof of their fitness for discipleship, they forsook all, and followed Him at once.^o

³⁸ ζῳοποιεῖν,
to take alive.

The few who had first joined Christ, and by doing so had shown their fitness for His special intimacy and confidence, were thus, once more gathered round Him, and lived with Him henceforth, apparently in the same dwelling, on a closer and more tender footing than any He afterwards received. They had often heard Him speak of the kingdom of God; of the need of faith in Himself and of a sincere religious spirit, as the conditions of entering it, and they yearned for closer intercourse with Him, that they might learn more respecting it. Their instant obedience showed their devotion. All that had hitherto engaged their thoughts and care, their boats, their nets, their fishing gear, their daily toil for daily bread, were left behind. They placed themselves, henceforth, under the higher authority of God Himself; ready at any time to separate themselves even

from their families, in the interest of the new Kingdom. CHAP. XXXII.
 Jesus had drawn them to Himself, as they were to draw others, not by craft or force, but by the power of His living words and the spirit of love. Their loyalty was free and spontaneous. The calm greatness of the character of Jesus shines out in such an unpretending beginning, as the germ and centre of a movement which is to revolutionize the world. But insignificant as it might seem, it was only so when judged by a human standard. Tainted by no selfishness, weak ambition, or love of power, the four simple, child-like, uncorrupted natures, touched with the love of Heavenly Truth, and eager to win others to embrace it, were living spiritual forces, destined by a law of nature to repeat themselves in ever wider circles, through successive generations.

The fishermen and sailors of the Lake of Galilee were a numerous and redoubted class, with something of the feeling of a clan. In the last Jewish war we find them, under the leadership of Jesus, son of Sapphias, seizing Tiberias, and burning and plundering the great palace of Antipas.³⁹ Of 39 Jos. Vita, 17.
 the four who had now definitely cast in their lot with Jesus, Peter and Andrew were apparently poor; James and John, in a better position. For the convenience of trade, both families had left the neighbouring town of Bethsaida, and had settled in Capernaum, one of the centres of the local fisheries, and of the occupations connected with them. Peter alone seems to have been married, and in his house Jesus henceforth found a home, as perhaps he had done on His former short stay.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

NOTES TO VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

* In the Talmud, God is often called "Our Father in Heaven," as Mr. Deutch points out (*Lit. Remains*, 1874, p. 148), but it is as the Father of the Jew, not of mankind.

b "The Greeks and Romans, before the time of Christianity, had no idea, or even the faintest vestige of an idea, of what in the Scriptural system is called *Sin*; and the idea was utterly and exquisitely inappreciable by Pagan Greece and Rome."—*De Quincey, Works*, ix. 240.

c Döllinger, ii. 126. Leland, *Advantages of Rev.* ii. 170—175 (ed. 1764), quotes many passages of a similar import from Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Antoninus, and others. —*Gieseler's Kirchengeschichte*, i. 28. *Neander's Ch. Hist.* i. 22.

CHAPTER II.

a The plain of Philistia is thirty-two miles long, from Ekron to Gaza, with a breadth of from nine to sixteen miles, and a height above the sea of from 50 to 300 feet.—*Capt. Warren, R.E.*, in *Quarterly Statement of Palest. Expl. Fund*, April, 1871. 82.

b In the hill country (behind the plain of Philistia), the spurs, not more than one mile or so apart, are often separated by narrow ravines 1,500 to 2,000 feet deep, at the bottom of which, in the rainy season, rapid torrents roll.—*Capt. Warren, R.E.*

c In the spring they glow with what is peculiar in Palestine, a profusion of wild flowers—daisies, the white flower called the Star of Bethlehem, but, especially, with a blaze of scarlet flowers of all kinds, chiefly anemones, wild tulips, and poppies.—*Sinai and Palestine*, 136.

d So lately as 1871, not more than one-fifth or one-sixth of the plain was under cultivation. The Turkish government having, however, taken steps to protect the fellahiu from the Arabs, nearly the whole plain, though rudely cultivated, was covered with splendid crops in June, 1872.—*Tyrrhitt Drake*, in *Pal. Expl. Fund Rep.* Oct., 1872. 181.

e מְרִיבָהּ from מְרַבֵּהּ to be depressed. "The low country," as opposed to the "hill-country."

f מְרִיבָהּ from מְרַבֵּהּ to go down—to descend.

CHAPTER III.

a Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Ægean sea.

b Ovid was banished to Tomi, at the mouths of the Danube, on the Black Sea. He only received an order to leave Rome in so many days, and transport himself to his place of banishment. Guards and jailors were unnecessary.

c *Cic. de Invent.* i. 29:—"In eo autem quod in opinione positum est, huiusmodi sunt probabilia—eos, qui philosophiæ dent operam, non arbitrari deos esse." Thus, on Cicero's evidence, those who gave themselves to philosophy disbelieved in the existence of the gods.

d Politicians and philosophers regarded the popular religion as deserving support from motives of policy, but only on such grounds. "Retinetur autem et ad opinionem vulgi, et ad magnas utilitates reipublicæ, mos, religio, disciplina, jus augurum, collegii auctoritas."—*Cic. de Leg.* ii. 7.

* The Edomites had been conquered and forced to submit to circumcision by John Hyrcanus, B.C. 135—106. Antipater was the son of a powerful "governor" of Idumea, who had amassed great wealth under Alexandra, by leagues with the Arab princes and with the people of Gaza and Askelon, whose trade passed through his territory.

† The chronology of this disastrous period is briefly as follows:—

B.C. 69—64. Disputes between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus respecting the throne.

64. The Roman commander in Syria, Scaurus, being appealed to, gives the throne to Aristobulus.

63. Pompey annuls the act of Scaurus, and gives the kingdom to Hyrcanus. Aristobulus is carried off as prisoner to Rome. Hyrcanus becomes priest and prince (*nasi*), but not king (*rex*).

57. Alexander, son of Aristobulus, having returned from imprisonment in Rome, raises a momentarily successful insurrection, to obtain the crown. The country is divided into five political districts by Gabinus, Governor-General of "Syria" from B.C. 57 to B.C. 55.

54. Crassus plunders the Temple.

48. Caesar grants the Jews many privileges after the battle of Pharsalia.

47. Aristobulus having been poisoned at Rome (B.C. 49) by the party of Pompey, just as Caesar was about to send him to Syria with two legions, and his son Alexander having been beheaded at Antioch, by Pompey's orders, Hyrcanus is, therefore, recognized by Caesar.

44. Antipater, father of Herod, poisoned by Malchus, a Jew, who wished to supplant him, and free Hyrcanus from his domination. Herod marries Mariamne, daughter of Hyrcanus, and he and his brother Phasaël are made tetrarchs under Hyrcanus.

40—37. The Parthians invade Judea, in alliance with Antigonus, son of the murdered Aristobulus, and make him king. Hyrcanus is taken prisoner, and sent into Asia by the Parthians.

40. On this the Senate, at the instigation of Antony, name Herod as king.

37. Herod, aided by Antony, expels the Parthians, storms Jerusalem, and begins his actual reign.

* A small kingdom in Lebanon.

† John Hyrcanus (B.C. 135—106) had destroyed Samaria, thrown down its temple, and turned a stream through the site of the city.

CHAPTER IV.

* He wrote a "History of the World" in 144 vols., which seems to have closed with the Life of Augustus, and was, doubtless, the source of much of the information Josephus gives of Herod's reign. He had also a drama on the "History of Susannah," which seems to have been acted in the theatre at Jerusalem, and composed geographical books, and a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

† The visit of the Magi must have happened about this time. No wonder Herod was alarmed at reports about a new king of the Jews, since he heard them from so many quarters.

‡ As a Jew or half-Jew Herod could not, of course, touch swine.

CHAPTER V.

* Winer, Ewald, and Diet. of G. and R. Biog. and Myth. Bosanquet gives B.C. 513 as the date.—*Trans. Soc. Bib. Archaeol.* ii. 177. Pisistratus was then tyrant of Athens, B.C. 560—527 (*Benseler, and Diet. of G. and R. Biog. and Myth.*), and Servius Tullius was closing his reign in Rome, to be succeeded in B.C. 534 by Tarquinius Superbus (the Haughty).

† Zerubbabel was of the Jewish royal race, and seems to have been early recalled, from jealousy, to Persia. Judea was, henceforth, for a long time, under Persian pashas, such as Nehemiah.

‡ See John vii. 49, where the very proverb occurs. "This rabble," say the Pharisees, "who do not know the law, are accursed" (of God).

§ Simon the Just, who was high priest B.C. 224, may be regarded as one of the last of them. The Great Synagogue had thus survived for about 250 years, i.e., from Ezra's days, B.C. 458.—*Derenbourg, Essai*, 46.

* The name *Pharisee*, is from the verb פָּרַשׁ to divide, and means "one separated," "standing by one's self."—*Fürst, Gesenius*. "Rabbinī פָּרָשִׁי dixerint Phariseos, quod ab aliis vitæ sanctimonia et munditiæ sejuncti essent." The Rabbis gave the Pharisees their name because they were separated from others by the holiness and (ceremonial) purity of their life.—*Pagnini Lex Heb.* 2256. *Sadducee* is probably derived from the name of the founder of the party. So Geiger (*Urschrift*, 24). *Derebourg (Essai, 453)*, on the contrary, thinks both names were originally given in mocking insult.

† The wife of his brother, Pheroras, her mother and sister, and Doris, Herod's first wife.

‡ The Jews used the title *Rabbi* as equivalent to our Doctor. It comes from the root רָבַב to increase (Ps. iii. 1). The cognate word in Arab. means "to be great," and in Syr. and Chald. "to magnify." *Rabbi* was a higher title than *Rab*, the original form, and *Rabban* is still higher. *Rabbi* is simply *Rab*, with the Heb. pronom. suffix "my," and *Rabboni* (Mark x. 51; John xx. 16) is the same word with Syro-Chald. suffix for "my."—*Winer, Pagninus, and Robinson's Lex.*

§ One of the lower officials of the Temple.

¶ A native-born proselyte, not a Jew. The word is derived from the Gibeonites being made hewers of wood, &c., by Joshua (Josh. ix. 27). The word is—נָתַן; "the given," the "devoted," from נָתַן, to give.

|| A *Mamser* or bastard, is the grossest word of reproach amongst the Jews.

‖ Ginsburg (*Cyclo. Bib. Lit.: Art. "Pharisee"*) describes the fifth class as the What-am-I-yet-to-do Pharisee, who knew the Law so badly, that after each act he had to ask what was next to be done.

CHAPTER VI.

* The Talmud was not put in writing for centuries after Christ's day, but its teachings are even older than His age.

† On Gen. xlix. 11. There was an idea abroad, however, with many, that no man knew from whence the Christ was to come. See John vii. 27.

‡ The Book Sohar is assigned by Reuss to the eighth century (Herzog, vii. 196); but its ideas are very much older.

§ The texts quoted are a sample of Rabbinical interpretation:—

Exod. xix. 8 says, "All the people answered together," &c.; therefore there could be no *dumb* among them, nor any *deaf*.

Exod. xx. 18 says, "And all the people saw the thunder," &c.; therefore there could be no *blind* among them.

Exod. xix. 17 says, "Moses brought (led) forth the people out of the camp," & therefore there could be no *lame* among them.

No wonder that Jesus spoke of them as blind leaders of the blind!

CHAPTER VII.

* Simon was made "prince," as well as high priest, but only "until there should arise a faithful prophet."—1 Macc. xiv. 41.

† David, separating the priests from the rest of the tribe of Levi, found them to be twenty-four families, and ordained that each family should serve in ministry for a week, settling the order by lot, which order continues to this day.—*Jos. Ant.* vii. 147.

‡ The course of Abijah, or Abia, to which Zacharias belonged, was the eighth.—1 Chron. xxiv. 10. It is mentioned in Neh. xii. 4, 17. The course took its name from a priest who bore it, descended from Eleazar, Aaron's son.—1 Chron. xxiv. 2, 8.

§ They were so numerous that it was a Jewish tradition that it had never fallen to the lot of any priest to offer incense twice.—*Ugolini*, xii. 18.

¶ There was a regular profession of "instructors of the priests," who trained them to a knowledge of the details of their duties. Even the high priest had each year to go through a seven days' preparatory training from some expert, to fit him for the duties of the Day of Atonement. The "learned" priests were called *Haberim*, or "companions," and formed a "Union," or close brotherhood, the condition of membership of which was a pledge to observe the prescriptions of the Rabbis with the utmost strictness. All priests and others who were not members were despised as *Amharez*

—rude peasants. Every priest, on admission to the "Union," swore before three members of it to be faithful to its laws, and must be a zealot for the least detail of Rabbinism.—*Jost*, i. 155, 162, 201. Cohen (*Historisch Kritische Darstellung d. Jüdischen Gottesdienstes*, p. 163) quotes a curious passage from the Talmud which says that "seven days before the Day of Atonement, the high priest was taken into a particular chamber, where he, like a scholar, stood under Rabbinical teachers, who instructed and watched him, that he did not perform the sacrificial rites, or those of the incense offering, after the forms used on some points by the Sadducees."

^r They were employed to select the wood for the sacrifices—in which there must be no worm-holes—and in other similar humble duties.

^s See Acts vi. 7. The temple services were in no way interrupted by this large secession of priests. The Council was not restricted to priests. It was rather a high council of Rabbis, as such.

^t Herod Agrippa II., son of Herod Agrippa I., reigned from A.D. 52 till the destruction of Jerusalem, over the provinces formerly under Philip and Lysanias. He held the charge of the Temple, and the choice of the high priests from A.D. 84.—*Winer, Real Wörterbuch*, i. 485.

^u Mine is no mean descent, out of the line of priests, which, with us Jews, is the mark of nobility of birth: I am also, which is a high distinction, of the first of the twenty-four courses.—*Jos.*, *Vit.* 1. See also Keim's *Jesu von Nazara*, i. 230. *Jost* (i. 147) points out rightly that the commanding sanctity and grandeur of the priestly office was lost from the time that the creation of kings overthrew the old Theocratic constitution, in which the priests ruled over the nation, as the direct and exclusive representatives of Jehovah.

^v Maimonides, quoted by *Jost*, reckoned fifty blemishes common to men and beasts; ninety found only in men, and twenty-three found only in animals.—i. 155.

^w Ewald's *Alterthümer*, 369 ff. *Jost* says that the priests were not consecrated with holy oil, there being none under the second Temple, and therefore the consecration of the high priest was performed by clothing him with the eight pieces of his official robes.—*Jost*, i. 149. Ewald must therefore speak of consecration in the early ages of Israel. The holy oil was said by the Rabbis to have been mixed by Moses himself, and to have been miraculously increased in quantity as it was used, so that no more was ever needed to be made.—*Leyrer in Herzog*, v. 13, 322.

^x Vitellius, the last governor of Syria under Tiberius, won great favour with the Jews by giving up the custody of the high-priestly robes. They had been taken possession of by John Hyrcanus, and had been kept by the Herods and the Romans, and given out only a week before the Day of Atonement, and taken back the day after it. Vitellius gave them up, by consent of Tiberius, permanently, to the high priests.—*Jost*, i. 333.

^y The Jews could neither sell nor work on the day of the new moon, and it was also devoted to special religious services.—Ps. lxxxi. 3; 2 Kings iv. 23; Amos viii. 5; 1 Chron. xxiii. 31; Ezra iii. 5; Neh. x. 33; Col. ii. 16, &c.

^z Derenbourg (36) remarks that this mixture of priests and laity had been characteristic of the Great Synagogue itself. Priests, from their greater leisure, had necessarily most opportunity for becoming eminent Rabbis. The Sanhedrim rose about B.C. 150.—*Derenbourg*, 37.

Jost, a great authority, differs (i. 278) from most in regard to the power or even active existence of the Sanhedrim under Herod and the Romans. He thinks that it virtually ceased under both. This point will come up for fuller consideration hereafter.

^a The high priest might not mourn for his nearest kin (Lev. xxi. 10, 11). The uncovering of the head was one form of mourning; the rending of the garments a second. The Talmudists, however, say that it was lawful for the high priest to rend the skirt, or lower part of his garment; but to rend it from the bosom downwards was not allowed. This explains how Caiaphas could rend his clothes (Matt. xxvi. 65). The ordinary priests might mourn for six degrees of relations—a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister that had no husband.—*Godwyn's Aaron and Moses*, 17.

^b Ezekiel (xlv. 22) tried to introduce a rule that priests should in no case marry widows, but it was not carried out. The first traces of modifications of the laws of the Pentateuch, since greatly developed by the Rabbis, are found in Ezekiel.—*Zunz*, 40.

^c The course of Abia, to which Zacharias belonged, ended its autumnal half-yearly course in October of the year 748 A.U.C.; and to this period Wieseler refers the Annunciation by the angel.—*Herzog's Ency.*, vol. xxii. 544.

Lichtenstein assumes that the spring course, in April, 748, was the time.—*Jesus Christus, Herzog's Ency.* Bunsen thinks it was at the autumnal course.—*Bibelwerk*, ix.

189. So also does Guder. Caspari fixes the time as in July.—*Chron., Geog. Einleitung*, 50. These differences only show how uncertain the exact season is. The autumn seems to me, however, to suit the requirements of the history best.

Bengel fixes the date as from the 2nd to the 9th Sept., adding, in his striking way, "*Et 2 Sep. eo anno, apud gentem Israelit., respondebat 1 Tisri* [the Jewish New Year's Day]. *Ece! inenite anno, cum nuncio angelico Zacharie oblati N.T. primordium cepit.*" (Genomon, Luke i. 5.) These calculations are made by reckoning backwards from the date of the destruction of the Temple, because that is known as having been the ninth of the month Ab, and the course of priests (Jofarib) then serving, is also known.

* The village of Juttah, in the "hill-country" of Judea, south of Hebron, has been conjectured by Reland (Pal. 870) to have been the home of Zacharias; but Hebron has the support of long-standing Rabbinical tradition. Juttah is supported by Dr. Robinson, Winer, Renan, and Arnold; Hebron by Keim (i. 472), Ewald (v. 213.), and most others. Caspari thinks a place in the Wady Bettir, near Jerusalem, Kirbet el Jehud by name, which in Hebrew would be *יְהוּדָה בֵּיתֵר* (*παλις Ιουδα*) the name given by St. Luke, to have been John's birthplace.

* This was the name of Aaron's wife, in the form Elisabetha—*עֲלִישֶׁבֶת* (God her oath—that is, a worshipper of God).—Exod. vi. 23. First renders it, "*El des Bundes*"—the Covenant God.

Zechariah. Heb. *זַכְרְיָהּ* (whom God remembers). A name singularly striking in his case.

* Commandments—*ἐντολαί*. Moral precepts, injunctions, prohibitions (Mark x. 19; xii. 28). But also traditions of the Rabbis (Titus i. 14), or precepts of the Mosaic Law (Mark x. 5).

Ordinances—*δικαιώματα*. Decrees, ordinances, precepts, rites, and ceremonies.—Heb. ix. 1. But also the positive requirements of the Law of Moses.—Rom. ii. 26. Meyer is therefore evidently right in saying that "the distinction made by Calvin and Bengel between the two words—*ἐντολή* being referred to moral precepts, *δικαιώματα* to ceremonial—is not well founded."—*Kommentar: Luc. i. 6.*

* Thus a citizen of Nablus, whose name was Abdallah, was known, after the birth of a son to him, as Abu Dadud (the father of Dadud), and the mother, in the same way, was thenceforth Im Dadud (the mother of Dadud). "The new name thus adopted is used, not only in common parlance, but also on the gravest occasions, and even in legal documents."—*Mill's Nabhus*, 119.

See, on this subject generally, Ewald's *Alterthümer*, 276 ff.

* I have reckoned the cubit as 18 inches. The common cubit was 204·8 lines = 18 inches. The sacred cubit 234·33 lines = 21½ inches.

* Josephus several times speaks of the Temple as an exact square of a stadium=606½ English feet.—*Ant. xv. 11. 3, 9; xv. 11. 9.*

The Talmud, which is the only other written authority, says that the Temple was a square of 500 cubits (Mischna v. 334), but the Rabbis explain that in this case the cubit was only 15 inches, which would make the square 625 feet. I do not understand how Jost (i. 139) can make it to have been a square of 500 cubits, each cubit equal to 6 handbreadths (Jede Seite 500 Ellen, die Elle zu 6 Handbreiten), as this would give a square of about 1,000 feet. Yet Captain Warren, R.E., who is a very high authority, gives it as the result of his prolonged researches on the spot, that the Temple square must have been one of 900 feet.—*Recovery of Jerusalem*, 310. The whole size of the platform, on part of which the Temple stood is, however, much larger. It measures about 1,500 feet from north to south, and about 900 feet from east to west. Almost in the centre of this plateau is an irregular, four-sided, paved platform, rising some sixteen feet above the general level of the plateau, and above the centre of this platform the summit of the Sacred Hill crops out, inside a Mahomedan building known as the Dome of the Rock.—*Recovery of Jerus.* 312. This spot is supposed by many to have been the site of the Holy of Holies. The whole immense area, once covered with royal or sacred buildings, has been created artificially, by building up huge walls on the four sides, from the valleys below, and filling in the space thus obtained with earth, &c., when it was not utilized by substructures, in the shape of tanks, arches, &c. The size of the tanks may be imagined when it is stated that the total number of gallons of water which could be stored in those now known, probably exceeded ten millions.—*Recovery of Jerus.* 17.

* The Jews called these points "raven-scarers" *עֲרֵבֵי*. The roof itself seem to have had low gables with a balustrade all round it.

* The interior of the Temple, strictly so called, seems to have been only about 30 feet by 60.

* Josephus says they were 55 cubits (82 feet) high and 16 cubits (24 feet) wide.—*Bell. Jud. v. 5. 4.*

⁴⁴ The Veil of the Temple, according to the vice-high-priest (Sagan) Simon, who had seen it, was woven with 72 strands. Each strand contained 24 threads;—6 of purple-blue, 6 of purple-red, 6 scarlet, and 6 white. These were the four specially holy colours.—*Delitzsch Jud. Handwerkerleben*, 15.

⁴⁵ This great vine was made from the gold offered, from time to time, at the temple, and was the embodiment of a symbol often used by the prophets.—Jer. ii. 21; Ez. xix. 10; Joel i. 7; Ps. lxxx. 8. There was a golden olive in the Temple of Hercules at Gades (Cadiz); and vines of gold were frequent as costly decorations among the Greeks.—*Herod.* vii. 27; *Plin.* xxxiii. 15 *et al.* The charge made against the Jews, that they worshipped Bacchus, probably rose from this temple ornament; and it is not impossible that our Lord may have had a reference to it when He spoke of Himself as the True Vine.—John xv. 1.

⁴⁶ So, Winer (*Rücherna*). Others speak of a third priest, who carried out the ashes of the preceding service.

⁴⁷ The number of the priesthood prevented the danger of this, but the rule shows the dignity associated with the act.

⁴⁸ Luke i. 9; it was determined in the same way who should slay the beasts, who lay them on the altars, who dress the lamps, &c.

⁴⁹ The "light of Jehovah" in Zion, and His ever-burning "altar fire in Jerusalem," are alluded to in Isaiah xxxi. 9.

⁵⁰ Numb. iv. 7. That is, the bread ever renewed, and, thus, ever before God.—1 Sam. xxi. 6. It is called the Bread of the Presence. So Lev. xxiv. 6 *et al.*

⁵¹ "When the incense and prayers were ended, the parts of the sacrifice were laid on the altar, and then the Levites began their psalmody, and their sounding the trumpet."—*Lightfoot, Horæ Hebraicæ*, iii. 18.

⁵² Tradition affirmed that Joannes Hyrcanus, son and successor of Simon Maccabæus, when alone in the Temple, offering incense, heard a voice saying that his sons had just then won a victory over Antiochus, brother of the great enemy of the nation, at Samaria, which proved to be true.—*Jos. Ant.* xiii. 10. 3.

⁵³ In the Second Book of Maccabees i. 18—36, and ii. 1, a curious legend is given of the preservation of the sacred fire during the period of the exile. Jeremiah and other priests, we are told, took it from the altar, and hid it in a dry water cistern, whence Nehemiah recovered it by a miracle. Having put wood in order, for an offering, close by, he caused water, drawn from the cistern, which was no longer dry, to be poured over it, and while the priests prayed and sang around, the sun suddenly burst through the clouds, and kindled the wood to a great flame, consuming the sacrifice. In the time of Antiochus Epiphanes the holy fire was extinguished, and the altar polluted, but legends soon rose to show that even in this case the sacred flame had been miraculously preserved.—See Winer, *R. W. B. Art.* "Brandopferaltar," and Ewald's *Gesch.* iv. 210 ff.

⁵⁴ Simon the Just (B.C. 221—202).—*Zunz d. Gottesdienstliche Vorträge d. Juden*, 36. The Son of Sirach lauds him as having "beautified the House of God," and "renewed the Temple," "doubling the height of the wall of the sanctuary." "In his days," he continues, "was made a water-laver of copper, like a sea, in circumference. He guarded his people against danger, and strengthened the city against siege."—Chap. l. 1—5. The Jews, in his time, were under the Greek dynasty of Egypt, which the Greek dynasty of Syria was victoriously assailing. The Egyptian king, Ptolemy Philopator, in one of his campaigns, visited Jerusalem, and not only offered in the Temple, but wished to go into the Holy of Holies. The whole priesthood, with the high priest at their head, resisted, begging and imploring him not to profane the sacred place, and the people were with difficulty kept from rising in arms. Tradition says he fell to the ground senseless as he entered within the veil, and had to be carried out.—*Jost*, i. 109. *Presael*, in *Herzog*, xii. 475.

Derenbourg (46—52) assigns no date to Simon's pontificate, its exact time being very uncertain. *Leyrer* (*Herzog*, xv. 297), assigns B.C. 300 as the date.

⁵⁵ *Lightfoot* assumes that it was a Sabbath day when Zacharias offered incense, as there were few people present on ordinary days.

⁵⁶ The word in Greek refers to the holy festival procession, in which the people marched round the Temple courts, on the great Day of Atonement.—*Fritzsche*, in *loc. Ewald's Geschichte*, iv. 81.

⁵⁷ Of the Holy of Holies, which the high priest, alone, entered once a year, on that day.

⁵⁸ Literally, in the days of the first-fruits.

⁵⁹ To bring God to a remembrance that Israel was His people.

⁶⁰ The worship of God.

* I have adopted, for the most part, the translation of Fritzsche in the *Exeg. Handbuch* z. d. *Apokryphen*.

† *Præulium legis ceremonialis finienda Christo veniente.*—Bengel.

Origen (*in Luc. Hom. v.*) and Ambrose (*in Luc. lib. i. 41*) make similar reflections.

"The naming a child took place on the eighth day, at its circumcision. This was then, as it still is, an occasion of quiet rejoicing, to which the friends of the family gather. The following is the account of the ceremony in Mill's *British Jews* (8—14):—

"The first thing to be done is to choose Sandakin—something similar to a godfather and godmother in the Christian world. The Sandakin, however, undertake no future responsibilities towards the child; all their duties are over on the day of circumcision. They are generally husband and wife, and selected from among the relations or immediate friends of the parents. . . .

"The parents must also give the child a name, that it may be mentioned at the circumcision. It must be a Hebrew name, and, generally, one adopted in the family, or that of some celebrated man. He may have another name, a common one, by giving a Gentile turn to his Hebrew one, or by adopting a Gentile name altogether. For example, his Hebrew name may be *Moshe*, and his common name Moses or Philip. Whenever he is named in the synagogue, or elsewhere, connected with any religious duty, he is called by his Hebrew name, but in all other affairs he is called by his common name.

"On the Friday evening before the circumcision, it is announced in the synagogue, that to A., son of B., a son is born; and after the service a few friends are entertained at the parents' house with fruit and wine, known by the name *Zachar*, i.e. male. The ceremony ought to be performed in the synagogue, but if the parents live at a distance from it, or if the weather be rough, they may have it done at home. There must be ten persons present to form a *Minyan*,* or 'private' meeting, and among these must be the *Chazan*† and the secretary of the synagogue.

"The child is brought to the door of the synagogue by the godmother, and there is received by the godfather. As he carries the child towards the congregation they say—*Blessed is he that cometh*. In the middle is a large chair, with two seats, one for the godfather, the other to be left vacant: it is the seat of Elijah the prophet, who is called 'the angel of the covenant,' who, it is believed, is present to witness the ceremony, though invisible. . . .

"The rite performed, prayers follow by the official who has thus admitted the child to the privileges of Israel, and an offering to the poor concludes the ceremony. There is afterwards a social gathering, in honour of the occasion, at the father's house."

Among a people so unchanging as the Jews the customs of to-day are the same as those of the remote past, and thus we have only to give an Eastern setting to this picture, to have before us the incident of the circumcision of the infant Baptist, nearly two thousand years ago, at Hebron.

Ewald thinks that circumcision is a symbolical dedication of the child to God by an offering of part of its body, the idea being that its very life is a forfeit, though allowed to be redeemed by this acknowledgment of the fact.‡ The child's blood must be spilt that its life be saved. It was thought so well-pleasing to God that it could save even a father's life, as the circumcision of the child of Moses saved that of the great law-giver.§

* מניין
"Number."

† Ezra 6. 17.
The Bezler.
(Haza).

‡ Alterthüm
121—123.

§ Ex. 4. 24—26.

CHAPTER VIII.

* This priest is said in our English version to be the grandson of Manasseh, but it should be Moses. The word *Manasseh* is printed in the Hebrew Bible thus, מנשה the *nun* being suspended, so as to show that it is in the original text, though omitted in reading; the remaining letters being read as משה—Moses. The copyists of the Old Testament MSS. were equally unwilling to own that the descendant of Moses could have sunk to be a priest of idols, or, on the other hand, to alter the sacred text. That the reading should be Moses is granted by the Talmud (*Baba bathra* 109a), but the Egyptian wife of Moses is blamed for the grandson's apostasy. The note of Raschi (called Jarchi), a great Rabbi of the middle ages, is—On account of the honour of Moses he wrote *nun* to change the name, and it is written suspended, to show that it was Moses and not Manasseh. The Vulgate retains the original true reading—Moses.

† The later Rabbis assigned a descent from David, through the female side, to Hillel "pour relever ainsi l'éclat des descendants de Hillel."—*Derenbourg*, 339.

‡ A fragment of Papias, the disciple of St. John, printed by Dr. Routh in his *Reliquie Sacree*, says that both Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Salome, were aunts of our Lord, and consequently sisters of his mother. The habit of giving the same name to more members of a family than one was not unknown among the Jews. Thus the High Priest Onias III. had a brother who, also, was called Onias.

^a In the Talmud קדש from קדש, to be holy, or sacred.

^c The school of Shammai fixed this at 90 grains of pure gold; that of Hillel fixed it at half a grain of pure silver. The sum was indifferent. The contract was binding if even a farthing was given.

^d At the present day a Jewish betrothal is effected thus:—The parties and their parents, with a number of invited friends, meet at an appointed time, and a deed of penalty, which has been drawn up, is read to the company. A certain sum is named as forfeited to the other party should either break the engagement. A cup is then broken, as a sign that a covenant is made, and a betrothal feast follows. This takes place six or twelve months, or even longer in some cases, before the marriage.—*Mill's British Jews*, 25.

On Jewish Betrothal see Godwyn's *Aaron and Moses*, 231; Winer *R. W. B.*, Herzog's *Ency.*, and Schenkel's *Bibel Lexicon*, Arts. "Ehe," &c.; Dr. Ginsburg's *Art.* "Marriage"—in *Kitto's Cyclo. of Bib. Lit.* &c.

^e The morning and evening sacrifice were at the third hour (9 a.m.), and at the ninth hour (3 p.m.), respectively.

^f ὁ ἄγγελος (the angel) is wanting in the MSS. B., L., and is omitted by Tischendorf.

The MSS. &c. to which reference may be made hereafter are distinguished in different ways, according to the class to which they belong. The most important authorities for the New Testament text are the Greek Uncial MSS., that is, those written in capital letters. The principal ones are: 1. The *Sinaiticus*, known by the sign \aleph . Its date is the third quarter of the fourth century; it contains the complete New Testament. 2. A. *Alexandrinus*. Date, first quarter of fifth century; New Testament, nearly complete. 3. B. *Vaticanus*. First quarter of fourth century; New Testament, with some parts wanting. For the sake of simplicity I shall refer to these by their first letters—S, A, and V. They are by far the most important authorities. 4. C. *Ephraemi*. Second quarter of fifth century; New Testament, but with a considerable portion wanting. 5. D. *Bezae*. First quarter of sixth century; Gospels and Acts with lacunæ. 6. E. *Basilienensis*. Eighth century; the four Gospels, with some lacunæ in St. Luke. 7. F. *Boreali*. Ninth century; four Gospels, many lacunæ. 8. G. *Wolffii A.* Tenth century; four Gospels, but many lacunæ. 9. H. *Wolffii B.* Ninth century; four Gospels, but many lacunæ. 10. I. *Tischendorfianus II.* Fifth to seventh century; fragments of Gospels, Acts, 1 Corinthians, and Titus. 11. K. *Cyprinus*. First quarter of ninth century; four Gospels complete. 12. L. *Regius*. Eighth or ninth century; four Gospels, complete except sixty-six verses. 13. M. *Campianus*. Fourth quarter of ninth century; four Gospels complete. 14. N. *Purpureus*. Last quarter of sixth century; small fragments of each Gospel. 15. P. *Guelpherbytanus A.* Sixth century; small fragments of four Gospels. 16. Q. *Guelpherbytanus B.* Fifth or sixth century; fragments of SS. Luke and John. 17. R. *Nitriensis*. Sixth century; fragments of St. Luke only. 18. S. *Vaticanus*. No. 354. Tenth century; four Gospels complete. 19. T. *Borgianus I.* Fifth century; some parts of St. John's Gospel. 20. U. *Nonianus I.* Tenth century; four Gospels complete. 21. V. *Mosquensis*. Eighth or ninth century; four Gospels, as far as John vii., with lacunæ. 22. X. *Monacensis*. Ninth century; four Gospels, with many lacunæ. 23. Z. *Dublinensis*. Sixth century; fragments of St. Matthew only. An easily accessible list of these and the other classes of MSS. of inferior value, with interesting details, will be found in McClellan's *New Testament*, vol. i., and in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. "New Testament." Lists of the ancient versions of the New Testament are also given, but I shall not refer to these or to the inferior MSS. Fuller lists may be found in *Mill's Prolegomena*, Scholz, Tischendorf, and elsewhere.

^g κεχαριτωμένη. E. V. highly favoured. Mr. Meyrick, in *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, translates it "Thou that hast bestowed on thee a free gift of grace." Webster and Wilkinson give it as "endued with favour." Meyer, "Welcher Huld (von Gott) widerfahren ist" (who has found favour with God). De Wette, "Begnädigte," which is much the same in meaning; and so Oosterzee and others. Bengel has the fine note: "Non ut inater gratiæ sed ut filia gratiæ" (not as mother but as child of grace).

Mr. Meyrick translates the words ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ—"the Lord be with thee;" but he is apparently alone in this. "Blessed art thou among women," is wanting in S, V, L, and in many of the ancient versions. It is rejected by Tischendorf.

^h Jesus. The name Jesus is a later form of Joshua. The name originally was יְהוֹשֻׁעַ—*Hoshea*, he saves—Numbers xiii. 8, 16. This was changed by Moses into יֵשׁוּעַ—*Jehovah* (is) his help or salvation. It is given thus (*Jehoshua*) in the English version, Numbers xiii. 16; 1 Chron. vii. 27. Elsewhere he is called Joshua. After the exile he is called יְהוֹשָׁעָה *Jesaias*, Neh. viii. 17, and this in the Greek became *Jesus*—the Greek Ἰησοῦς. A striking illustration of the sense in which St. Matthew uses this form, *Jesus*, "For he shall save his people from their sins," occurs in Eccles. xli. 1 where it is said of Joshua (*Jesus*)—ὅς ἐγένετο κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ μέγας ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ ἐκλεκτῶν

αὐτοῦ—who, according to his name, was made great for the saving of the elect (of God), i.e., the Jewish nation.

The name was not uncommon among the Jews. Ecclesiasticus was written by Jesus, son of Sirach, and a Jesus called Justus was a fellow-worker with St. Paul, Colossians iv. 11. Jason is a Greek form of Jesus, and was of frequent occurrence. It is found twice in the Apocryphal list of the seventy-two commissioners sent by Eleazar to Ptolemy (*Arist. Hist. ap. Hody De, text. p. vii.*). It is striking that one Joshua conquered Canaan and that the first high priest after the return was another Joshua, Ez. v. 2. Several other Joshuas are mentioned in the Old Testament, and there was a town called Joshua in Judah (Neh. xi. 26). Some of the Fathers, not knowing Hebrew, fancied that "Jesus" was of Greek origin, and traced it to *Iasus* (*Iasis*) healing, but not more correctly than when they derived *Διαβολος* from *δύο* and *βῶλος*, because the devil swallows man at two bites, first of the soul and then of the body. The fancy has often been set at work to find hidden meanings in the name of our Lord. Thus the Valentinians, according to Irenæus (lib. ii. c. 41) held it to mean "Him who possesseth Heaven and earth," because the three letters in the Hebrew form of it, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, are, respectively, the first letters of the words יְהוָה (Jehovah), שָׁמַיִם (heaven), and אֶרֶץ (and the earth), thus making up "Jehovah of heaven and earth." Osiander, one of the most learned of the Reformers, was equally fanciful, for he maintained that Jesus is no other than the name which it is not lawful to utter—the Shem-hamphorash—"rendered unutterable by the insertion of the letter ה." The phrase itself יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַמְּשֻׁמָּה may mean "the name distinctly declared." See Neh. viii. 8, where מְשֻׁמָּה is used adverbially for "distinctly." Or—"the name which reveals"—or "the name known" (only to the initiated). It is an invention of the Jewish Kabbala, and it is no wonder that its meaning is disputed, for no crazed brain ever created wilder confusions and follies than those which make up this system. Any one who wishes may find details to his satisfaction in the articles, "Kabbala" and "Jehovah," by Reuss and Oehler, in Herzog. Origen says, in reference to the number of persons in Scripture bearing the name of Jesus—"In tanta multitudinē scripturarum neminem scimus Jesum peccatorem"—but the wish, as in too many cases, is father to the thought!

¹ The genealogies given by both Matthew and Luke seem unquestionably to refer to Joseph. Meyer, De Wette, Lord Herve, McClellan, and others, who may be taken as representing different schools of thought, agree in this. Matthew seems to give Joseph's legal descent as heir of David's throne; Luke his private genealogy. Through him, Jesus, as his adopted son, became his legal heir. Lord Herve, like many others, supposes that Mary was the daughter of Jacob (Matt. i. 16), and, in this way, the cousin of Joseph, and that thus, in point of fact, if not in form, both genealogies are as much hers as his. But apart from hypothesis, which must always be unsatisfactory, the descent of Mary from David, though not established like that of Joseph by a transcript from the public registers, is abundantly proved by the constant testimony of the New Testament. See Matt. i. 1, Acts ii. 30, Rom. i. 3, 2 Tim. ii. 8, Heb. vii. 14, John vii. 41, 42, Rev. v. 5, xxii. 16. Jesus himself, indeed, assumes a descent from David as necessary in the Messiah (Matt. xxii. 42). Eusebius (bk. i. c. 7) mentions descendants of our Lord's family, known as the Desposyni (*παῖς τοῦ δεσποῦ ἐστὶ*—Suidas) as living in Nazara and Coebata, villages of Judea, and relates from Hegesippus how they were summoned before the Emperor Domitian as being of the lineage of David (bk. iii. c. 20). I shall allude to this hereafter. There is a further striking confirmation of our Lord's descent from David in a statement by Ulla, a Rabbi of the third century, that "Jesus was treated in an exceptional way, because he was of the royal race."—*Sanhedrin* 43a (in unmutated editions), quoted by Dorenbourg, *L'Hist. de la Palestine*, p. 349.

² The relationship of Mary to Elisabeth is not known. It was likely a connection through marriage, which the fact of Mary's family belonging to the tribe of Judah, and Elisabeth's to that of Levi, did not at all affect. Marriages between members of different tribes were customary. The traditions respecting Mary's family are numerous and curious. Thus she is said, in the Protevang. Jac., and in the *Hist. de Nativ. Marie*, to have been the daughter of Joachim, a prosperous owner of sheep and cattle, and of Anna, a daughter of the priest Matthan (Matt. i. 15), the grandfather of Joseph and Mary.—*Niceph. H. E.* ii. 3. She was born when both her parents were old, and was baptized by Peter and John.—*Coteler. ad Herm.* iii. 9, 16.

³ Acts i. 14. Tradition relates that Mary lived with John till her death at the age of fifty-nine, in the fifth year of Claudius, at Ephesus, whither she had followed her guardian.

⁴ Compare Mary's hymn with Hannah's (1 Sam. ii. 1—10) and Judith's (Judith xvi. 2—17) throughout. "Low Estate," *ταπεινωσις*. Acts viii. 33: "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." James i. 10: "But the rich, in that he is made low." Phil. iii. 21: "Our vile body" (the body of our humiliation).

⁵ The principal Christian Apocryphal writings are:—

1. The "Protevangelium Jacobi minoris" is of a very early date. It is noticed by Origen (A.D. 250), Epiphanius (A.D. 402), and other Fathers; and some of the incidents it contains are spoken of by Justin Martyr (A.D. 166), and Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 217).

2. The "Evangelium de Nativitate S. Marini" seems to date from the sixth century.

3. The "Historia de Nativitate Marini" is of uncertain date.

4. The "Evangelium Infantie Servatoris" (the Gospel of the Infancy) embraces narratives which were current in the second century.

5. The "Evangelium Thomæ Israelitæ." This is supposed to have been the foundation of all the Gospels of the Infancy of our Lord, though it has been recast and altered.

These five are known as the Gospels of the Infancy.

^a There were little children, thus, in the chambers round the Temple; but, as in the case of Mary, they lived in it only while quite young. Mary left it, we are told, when she was fourteen.—*Hofmann, Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, 36.

^r Mary is said to have worn a new "veil" for the Holy of Holies.—*Hofmann*, 66.

There are Mahomedan legends of the childhood of Mary very like those given here.—See *Weill's Legends of the Mussulmans*, p. 216.

CHAPTER IX.

^a "Pompeius captis Hierosolymis tributarios Judeos fecit."—*Chron. Euseb. ad Olym.* 179. *Jos. Ant.* xiv. 4. 5.

^b "Opes publicæ continebantur, quantum civium, sociorumque, in armis; quot classes regna, provincia, tributa, et vectigalia, et necessitates, et largitiones: quæ cuncta sua manu perscripserat Augustus."—*Tac. Annal.* i. 11. See also Suetonius, *Aug.* 28: "Magistratus ac Senatus domum accitis, Rationarium imperii tradidit." It must have been something of the same kind as the Domesday Book of William the Conqueror. In the later Republic the census of Roman citizens—that is, of all Italy and of the colonies which had Italian rights, was of small importance to the empire, since Roman citizens were no longer subject to military conscription, and paid no direct taxes. But the census of the provinces was very different, its chief end being the due assessment of population and property for taxation.—*Zumpt d. Geburtsjahr Christi*, 147—175. There were apparently two kinds of direct taxes raised throughout the empire—first, the land tax (*tributum soli*, or *agri*), and, second, a poll or head tax (*tributum capitis*). The first was paid, partly in kind, partly in money. Under the second, various taxes seem to have been included—the income tax, for example, which was assessed much as the same tax is with us. Every one was liable to the head tax, and the amount was the same for all. Women and slaves had to pay it as well as men. In Syria the men were liable to it from the age of fourteen, the women from that of twelve—both till the age of sixty-five; and only children and the aged were excepted. Each householder had to give the particulars of his liabilities, as with us, and the taxation lists were made up from these returns or declarations. There seems to have been a system of "offices of inland revenue," all over the empire, to keep the lists duly corrected, and to collect the imposts. If any one owned land in another district than that in which he lived, he had to go to that district and make his return, or, at least, had to get it made for him in that district, "for the land tax must be paid in that district in which the particular land is owned."—See Schürer's *L. B. d. N. T. Zeitgeschichte*, 263 ff.

^c It is frequently said that Tacitus tells us (*Ann.* vi. 41) that the Clitæ in Cilicia, though subject to a King Archelaus, of Cappadocia, were required to make census returns after the Roman manner, and to submit to tribute. But, as Schürer points out, (*N. T. Zeitgeschichte*, 272), this passage does not say that the Romans made a census in the territories of Archelaus, but that Archelaus sought to make one in the Roman way among a people subject to himself.

^d Ewald thinks that it is likely happened when the people were gathered together for the registration or taxing to which Joseph and Mary are related by St. Luke to have come.—*Geschichte*, v. 206. The taking an oath of allegiance was usually connected with a census.—See authorities quoted in Eisleys *Annotations*, ii. 145.

^e The numbering of the people under David, with its fatal results (2 Sam. ch. 24.) was deeply fixed on the Jewish memory. It was, moreover, believed that a census would be the fulfilment of an old prophecy that the kingdoms of Syria (including Palestine) and Egypt were to be destroyed.—*Grotii Annot.* Luke ii. 3.

^f Grotius remarks, "The custom of the Jews was that a census should be made by tribes, houses, and families. But this, after the many revolutions and changes the Jews

had suffered, could not be done, except by each person going to the place to which his ancestors had belonged."—*Annotationes ad Luc. ii. 3.*

^a The statement by St. Luke that "this taxing was first made when Cyrenius"—or, Quirinius, as it should be written—"was Governor of Syria," has provoked much discussion. It is urged that Sentius Saturninus was Governor of Syria from 744 to 748 of Rome, and Quintilius Varus from 748 till after Herod's death, as is supposed, in 750. It has been shown, however, by Zumpt, that Quirinius was twice Legate of the Province of Syria, first in 750—753 of Rome, and a second time, some years later.^{*} Caspari has, moreover, shown very strong grounds (*Chronologisch-Geographische Einleitung*, 28—30) for believing that Herod did not die in 750, as has been supposed, but on the 1st of Schebst (24th January), 753, in which case all difficulty would vanish. Ewald, Wieseler, and some others render the verse of Luke: "This taxing took place before Quirinius was governor,"† &c.; but this is condemned by Winer (*Grammatik*, 1867, 229), and cannot be sustained. Köhler also rejects Wieseler's translation, and supposes that the census was begun before Quirinius came the first time, but was discontinued, owing to an uproar having been made, till he arrived, after Herod's death, as is supposed, in 750. This is also the explanation of Oosterzee.—*Kommentar*, p. 25. Wieseler also supposes that the tumult with which Judas and Mattathias were connected, and for which they were burned alive, took place at this time.—*Herzog's Ency.* vol. xxi. 545. One thing is certain, that Luke, who mentions the second census (Acts v. 37), is, by that very fact, fully reliable when he speaks of an earlier one, at the birth of Christ. Bunsen (*Bibelwerk*, ix. 195) supposes that the census in the Gospel took place in the second half of April, 750, immediately after Herod's death (as generally fixed). Keim (*Jesus von Nazara*, i. 398—) and Meyer (*Kommentar*, in loc.) think Luke has mistaken the date of Quirinius' census, and Hagenbach (*Kirchengeschichte*, i. 34) is inclined to think with them; but enough has been said above to make it easy to decide whether Luke, at the time, is likely to be right, or scholars, nearly 2,000 years after. It is worth noting that even so destructive a critic as Ernest de Bunsen (*Chronology of the Bible*, 1874, p. 70) has to admit that Quirinius may have been Governor of Syria in the latter part of the year 750. See also Keim, i. 390, where the whole subject is treated very fully.

Curiously, the three years specified as those in which a census was taken, 726, 746, and 767, were Jewish Sabbatic years, when the land lay idle, and the people were able to travel where they wished, without hindrance.

^b Luke ii. 4. The tribes which sprang from the sons of Jacob were called *שבטות* (שִׁבְטוֹת) the branches which sprang from these Patriarchs were called *ביתות* (בֵּיתוֹת) the separate families were called *עוֹלָם* (עוֹלָם). The second and third words are used here. Joseph was thus of the direct family of David, and of the same branch to which David had belonged.

¹ Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ* (Luke ii. 8) says, "The spring coming on, they drove their beasts into wildernesses, or champaign grounds, where they fed them the whole summer, keeping watch over them night and day, that they might not be impaired either by thieves or ravenous beasts. The winter coming on, they betook themselves home again with the flocks and herds." He quotes the Talmud in illustration, but as Wieseler says, the rule cannot be regarded as having been always observed. The particular season would decide for itself. Even in Canada I have seen a man ploughing at Christmas. Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake writes on the 15th of December, 1872, from near Haifa:—"The winter rains still hold off, though the quantity that fell in October and November—'the former rain'—has proved quite sufficient to enable the fellahin to begin their ploughing. These rains produced an immediate change in the appearance of the country; grass began to sprout all over the hills, the wasted grain on the threshing-floors (in the open air) soon produced a close crop some six inches high. The cyclamen, white crocus, saffron crocus, and jonquil are in full flower on the mountains; the oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is fast putting out its new leaves, and in sheltered nooks some of the hawthorn trees are doing the same. The Zomzarût (species of Judas tree?) is gorgeous at the foot of Carmel, with its clusters of lilac blossoms."—*Quart. Rep. of Palest. Explor. Fund*, April, 1873, 61.

² The population of Malta, in 1849, was 1,182 to the square mile; that of Middlesex is nearly 7,000 to the square mile. We must assume that it is an Oriental exaggeration when Josephus speaks of the least place having over 15,000 inhabitants, but undoubtedly the population was very great. See Furrer in *Bibel. Lex.* Art. "Galilee."

³ "He who tastes the bread of a Samaritan is as one who eats the flesh of swine."—*Pirk. R. El. c. 38.* "Sychar" was even said by the Jews, in their hatred, to be derived from שִׁכָּר (Shakar) to be drunken.

⁴ The Talmud has the same figure as is used by St. Matthew, of Rachel weeping for her children (chap. ii. 18). "When the children of Israel, laden with chains," it tells us, "were being driven off by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, the road led past the grave of our mother Rachel. As they came near her grave they heard cries and

* Merivale's *Roman Empire*. iv. 457.

† Ewald's *Geschichte*, v. 294. Herzog, xxi. 545.

bitter weeping. It was the voice of Rachel, who had risen from her tomb, and was lamenting the fate of her unhappy children." Quoted in *Rom. und Jerusalem*, 20.

* The population, now, is about 3,000; the number of houses about 500, and the streets narrow and crooked.

° Jer. xli. 17. 2 Sam. x. 37, 38. The word is נָחַל which occurs only once in the Bible, but can only mean a khan. It is from נָחַל to sojourn—to dwell for a time; נָחַל a stranger—a traveller.—*Gesenius, Heb. Lexicon. Fürst's Hebr. H. W. B.*

The "inn" (Luke x. 34) to which the Good Samaritan took the man who had fallen among thieves was a khan. The host was the man in charge of it, to keep it clean, and attend in some slight measure to the wants of travellers and their beasts.

° Quicunque libenter hospitalitatem exercet, ejus est paradisu. — *Jalkut Rubeni*, xli. 2. Majus quid est recipere viatorem quam apparitionem Schechinæ habere.—*Schechnoth*, xxxv. 2. Both quoted from Schöttgen, by Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, 391. With the Essenes hospitality was a religious command. Among other particulars we read that "In every city where they live there is one appointed, particularly to take care of strangers, and provide garments and other necessities for them."—*Jos. Bell. Jud.* ii. 8. 4. נָחַל, Shechinah, among the later Jews, the visible presence or glory of Jehovah—from נָחַל "to dwell"—in allusion to the cloud over the Tabernacle, &c., in which Jehovah dwelt.—*Buxtorf, Lex. Talm.* p. 2394. In Luke ix. 52, we see that this sacred right of hospitality was recognized in some cases even by Samaritans to Jews.

° κατάλυμα from καταλύω "to unbind" — "to unyoke" — "to put up for the night" (when the beasts of burden are unloaded). The verb occurs Luke ix. 12, xix. 7, in which latter passage it is translated gone "to be a guest." It has the same meaning in the former verse. Even at the passover, the countless strangers visiting the city, for the feast, were provided gratuitously with the necessary apartments, as far as was possible. They left, in return, the skins of the paschal lambs, and the vessels they had used in the ceremonies.—*Jona*, 12a. See, also, Luke xxii. 10–12; Matt. xxvi. 18.

On the whole subject the reader may consult articles by Vaehinger, Ruetschi, and Lichtenstein, respectively, in Herzog's *Encyclopædie*, v. 745, vi. 564, and iv. 666.

° "It is not impossible, to say the least, that the apartment in which our Saviour was born was, in fact, a cave. I have seen many such, consisting of one or more rooms, in front of and including a cavern, where the cattle were kept."—*Thomson's Land and the Book*, 645. The evidence in favour of "the manger" having been in a cave—most likely the very cave now shown as that of the Nativity—is exceedingly strong. Justin Martyr, a native of the country, who was born little more than a century later (A.D. 103), speaks of our Lord's birth as having taken place "in a certain cave very close to the village"—ἐν σπηλαίῳ τινὶ σὺνέγγυς τῆς κώμης, κ. τ. λ.—*Tryph.* c. 78. Winer (*Art.* "Bethlehem") refers to passages in Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and other Fathers, who repeat the tradition. So profound, indeed, was St. Jerome's belief in it, that he settled in Bethlehem in A.D. 386, and lived, for thirty years after, in a cave close beside the one now said to have been the scene of Christ's birth, to be near so holy a spot; nor would the most tempting offers induce him to leave it.

The limestone hills of Palestine are pierced by innumerable caves, which have in different ages been used for the most various purposes, as a reference to the word in any concordance will show. They are still used, not only as Thomson describes above, but as dwellings, by shepherds, while pasturing their flocks in the field, and by harvesters, through the whole summer.—*Robinson's Pal.*, i. 353; iii. 10, 215. Being quite dry, they are very suitable for this. Mr. Palmer found the whole hilly region of the desert of the Tih, which is south of Judea, full of natural caverns, which had been used for dwellings, &c., in former times, and are even still used in this way by the Arabs.—*Quart. Statem. of Palest. Explor. Fund.* Jan., 1871, 38. Thus, of one part, he says, "The dwellings consist principally of caves in the natural rock, some of them with rude arches carved over the doorways, and all of them of the greatest antiquity. The spots selected for their excavations are small terraces on the hill-side, and these are walled round with mud fences, and form a sort of courtyard in front of the cave itself, in which dogs, goats, chickens, children, and other members of the family take the air."

* The birth of Christ, without doubt, took place some years before the date at present received. The Christian era, as we reckon it, was fixed by Dionysius Exiguus (the small or lean), a Roman abbot of the sixth century,* a Scythian by birth; and it bears the mark of the age that produced it, in its incorrectness. The date of Christ's birth is calculated from various notes of time, some of which are as follows:—

1. We know from the Talmud, that on the day of the destruction of Jerusalem—the 9th of the month Ab, the 4th of August, A.D. 70—the first of the twenty-four classes of priests, that of Joarib, was on duty.—*M. Ta'anit*, iv. 6, quoted by Derenbourg, *L'Histoire, etc., de la Palestine*, 291. This can be proved to be correct, for the passage above quoted says that the 9th Ab was a Sabbath day, and it has been found that it

* He died A.D. 556.

really was so. It is easy to reckon backwards from this, and find on what months of the years before Herod's death the course of Abia entered on its term of service; and it is found that it did so, for its autumn duty, on the 3rd of October, 748, and ended its week on the 9th.

2. Christ was certainly born before the death of Herod, who, at the earliest, did not die before March 750. Josephus says that Archelaus, his son, was banished in the tenth year of his ethnarchy (*Antiq.* xvii. 13. 2), or in the ninth (*Bell.* ii. 7. 3); but elsewhere (*Antiq.* xviii. 2. 1) he says that his property had already been confiscated in the thirty-seventh year after the battle of Actium, which would be the year 760. His banishment must have taken place, therefore, at the latest, by 760, and thus Herod would seem to have died in 750 or 751. But Josephus tells us that an eclipse of the moon took place shortly before Herod died, and it is found that there was one on the 13th of March, 750. This has been thought to confirm the date of 750 as that of Herod's death.

3. The visit of the Magi. These illustrious visitors perhaps came from the neighbouring Arabia, and were induced to make the journey to Bethlehem on astrological grounds. Now it appears that there was a "conjunction" of Jupiter and Saturn, in the sign Pisces, in the year 747. A year later Mars was in conjunction with both the other planets, and, a year later still, a new, hitherto unseen star or other heavenly body, came into sight—that is, in 749 or 750. It is striking that the Rabbis believed that there had been a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of the Fish three years before the birth of Moses, and expected a repetition of the same phenomenon before the birth of the Messiah. The knowledge of this belief may have led the Magi to make the journey. Professor Pritchard has, however, pointed out that, at their conjunctions, the planets Jupiter and Saturn were never seen as a single star, but, at their nearest, were at the very considerable distance from each other of double the moon's diameter (*M. R. A. S.*, vol. xxv). But Wieseler (p. 61) shows from a notice of Münster, that "the astronomical tables of the Chinese actually record the appearance, for seventy days, of a new star in 750, and this is corroborated by Humboldt (*Kosmos*, i. 389. ann. iii. 561), and by the astronomer Pingré (*Cométographie*, tom. i. 281), who calls this new star a comet, and records the appearance of two comets—one in February and March, 749, and the other in April 750 (Wieseler, 62). If those comets be accepted as the Star of the Messiah, to which the previous conjunction of the planets had attracted the attention of the Magi, Christ would appear to have been born in 749 or 750.

4. The date of the census, which I have noticed already, is another datum from which the time of Christ's birth is reckoned.

The season at which Christ was born is inferred from the fact that he was six months younger than John, respecting the date of whose birth we have the help of knowing the time of the annunciation during his father's ministrations in Jerusalem.

Still, the whole subject is very uncertain. Ewald appears to fix the date of the birth as five years earlier than our era. Petavius and Usher fix it as on the 25th of December, five years before our era; Bengel, on the 25th of December, four years before our era; Anger and Winer, four years before our era, in the spring; Scaliger, three years before our era, in October; St. Jerome, three years before our era, on December 25; Eusebius, two years before our era, on January 6; and Ideler, seven years before our era, in December.

¹ Joseph's two sons by his former wife.

² See *Les Evangiles Apocryphes*, par Gustave Brunet. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach d. Apocryphen*.

³ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (A.D. 264—340) wrote a topographical account of places mentioned in Scripture. To this the name "Onomasticon" is given.

⁴ On the more dangerous pasturages towers were erected, into the enclosures of which the herds might be driven on the approach of enemies, and in which the shepherds themselves might find safety. In Gen. xxxv. 21, there is a village mentioned near Bethlehem, named, "The Tower of the Flock" מִגְדֵּל הַצֹּאן. See also 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. In Micah iv. 8, *Migdal Eder* is used for the city of Bethlehem itself (Gosenius), or for a tower on Mount Zion (Fürst).

⁵ The Greek is "watching the watches of the night." The night watches were four in number, and ended at 9, 12, 3, and 6.

⁶ There is no article before "angel" in the Greek.

⁷ "The glory of the Lord." The celestial splendour round about God—the Shechinah of the Rabbis. The expression is used of the heavenly splendour revealed to St. Stephen (*Acts* vii. 55), of the overpowering light that will surround Christ at His second coming (*2 Thess.* i. 9), of the radiant splendour of the New Jerusalem (*Rev.* xxi. 11, 23). This latter verse may be fitly quoted in connection with the vision seen by the shepherds—"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

^{cc} παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, "to the whole people" (of Israel).

^{dd} There is no article before "babe" in the Greek.

^{ee} The Vulgate reads *euboklas*, instead of *eubokla*, its version being "hominibus bonæ voluptatiæ." Tischendorf, Meyer, Tregelles, Alford, and a number of others, support this reading, but Meyer candidly admits that weighty authorities are to be found for both readings.

Meyer's translation is "Preis [ist] in Himmel Gotto, und auf Erden Heil unter Menschen, welche wohlgefallen," which he paraphrases thus—"God is praised in heaven, by the angels, on account of the birth of the Messiah; and peace, with all its joys, has begun its reign on earth, among men who enjoy the favour of God."

Griesbach, Bengel, Kuinoel, Oosterzee, Godet, McClellan, Webster, Wilkinson, Scrivener, support the received text. It is the reading in the MSS. \aleph c, B α , E, G, H, and others. The genitive is found in \aleph^* , A, B*, D, Ital. Vulg.

But, not to lay stress upon the violation of rhythm by using the genitive, the sense seems also to require the nominative. "Peace to men of good will on earth" is Dr. Farrar's rendering, and is thought by him to "best maintain the obvious poetic parallelism." Whether it do so, the reader can judge. As to the sense, the introduction of the idea of the *elect* as those to whom only the message of the Saviour is proclaimed by the angels is equally opposed to the declarations of God's loving the *world*, and to the grandeur of Christ's mission. I therefore retain the reading of the received text.

Some of Bengel's notes on this passage are very striking. Thus:—ver. 9: "ἀγγελος, angelus. In omni humiliatione Christi, per decorem quandam protestationem cautum est gloriæ ejus divinæ. Hoc loco, per præconium angeli: in circumcissione, per nomen Jesu: in purificatione, per testimonium Simeonis: in baptismo, per exceptionem Baptiste; in passione, modis longe plurimis." Ver. 14: "Gloria in excelsisimis Deo [sit], et in terra pax [sit]; cur? quoniam in hominibus beneplacitum [est]. ἐν ὑψίστοις—in excelsisimis. Non dicunt: *in celo* ubi etiam angeli: sed, *rara locutione*, in excelsisimis, quo angeli non aspirant."

^{ff} Curiously, the Talmud ranks shepherds among those whose callings were to be avoided. "Let no one," says it, "make his son an ass-driver, a camel-driver, a barber, a sailor, a shepherd, or a shopkeeper—they are dishonest callings." (Quoted by F. Delitzsch, in *Jüdisches Handwerkerleben zur Zeit Jesu*, 42.)

^{gg} "It is common to find two sides of the one room where the native farmer resides with his cattle fitted up with these mangera, and the remainder elevated about two feet higher, for the accommodation of the family. The mangera are built of small stones and mortar, in the shape of a box, or rather of a kneading-trough, and, when cleaned up and whitewashed, as they often are in summer, they do very well to lay little babes in. Indeed, our own children have slept in them, in our rude summer retreats on the mountains."—*Thompson's Land and the Book*, 413.

CHAPTER X.

^a The Book of Jubilees is a Jewish book, evidently written before the destruction of the Temple. Ewald thinks it dates from about the birth of Christ; Dillman and Frankel suppose it was written in the century before Christ; while Krüger maintains that it is as old as between 332 and 320 B.C. It was composed in Hebrew, then translated into Greek, and from Greek into Ethiopic, in which language a copy was found by Dr. Krapf, some years since, in Abyssinia. Dillman published a translation of this version in Ewald's *Jahrbücher* 1851—1853. It is a most important authority for Jewish opinions and customs in the time of our Lord.

^b Female children received their names when they were weaned.

^c The subject of Hebrew names is interesting. The same feelings which obtain in all human hearts led to the names chosen, but the form of the names themselves, at different periods, marks the successive changes of the national history. After the Return, when Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, and Aramaic had taken its place, names from the new dialect were naturally introduced—such as Martha, Tabitha, or Caiaphas. After Alexander the Great's time Greek names came into fashion; and Latin names, in the same way, followed the conquest by Pompey. Thus we have Alexander, Antipater or Antipas, Aquila, and Marcus, among many others. Old Hebrew names were also changed into the prevailing mode. Thus, Eleazar became Lazarus, and Amithai Matthew.

^d Jost, i. 166. The hour of morning prayer was 9 a.m., the third hour.

^e Nicanor's Gate was fifty cubits high.

[†] Bab Taanith, fol. xviii. 2. quoted in Lightfoot's *Chorographical Century*, p. 69.

[‡] *Jon. Bell. Jud.* vi. 5. 3. It seems impossible to understand the description of Josephus exactly. He describes, apparently the same gate, differently, in different places. Lightfoot (*Chorog. Centy.* 66, 69) makes the Beautiful Gate that of the Court of the Women, on the east side, and so also does Delitzsch (*Durch Krankheit*, 168),—as hero. Ewald (*Geschichte*, iv. 420) makes the Nicanor Gate the same as the Beautiful Gate, but this seems an error.

[§] It would seem, however, from a note in Derenbourg (*Histoire de la Palestine*, 467), that the sale of doves was a monopoly of the priests, or rather of the powerful family of Annas (*Jolin* xviii. 13), who sold them to retailers from bazaars kept by them on Mount Olivet. They had, it seems, so multiplied the cases in which doves were used in sacrifice that a dove had come to be sold at a golden denarius = half-a-guinea.—*Anrum, Diet. of Antig.*

^{||} The Talmud, quoted by Pressel.—*Herzog Real-Ency.* xii. 624. It is curious to notice the similarity of some rites in other religions, to this Mosaic one. In the East Indies the mother and child are unclean for ten days: the house must be purified with holy water; the mother by baths; the other people in the house by careful washings.—*Sonnerat, Travels*, i. 71. Among Mahomedans there is an interval of forty days required from birth, for purification of mother and child. A Greek mother could not go to a temple till the fortieth day. Rites more or less similar have prevailed from the earliest antiquity in many other nations.—*Meiner's Gesch. d. Rel.* ii. 106 ff..

[¶] Thus Onkelos supports it from Exodus xxiv. 5.—*Targ. Hieros.* xlix. 3. Exodus xix. 22, where priests are spoken of before Aaron and his sons were set apart, seems also to favour it. So, also, Num. xviii. 22. It was, besides, the custom of all antiquity.

[‡] A "Shekel of the Sanctuary," the coin required by the priests, was worth 2s. 6d. of our money.—*Gesenius, Heb. Lex.*; *Robinson, Greek Lex. New Test.* First (*Heb. II. W. B.*), says the shekel was worth two-thirds of a Prussian thaler, or 2s.; but this may refer to the common shekel, which was less pure.

[§] On the Continent, the "redemption money" may be as much as seven or eight florins, but not more. It is generally, however, only about two. In Britain twelve shillings are reckoned equal to five shekels. A poor father gives much less.

^{||} According to Jewish jurisprudence, the Cohen can claim the firstborn as his own.

[¶] For the details of the ceremony of redemption among the Jews of this day, see Mill's *British Jews*, 15; Pressel, "Erstgeburt," and Leyrer, "Reinigungen," in *Herzog's Ency.*

[‡] Nothing was more common with the Jews of Christ's day than to swear by "the Consolation of Israel." Lightfoot gives many examples.—*Horæ Heb.* iii. 41.

[§] "Instigante spiritu."—*Grot.*

^{||} The MSS. B, D, L, &c. and Vulgate have *ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ* "his father," and Griesbach and Tischendorf have adopted it, rightly. So Stier u. Theile (*Bib. Polyglot.*), Meyer, McClellan, and others.

[¶] Anna is said to have been of the tribe of Asher, one of the ten tribes carried off to Assyria 720 years before. That her genealogy had been preserved shows that some at least of the ten tribes had joined Judah, and, also, that in spite of the confusion caused by Herod's burning the legal registers of family descent formerly kept in the Temple, not a few could still trace their pedigree correctly, just as St. Paul traced his from the tribe of Benjamin.

The Mishna furnishes many proofs of this, as, for example, where it names the different families who were required to supply wood for the Temple on special days.—*Taanith*, iv. 5. We find the members of the house of Arach, of the tribe of Judah;—of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah;—of the house of Jonadab the Rechabite;—of the house of Senna, of the tribe of Benjamin,—and a number of others, mentioned. Those of uncertain descent supplied the wood on a special day known as the day of the "common wood delivery."—*Jos., Bell. Jud.* ii. 17. 6. In Nehemiah's time only the members of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi are mentioned separately. The others are classed as "the remnant of Israel" (chap. xi.). Only these three tribes are mentioned separately in the Mishna.

[§] Augustine has a sermon on Anna, which is a good specimen of the allegorizing system in too great vogue in the early Church. The seven years of her married life are a symbol of the Law; the eighty-four of her widowhood, of the Gospel. The law is only seven, while the Apostles, who represent the Gospel, are $12 \times 7 = 84$ —that is, of twelve times more value.

^{||} St. Jerome's bones are said to have been removed to Rome.

CHAPTER XI.

* See Isaiah xlv. 7, which, while addressed to Cyrus, directly opposes this fundamental article of his faith.

† Zech. iii. 1, 2 ff.; iv. 14. Also in names of angels, as in Daniel. See also Tobit *passim*.

‡ Jos. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 5. 4. Τὸ δὲ ἐπαῖον αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἦν χρησμός ἀμφίβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐρόμενος γράμμασιν, ὡς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκείνον ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας τῆς αὐτῶν ἔρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης. Τοῦτο οἱ μὲν ὡς οἰκίον ἐξέλαβον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν ἐπληρώθησαν περὶ τὴν κρίσιν· ἐξήλουν δ' ἔρα τὴν Οὐδεασσαν αὐτὸ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν, ἀποδειχθέντος ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αὐτοκράτορος.

“But what did most elevate them in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth. The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular; and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian who was appointed emperor in Judea.”

Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut valeret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Quæ ambages Vespasianum ac Titum prædixerant; sed vulgus more humanæ cupidinis sibi tantum fatorum magnitudinem interpretati, ne adversis quidem ad vera mutabantur.—*Tacit. Hist.* v. 13.

“Many believed that it was written in the ancient books of the priests that the East would revive about that time, and that there would come from Judea those who should gain the empire. These prophecies referred to Vespasian and Titus; but the common people, in the usual way with human nature, interpreted such a grand destiny in their own favour, and would not be persuaded of the truth even by their troubles.”

Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fati, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de imperatore Romano, quantum postea eventu paruit, prædictum Judææ ad se trahentes rebellarunt.—*Sueton. Vesp.* c. 4.

“An old and fixed belief was spread through the whole East, that at that time, some, springing from Judea, should obtain the empire. This, though foretold, as the event proved, of the Roman Emperor, the Jews applied to themselves, and consequently rebelled.”

Gieseler (*Kirchengesch.* I. i. 5. 51), and Schürer (*Lehrbuch*, 576), believe that Tacitus and Suetonius only copied Josephus. Keim, on the other hand, in *Herzog's Real-Enc.* xvii. 164, *Art.* “Vespasianus,” rejects such an idea. It certainly was quite unnecessary for them to transcribe an opinion which must have been universally known.

† Prof. Dr. Bastian's *d. Rechtsverhältnisse bei verschiedenen Völkern*, 242. Mr. Baring-Gould, also, in his very interesting and learned book *On the Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, 2 vols. 8vo, throws great light on this subject. It is an injustice to the purchasers of such books that no index is provided.

* A very curious and learned paper, by the Rev. A. H. Sayce, M.A., in the transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, vol. iii. 145—339, on the Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians, may be referred to on this subject. Each day of the year (of 360 days) was noted as lucky or the reverse. Like the Jews, they intercalated a month when necessary, to correct the length of the year. They had seven planets, the moon, the sun, Mercury, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, always given in this order. Twelve fixed stars in the western heavens, and twelve in the eastern, were thought to bring with them invasions, misfortune, rain, justice, peace, bad laws, pestilences, blessing, strength, happiness, prodigies, plenty, obedience, floods, and so on. The conjunctions of the planets were also thought to have especial importance in affecting nature and human affairs.—See also Döllinger's *Gentile and Jew*, vol. i. 423.

† In Persian *mogh* means priest. In Zend it is *meh*, *maē*, *māo*, and seems to be related to the Sanscrit *mahat*, *mahā*, in which lies the Greek root *μέγας*, Latin *magnus*.—*Gesenius s. v.* 27. First says the word means “a wise man.”

* The Chaldeans, whose name became after a time synonymous with Magi, have been credited with a Hamitic origin, but Renan (*Histoire des Langues Semitiques*, 66, 67) gives very good reasons for believing the earlier Chaldeans as of Aryan extraction. See also Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*, i. 30.

† Similar prodigies are recorded in *Luc.* i. 529; *Senec. nat. ques.* i. 1; *Serv. ad Virg. Ecl.* ix. 47; *Justin.* xxxvii. 2, &c. See list in Hofmann's *Leben Jesu*, n. d. *Apok.* 123. Allusions to astrologers and their science, generally, abound. See, e.g., *Juv. Sat.* vi. 553, 570; *Pers. Sat.* v. 45.

† There is a place called מִצְדָּה perhaps the birth-place of the false Messiah, from which, very possibly, the idea of Coehba rose.—*Fürst*. Pressel, however, says that

Bar-Cosiba was the name given him after his death—from בָּרִי "to lie"—with the meaning "the Son of Lying."—*Herzog*, i. 789.

There is a capital story from the Talmud in Buxtorf, under the word כִּכָּבָה a star, which is worth giving in English:—"I know the number of the stars," said a conceited astronomer to a Rabbi. 'Do you?' said the Rabbi; 'then tell me the number of teeth in your mouth.' The astronomer put his finger into his mouth to count. 'Ha, ha!' cried the Rabbi, laughing, 'you don't know what's in your mouth, and yet you know all that's in heaven!' So went life, with its many colours, the same two thousand years ago in the streets of Jerusalem as round us to-day.

¹ For curious details on astrological science, see Bell's *Chaucer*, i. 79, note.

¹ Wieseler (p. 59) quotes from the great Jewish Rabbi Abarbanel (fifteenth century), a passage as follows:—"The most important changes in this sublunary world are portended by the conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn. Moses was born in the third year after such a conjunction in the constellation *Pisces*, which is the constellation of Israel, and a similar conjunction will herald the advent of *Messiah*." (The italics are my own.)

The "star" has been thought by some to have been a temporary phenomenon, and this is not impossible. Temporary stars have appeared from time to time in different parts of the heavens, blazing forth with extraordinary lustre; and after remaining awhile apparently immovable, have died away, and left no trace. Such was the star which, suddenly appearing in the year 125 B.C., is said to have attracted the attention of Hipparchus. Such, too, was the star which blazed forth A.D. 389, remaining for three weeks as bright as Venus, and then disappearing entirely. In the years 945, 1264, and 1572, brilliant stars appeared. In 1572, the appearance of the star was so sudden, that Tycho Brahe, a celebrated Danish astronomer, returning one evening (the 11th November) from his laboratory to his dwelling-house, was surprised to find a group of country people gazing at a star, which he was sure did not exist half an hour before. This was the star in question. It was then as bright as Sirius, and continued to increase till it surpassed Jupiter when brightest, and was visible at mid-day. It began to diminish in December of the same year, and in March, 1574, had entirely disappeared. So, also, on the 10th of October, 1604, a star of this kind, and not less brilliant, burst forth, and continued visible till October, 1605. In 1670, a star of the third magnitude appeared in the head of the Swan, which, after becoming completely invisible, reappeared, and after fluctuating in its brightness for two years, at last died away entirely, and has not been seen since. On a careful re-examination of the heavens, moreover, it is found that many stars once visible are now missing.—*Herschel's Astronomy*, 383. Within the last few years a bright star appeared for a short time, and then, like those mentioned by Herschel, disappeared altogether.

² Gen. xlix. 10. Sept. *רָא אֶת־כִּכְלֵמָה אֲנִי־קָם*. Vulg. "qui mittendus est."

³ The Targums quoted are of a somewhat later date, but they doubtless embody the views of Christ's time.

⁴ The *Sohar* is a middle-age Jewish book, but its opinions, in a people so unchangeable, are no doubt those of early ages.

See Gfrörer's *Jahrhundert*, ii. 360.

⁵ That the Rabbis believed Christ to be descended from David seems clear from the fact that in the Talmud, Mary is called "the daughter of Eli," and Jesus, in *Sanhedrin* 43b, is said to have been "related to the royal house (of David)." קִרְבָּן לְמִלְכֻתָּהּ. See Delitzsch, *Jesus u. Hillel*, 13.

⁶ He is not so bad as the Rabbis, however. So sunk were these pedants in their mostly useless studies, that they do not even mention the name of the Maccabees—including that of Judas!—*Derenbourg, Histoire de la Palestine*, 58. Nor do they make any mention of the building of the Second Temple.—*Joist*, i. 323. In the same way Josephus does not mention Hillel, the greatest of the Rabbis.

Josephus, though he does not expressly name the incident at Bethlehem, has two allusions to a massacre which Herod ordered shortly before his death, which very probably refer to it. He says: Herod "did not spare those who seemed most dear to him"—"he slew all those of his own family who sided with the Pharisees, and refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor, because they looked forward to a change in the royal line."—*Ant.* xvii. 11. 7; xvii. 2. 6.

⁷ They are brought forward by Caspari in his *Chron. Geog. Einleitung*, 28.

⁸ Jannæus Alexander, a great persecutor of the party of the Pharisees. Reigned B.C. 105—78.

⁹ Keim and others reject Caspari's arguments and date, believing that they are irreconcilable with other events, before and after.—*Keim, in Schenkel's Bibel Lexicon*, Art. "Herodes."

* See respecting these traditions, Hofmann, *d. Leben Jesu*; Brunet, *Les Évangiles Apocryphes*; Winer, *R. W. B. Art.* "Stern, d. Welsen;" Herzog, *Ency.*, vi. 564, &c. Schleiermacher's Sermons on this period are well worth notice.—*Predigten*, iv. 802, 491.

CHAPTER XII.

* *ἡγεμὼν* = ruler of the people. Simon Maccabæus was elected ethnarch by the people. It was a title somewhat below tetrarch. He stamped *Nasi* נָסִי = prince, on his coins,—the title assumed by the president of the Sanhedrim. John Hyrcanus, Simon's son, was, also, styled ethnarch, and Pompey made Hyrcanus II. ethnarch, though at times he called himself king. Herod, like Aristobulus, son of John Hyrcanus, took, or rather got, the title of king. Archelaus had to content himself with that of ethnarch. There was an ethnarch of the Jews in Alexandria, and Aretas was ethnarch of Damascus.

^b The origin of the name Nazareth has been much disputed. The principal explanations offered have been that it comes:—1. From נָזַר (*nazir*) "consecrated," or "devoted" to God. 2. From נֹצֵר (*notzeri*) "my Saviour." 3. From נָזֵר (*nätzer*) "a sprout" or "shoot." But the word should have been some form of נֶזֶר if it had been intended to have had a reference to the Messiah, as the "branch," or "sprout" of David. These are to be rejected. The true etymology seems to be that derived from the characteristic of the locality, the high hill overlooking Nazareth, and as it were *guarding* it. In this case it would come from נָזַר (*natzar*) "to look, to watch, to guard." If from נֶזֶר (*netzrah*) it would mean "the watched or guarded one." If from נֹזֵר (*notzerah*), it would mean—"the watcher" or "guardian." The importance of hills as outlooks, or defences, in ancient times, needs not be more than recalled to mind. Moreover, it was the custom to give towns their names from some leading feature of their site. Thus Sepphoris, on its hill, is "the bird," נִסְפֹר (*tsippôr*). Safed—high on the northern hills—is "the watch tower," צֶפְתָּה (*zephath*). Magdala is "the tower," מִגְדָּל (*migdal*). Ramah is the "high place," רָמָה, and is the name of several towns on heights. Gibeon—"the hill city"—גִּבְעוֹן; Gibboi, "the boiling fountain"—from a fountain on the hills of the name. These are only a sample of a law common to all lands and ages.

^c Tobler (*Nazareth in Palaestina*, 4) describes it as twenty minutes long by eight or ten broad.

^d Furrer, under date of April 8th, speaks of the hills as lonely and barren.—*Wanderungen durch Palästina*, 267.

* Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, writing on the 20th March, from Mizpeh, a little north of Jerusalem, says:—"While I am writing, hail is falling, and dense fogs, accompanied by sharp showers, at intervals, are hurried up by the violent equinoctial gale from the south-west, which threatens every moment to tear the frail cotton shelter from over my head, and hurl it into the neighbouring valley. Only a few days ago, the weather was like a fine June day in England. These fine days of early spring are rare, however, and we must often look for cold pelting rains, mists, hail, and even snow—though the latter very rarely, and only on the central ridge. A fine day at this time of the year shows the country in its best cloak. A little later in the season every blade of grass will be withered up; the shrubs on the hills will be blackened and parched; the plain will be covered with an impenetrable veil of white mist, known to the African traveller by the appropriate name of 'smokes.' Above head, the sky will be that pitiless glare of changeless blue, never to be relieved by a single speck of cloud, till the welcome rains of autumn begin to cool the scorched soil and burning rocks.

"Such are the changes of temperature to be found in this country, from Petra to Damascus. Just two years ago I was snowed up, near the former place, at an elevation of 4,500 feet, and three weeks later, in Moab, being only 1,500 feet lower, I sighed for a lump of snow to put in my tea, the thermometer standing at 105° Fahr. in the shade. At Damascus (2,340 feet, in the Salahiyyeh suburb), snow is rare, though sleet is not uncommon in winter. In summer, the thermometer ranges up to 100° Fahr. in the shade, and there is at times a difference of as much as 30 degrees between the dry and wet bulbs."—*Palest. Explor. Fund Rep.*, October, 1872, 175. See, also, Furrer's admirable *Art.* "Witterung," in Schenkel's *Bibel Lexicon*.

^f Josephus says that no "village" in Galilee had fewer than 15,000 inhabitants; but this seems to be an exaggeration. Keim supposes the population of Nazareth in Christ's day, to have been about 10,000.—*Jesu von Nazara*, i. 318. It has now about 3,000.

* I have altered the received translation where it was desirable to give a more literal rendering of the Hebrew.

^b Ewald thinks chapters 30 and 31 of Proverbs date "from the last age before the exile." Hitzig assigns them to "the last quarter of the seventh century B.C., which is about the beginning of the exile." Delitzsch says, "the time immediately after Hezekiah" (B.C. 726-698). Zückler thinks that Lemuel and Agar were shepherd princes of a Jewish colony, of the tribe of Simeon, which settled in the territories of the almost exterminated Amalekites, in the reign of Hezekiah (1 Chron. iv. 39-43). Hitzig, Delitzsch, and Bertheau, agree with him, that peculiarities in the language of the two chapters prove this Israelitish-Arabian origin. Verse 10, begins with **ש**, the first letter, and the thirty-first verse begins with **נ**, the last, the other letters coming between in their proper order. This form of poetical construction is found also in Jeremiah, and in the Psalms.

^c It is to be remembered that Wordsworth was a staunch Protestant, with no thought, the most distant, of *Mariolatry*.

^d The history of Susanna was a Greek addition to the Book of Daniel.—*Herzog*, xv. 265. Riettschi assigns it to the century before Christ. Ewald (iv. 636) classes it with the copious literature of the later Grecian age—that is, a little earlier than Riettschi's date.

^e ἀπὸ βρεφους. It may be translated "from the cradle."

^f Likely the high priest of that name.—A.D. 63-65.—*Schürer*, 468. So, Keim, i. 428. Isaiah ii. 3.

^g This law dates from B.C. 80.—*Ginsburg, Cyclo. Bib. Lit.* i. 728.

^h Dr. Ginsburg quotes the saying of the Talmud, "The world is preserved by the breath of the children in the schools," as evidence of the value attached to education, but Dukes explains it as referring to the innocence of young children.—*Blumenlese*, 104.

ⁱ The Hazan, according to Buxtorf, led the prayers and the singing of the congregation, and conducted the discussion of some point of the Law which followed. He also presided over the reading of the Law, showing what part was to be read, and directed in other similar matters connected with public worship. Buxtorf calls him a deacon. Winer makes him no higher than a sexton. He was sometimes called the "Messenger of the Synagogue," and was evidently the person to whom the necessary details of synagogue work, generally, were entrusted. In the Talmud, his position is beneath that of the scribe, and above that of the "boor," or *Am-ha-aretz*.—*Buxtorf, Lex. Heb., Chal., et Tal.* 730, 731. Renan (*Vie de Jésus* 18), calls the Hazan "the Reader." Delitzsch makes the Hazan of the prayer-house of Bethany a village baker (*Durch Krankheit zur Genesung*, 99); and in a recent law case in London, a "Reader," examined as a witness, proved to be also a butcher (1875).

Am-ha-aretz, literally means "countryman," but was used for an illiterate clown—just as *Bauer* "a peasant," has come to mean "boor;" or *paganus*, a "countryman," what we understand by a "pagan;" while *urbains*, a "city man," meant an educated person. Indeed, "civilized," "civil" "civility," and the related words, all refer to supposed characteristics of a *citizen*, as contrasted with a countryman.

^k The words "in spirit" are not in the Sinaitic or Vatican MSS., and are omitted by Mill, Lachmann, Griesbach, Tischendorf, and Meyer.

^l The same word (χαρις) is used here and in verse 52.

^m προέκοπτε. For a very striking sermon of Schleiermacher on Jesus being the "Son of God," and possessing, from the first of His life, divine power which qualified Him to be the Saviour of the world, see Predigten, ii. 56.

CHAPTER XIII.

* This prayer, in later times, has been incorporated with the morning prayers of the synagogue service, as the Rabbis have taught that it is not proper to utter it at once on awaking, because the hands are not then washed, as yet.—*Cohen*, 200.

^b That is, who leaves the world as blameless as he enters it. All these sentences are ancient Jewish proverbs.

^c Seek the company of the learned and the good.

^d A warning against bad companions.

^e The least ground of suspicion should be avoided.

^r He worships himself.

^s The first trace of synagogues in Palestine, is in Psalm lxxiv. 8, which is apparently of the Maccabean period. Josephus (*Bell. Jud.*) speaks of a synagogue in Antioch, under the Syro-Grecian kings.

^t The Rabbis based the duty of prayer on the text, "And ye shall serve the Lord your God." From this they deduced the obligation of praying three times a day. R. Ramban, however, a great Jewish commentator, thought he could show, from a number of quotations from the Talmud, that prayer was only a Rabbinical, not a Mosaic, law.—Cohen, 186.

¹ The Targums claim that synagogues existed even in the times of the Patriarchs.—*Targ. Onk. Gen. xxv. 27.*

^k Cohen says, however, "It would appear from the Talmud, that there were many synagogues in Alexandria, but none in Jerusalem. As regards what is said in the Talmud of Jerusalem (*Megilla*, 3, 73) of 480 schools in Jerusalem—it may fairly be understood of schools, but not of synagogues, since public worship could be held there, nowhere but in the Temple."—Cohen, 194. See Vitringa, *de Veteri Synag.*, p. 28. But in that case, what shall we make of Acts vi. 9?

¹ Of seven synagogues of Galilee, of which Captain Wilson examined the ruins, the largest was 90 feet long, inside, by 44 feet 8 inches broad (within). The smallest was 48 feet 6 inches by 35 feet 6 inches. Their shape was by no means always the same. One was 60 feet by 46 feet 6 inches; another 57 feet 3 inches by 53 feet. The walls were from 2 to 4 feet thick, and even, in one instance, 7 feet thick. The space between the columns or pillars, inside, varied from 9 feet 6 inches to 6 feet 1 inch. The spaces in the roof stones for the rafters are $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep by 2 feet broad.—*Quarterly Statement*, No. 2, p. 42.

^m They were the Morning Service or Morning Offering, the Mincha or Vespers, and the Evening Service or Evening Offering. The Rabbis said that these were invented by the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; each having introduced one.

ⁿ Often called "rulers of the synagogue," in the New Testament, *e.g.*, Mark v. 22; Acts xiii. 15, &c.

^o Antiquity seems to have paid more respect to the wisdom and experience of age than later ages, if we may judge from the names of their dignitaries. The Arab Sheikh, the Italian Signor, the French Seigneur, the Spanish Señor, all mean an old man. So also does the German *Graf*, a count, which is simply *graw*, *krawo*, grey-headed.

^p The Semicha, introduced by the Rabbis about n.c. 80.—*Pressel, Rabbinismus*, in *Herzog*, xii. 474. The president and members of the Sanhedrim, were ordained in the same way.—*Leyrer, Synedrium*, in *Herzog*, xv. 318. See also the *Art.* "Volk Gottes," *Herzog*, xvii. 318, and Schenkel's *Art.* "Handauflegung," in *Bibel Lexicon*. Priests had been thus consecrated from the first, Ex. xxxii. 29.

^q Luke, iv. 20. Translated "minister." The word *ὑπηρέτης* means pr. an under-rower (in a galley)—a common sailor—a "hand" as distinguished from *οἱ ναῦται*—seamen, or *οἱ ἐπιβάται*, mariners. Used for a constable—a beadle, Matt. v. 25; John vii. 32. Translated "servants," Matt. xxvi. 58; Matt. xiv. 54, 65.

^r It is now used to cover the head of worshippers in the synagogue during prayer, but 1 Cor. xi. 4, would seem to imply that this was not done in the time of Christ.

^s The fringes of the Tallith were a good illustration of the pedantry of Rabbinism. They were fastened to it as follows:—A hole was made about two inches from each of the corners, and through this were drawn four threads of white lamb's wool, which were secured by a double knot. Seven of these threads were half a yard long, but were doubled so as to make them half that length, one of the threads being left longer than the rest. This was wound seven times round the other seven threads, and then a second double knot was made. It was then wound nine times more round the other threads, and another double knot made. It was next wound eleven times round them, and a fourth double knot made; then thirteen times, after which a fifth double knot was made. The whole of the threads were now of an equal length. The space from the hole in the Tallith to the first double knot needed to be equal to that from this knot to the fifth, and from the fifth to the end of the thread it required to be three times the space between each of the remaining knots. A kind of pocket was further made in each corner of the Tallith, in which to keep the fringes, lest they should be defiled by touching the body.—*Mill's British Jews*, 16, 18.

^t Schürer says, that they might also be white; but this is a later innovation of the Rabbis.

^u The fringes had to be kissed three times during a prayer, in which the word "fringe" was repeated thrice. The prayer is, in fact, a repetition of Num. xv. 38, 39.

* The Tephillin and the Zizith were introduced before the time of Alexander the Great—*Jost*, i. 95.

† Besides the separate verses, the parts read were, 1 Chron. xvi. 10—37; Ps. c., except on Sabbaths and feasts, and, as said above, the last six Psalms.

‡ It is impossible to know exactly the form of worship, in detail, in the time of Christ. The prayers, however, are the same, for the most part, as they were then, and so are the lessons. *Jost* (i. 174) ascribes both prayers and lessons, with slight developments and additions since, to the time of the Great Synagogue. *Schürer* (499) confirms the substantial identity of the Sch'ma, at present in use, with that used in Christ's day. *Zunz* (367, 369, 371) says, that only the Benedictions have received additions to any extent since the Christian times.

§ It consisted of Deut. vi. 4—9; xi. 13—21; Num. xv. 37—41. Every child was taught the Sch'ma as soon as it could speak. So that we thus know the first verses learned by Our Saviour.

|| The Sch'mone Esre שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר בְּרָכּוֹת or the "Eighteen Benedictions."

¶ The Great Synagogue rose about 350 years before Christ (in a.c. 348—342).—*Hitzig*. The 14th and 17th benedictions are of the later date. For their antiquity, see *Cohen* 191. The Jews ascribe them to Ezra. *Herzfeld* (ii. 133) thinks the first three and the last three prayers of later origin. *Comp. Jost*, i. 39; ii. 262; *Zunz*, 305, 367. *Cohen* thinks, the 7th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th, and 16th of later date than the destruction of the Temple (216).

|| Lightfoot, 281, "Obmurmuravit totus cœtus et dixit interpreti, Tace, et tacuit. See also 1 Cor. xiv. 30; Matt. xiii. 54; Acts xviii. 6.

¶ On Sabbath and Feast days, only the first three and the last three portions of "The Prayer" were read; forms for the special day being introduced instead. Many short prayers of different kinds were also early introduced, in addition. On feast days, &c., &c., special lessons.—*Jost*, i. 177.

¶ The word used, *παραρπυζόμενον*, implies a continuous growth in wisdom. It would have been *πεπληρωμένον* if a finished and perfect act had been meant.

CHAPTER XIV.

* The names of the months of the Hebrew year were:—

1. Nisan ...	"the month of flowers,"	corresponding nearly to	April.
2. Ijjar ...	"the month of beauty,"	"	May.
3. Siwan ...	"the bright month,"	"	June.
4. Tamuz ...	"	"	July.
5. Ab ...	"the fruit month,"	"	August.
6. Elul ...	"the wine month,"	"	September.
7. Tisri ...	"month of the floods,"	"	October.
8. Marcheswan ...	"rainy month,"	"	November.
9. Kislaw ...	"cold month,"	"	December.
10. Tebet ...	"cold month,"	"	January.
11. Schebat ...	"	"	February.
12. Adar ...	"the returning sun,"	"	March.
13. Adar II. (introduced from time to time to correct the errors of the lunar year).			

The variations of the date of the new moon sometimes made Nisan equivalent to parts of our March and April, and so on, throughout.

† Originally there were only seven days, but the Rabbis added a day, as they did also in the case of other feasts, to guard against a possible mistake in reckoning the new moons.

‡ Passover, פֶּסַח, a passing over, sparing, deliverance from מִצְרַיִם to pass over, to spare.

§ *πνεῦμα*, here means intellect, understanding. The verse refers to the fact that He had grown vigorously in mind and body. St. Luke uses the phrase, "His parents," in verses 41 and 43. *οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ*.

¶ It was for being supposed to have taken Trophimus, an Ephesian, past the balustrade into this, that Paul was attacked by the mob.—Acts xxi. 29.

† His words are—"The high priests found the number of sacrifices (at the Passover in question) was 256,500. Not fewer than ten nor more than twenty persons belong to every service, for it is not allowed that any one should feast by himself. Now, allowing

only ten for each sacrifice, this amounts to 2,700,200 persons, that were pure and clean." He adds, that those of both sexes, who, for the time, were ceremonially unclean from sickness, &c., and the foreigners were not counted in this vast aggregate.

^a "The inhabitants of Jerusalem did not let out their houses at a price to those that came to the feasts, but granted them to them gratis."—*Gloss on Talmud*, quoted by Lightfoot, *Chorograph*, Cont. 47.

^b One passage in the Talmud says, that gardens of roses were allowed in the city.—*Lightfoot*, 48.

^c *Euerós*, a covered colonnade in gymnasia or schools of exercise, where athletes exercised in winter. It served also for a promenade. So called from its polished floor. In Roman villas a terrace with a colonnade was also called a *xystum*.

^d Fragments of description of Jerusalem by Aristæas in B.C. 250, in Appendix to Havercamp's *Josephus*.

^e See the opinions of various authorities given by Arnold, *Art. "Zion," Herzog*, xviii. 617 ff. See also Kiepert's New Map of Jerusalem, Berlin, 1875.

CHAPTER XV.

^a Heb. מצות—*Matzoth*.

^b A clever authoress gives the following description of the mode of keeping the Passover at Jerusalem at the present day:—"We were very anxious to see the Passover kept in Jerusalem, and by the kindness of Mrs. Finn, we received an invitation to the house of one of the most respectable Jews for that evening—the night of our Good Friday. We went there between eight and nine o'clock, and found the whole family,—including four generations,—assembled in the principal room, which was well lighted with lamps and several wax candles: these they were obliged to ask the Moslim kawasses, who came with us, to replenish, when they burnt out later in the evening, as the Jews cannot kindle a light or do any kind of work during the feast. We were placed upon the divans at one side of the room, the women of the family, with the servant and children, remaining together, at the bottom of the room, only one of the women, the venerable mother of the master of the house, being seated with the men and boys, who were all together in one corner, with a small table before them, covered with silk and velvet cloths, richly embroidered with gold, some of which were heirlooms of antiquity. A little boy, one of the youngest members of the family, then asked, 'What mean ye by this service?' (in accordance with Exodus xii. 26); upon which all the males stood up, rocking themselves without ceasing a moment, and recited very rapidly, in Hebrew, the story of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Then a boy repeated a very long legendary tale in Spanish, with a rapidity that was perfectly astonishing. All had books before them, and continued rocking their bodies to and fro, while only one was speaking. This is an illustration of the text—'All my bones shall praise Thee.' After a long time the men sat down, when a long white cloth was placed upon their knees, and the old mother brought in a metal ewer and basin, and poured water upon the hands of each, which were wiped in the cloth while they continued reading out aloud. Then the master laid a white cloth over one shoulder, and removing the coverings from the table, he took one of the large cakes of Passover bread, till then concealed, and breaking it in half, tied it into the end of the cloth and slung it over the shoulder of the youngest boy, who kept it for ten minutes, and then passed it on to the next, and so on—all continuing to recite from the books without stopping; after this the mother brought another basin, and the master took up a glass vessel containing a mixture of bitter herbs and vinegar, and some other ingredients, and, separating ten portions from it with his finger, threw them into the basin—these represented the ten plagues of Egypt. There were plates of lettuce and other herbs, and the bones of the roasted lamb, in dishes on the table, besides the unleavened bread, and four cups of wine; three of these at certain parts of the ceremony were passed round, and partaken of by each individual, including the women and baby; one cup of wine remained untouched, which was said to be for the Prophet Elijah; and we were told that in most families, towards the end of the supper, the door of the room is opened, and all stand up, while the Prophet is believed to enter and partake of the wine. Among rich Jews this cup is frequently of gold, with jewels. Some other dishes were laid on another table, containing nuts and dried fruits, of which they afterwards partook; except in this, the females entered into no part of the ceremony. All were dressed in their best and gayest clothes, with jewels and flowers in their hair. Before the conclusion they wished each other the usual wish, that at the coming of the next Passover, they might all be in Jerusalem, and the usual prayer was offered, that by that time the Messiah might come to redeem Israel."—*Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*, by Emily A. Beaufort.

^a The description of the Passover is taken from Lightfoot, Dillmann in the *Bibel Lexicon*, Ginsburg in Kitzo's *Cyclo*, Schürer, Josephus, the Talmud, Herzog, &c. &c.

^d There were twenty-four courses of these representatives, as of the Priests and Levites, so that men from each course were required to be in attendance at the Temple for a week twice a year.

^e This description of the Temple and of Jerusalem is taken from Josephus, Caspari, Hausarath, Delitzsch, Cohen, Jost, Vaibinger, Keim, Bunsen, and others.

^f πεπληρωκώς ἔτος ἤδη δωδέκατον.

^g ἀνέστην. Luke ii. 44.

^h Lightfoot (*Hor. Heb.* iii. 46, 47) gives illustrations of this.

ⁱ Some suppose Hillel to have been present, but he appears to have been a man in Herod's early youth eighty years before.—Ewald, v. 407. Jost, i. 328, 265. Schürer, 36, 454. He is said to have died A.D. 10 or 11, aged 120. But Dorenbourg thinks that he and Shammai died about the same time as Herod, A.D. 2 or 4. There is, indeed, no certainty in these matters.

^k Meyer translates ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς μου—"in my Father's house." So, also, Kuinoel. De Wette prefers this, but thinks it does not exclude the sense—"my Father's affairs." Oosterzee, prefers "affairs." Tischendorf translates the clause—"Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

^l See a fine sermon of Schleiermacher, on this subject.—*Predigten*, iv. 313.

^m See an admirable sermon by Schleiermacher on this verse.—*Predigten* iv. 206.

CHAPTER XVI.

^a They were of the horns of a ram or he goat.

^b Even he stayed only a moment in the small, dark, damp chamber.—Jost, i. 164.

^c Even the grape and olive harvests were over.

^d All Jews, everywhere, do so still, even in London.

^e The Jewish name is *Chanuca*—חנּוּכָּה—Dedication.

^f Matt. iv. 7, 10. Luke iv. 4, 8, 12. Matt. ix. 13; xv. 4. Mark vii. 10. Matt. xxii. 36, 38; xviii. 16; xi. 10; xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14. Matt. xxvi. 54. Luke vii. 27. Matt. xi. 10. Luke xxii. 37. Matt. x. 35; xii. 5; xiii. 14, 15; xv. 8, 9; xxi. 16, 42; xxvi. 31. John vi. 45; xiii. 18; xv. 25. Matt. xii. 40; xix. 4, 5. Mark x. 6. Matt. xxii. 32. Mark xii. 26. Luke xx. 41. Matt. xxvii. 46. Mark xv. 34; ix. 49. John x. 34. See Canon Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, 380.

^g Jesus must have used the Hebrew text in disputing with the Rabbis, and Joseph and Mary, doubtless, understood, read, and taught the Hebrew; but could hardly have known the Greek translation of the Seventy. It was, moreover, even then little esteemed among the Jews. Paul shows the dislike of the Jews to Greek. Acts xxi. 40.

^h Comp. Matt. vi. 23, "The light that is in thee;" vi. 26, "Are ye not much better than they?" xii. 12, "How much is a man better than a sheep?" ix. 4; xii. 25. Luke xiv. 7; xxi. 1.

CHAPTER XVII.

^a Buxtorf explains the title Scribe (Sopher), thus—"Elias" (a Rabbi) writes:—"The wise are meant by the name Sopherim (Scribes), who are called, more exactly, Rabbis, masters, and doctors, or Teachers of the Law."—*Lex. Heb. Tal.* &c., under the word שֹׁפֵרִים. In the New Testament, the Scribes are sometimes called "lawyers" (νομικοί), Matt. xxii. 35; Luke vii. 30; x. 25; or "Teachers of the Law" (νομοδιδάσκαλοι), Luke v. 17; Acts v. 34; 1 Tim. i. 7. In the Mishna the name "Scribe" is only used of the FOUNDERS of the Oral Law, that is, of the Scribes (סֹפְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה), from the time of Ezra to that of the Maccabees. Instead of Scribe, the title of "the Learned" (סֹפֵר הַלְמוּד), the same word as Hakim—which is still that of the East for a learned man—is used. Buxtorf gives an extract from the Mishna, which may be added to what has been elsewhere said of the corruption of the Pharisees in the days of Christ:—"The weak good man, the clever

knave, the religious woman, and the mesh-like rules of the Pharisees, bring old age on the world and destroy it."—Page 799 a.

^b Que chacun se persuade que ceux qui vivent sous l'obéissance "doivent se laisser conduire et diriger par la divine providence, qui se sert de l'entremise de leurs supérieurs, comme s'ils étaient des cadavres qui se laissent remuer en tout sens et manier comme on veut : on comme le bâton que tient un vieillard, et qui lui sert à quelque fin qu'il veuille l'employer, et de quelque côté qu'il veuille le tourner. On obéit, quant à l'exécution, lorsqu'on fait ce qui est ordonné; quant à la volonté, lorsque celui qui obéit n'a pas d'autre volonté que celle de celui qui lui commande; quant à l'esprit, lorsqu'il pense comme lui, et qu'il croit que ce qu'on lui commande est commandé à propos," &c.—*Constitutions des Jésuites en France*. (Edition prepared by themselves in 1762.) Thus it is demanded of the Jesuit that he be towards his superiors like a corpse, which can be moved in any way desired; or like a staff in the hands of an old man, which turns any way he wishes, and serves any end he may fancy. He is even to *think* as his superior commands, and to believe that all he orders is right! This reminds one of the horrible extinction of manhood in the "assassins," as told by Von Hammer (*History of the Assassins*, 135), where members of the order threw themselves over precipices, or stabbed themselves, at the command of their "prior," to show visitors how obedient they were!

^c The taking of Jerusalem by Pompey, B.C. 63, was connected with the overthrow of the Syro-Greek kingdom, which, till then, had at intervals been paramount in Judea.

^d On this part of the subject, see Jost i. 199, 205.

^e Laws of Manu, quoted in Baring-Gould's *Heathenism and Mosaism*, 204.

^f This method of interpretation is called Gematria (the science of figures).

^g Thus—

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} \text{N} & \text{R} & \text{O} & \text{N} & \text{K} & \text{S} & \text{R} & \text{R} & & & \\ 50 & + & 200 & + & 6 & + & 50 & + & 100 & + & 60 & + & 200 & = & 666 \end{array}$$

Neron Késar (Nero the Emperor) was apparently the name by which the Christians of Asia spoke of the monster. Thus the coins of Asia bore the legend—NEPΩN KAIZAP—the form of the mystic number. See Renan, *L'Antechrist*, 416. Schürer, *L.B.* 449. Gfrörer, i. 245. Hausrath, *Zeitgesch.* i. 99. There are inscriptions at Palmyra in which Nero's name and dignity are written *exactly* as in the cipher in the Apocalypse.—*De Vogüe's Syrie Centrale*, &c., 1868, pp. 17, 26.

^h Gratz has a learned and ingenious attempt to show that Jesus was indebted to the Pharisees for Christianity.—*Gratz, Geschichte der Juden*, iii. c. 11, 216. Geiger tries to support the same view, but with equal want of success.

CHAPTER XVIII.

^a Josephus speaks of the lavish expenditure at these feasts, which reduced many to poverty.—*Bell. Jud.* ii. 1. 1.

^b Herod had ten wives:—

1. Doris. Son, Antipater, beheaded by his father (B.C. 4?).
2. Mariamne, grand-daughter of Hyrcanus. Sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, put to death by Herod, B.C. 7. Daughters, Salampsis and Kypros. Salampsis married Phasaelus, her first cousin, and had three sons and two daughters.
3. Mariamne, daughter of the High Priest, Simon (B.C. 24). Son, Herod, first husband of Herodias.
4. Malthake, the Samaritan. Sons, Archelaus and Antipas. Daughter, Olympias.
5. Cleopatra, of Jerusalem. Sons, Herod and Philip.
6. Pallas. Son, Phasael.
7. Phädra. Daughter, Roxana.
8. Elpis. Daughter, Salome.
- 9 and 10. A brother's daughter, and a sister's daughter. No children.

Thus Herod had nine sons and five daughters. Yet the family, except a very few obscure descendants, died out within 100 years.—*Jos. Ant.* xviii. 5. 3.

Intermarriages were, doubtless in part the cause.

1. Salampsis, daughter of 2, married her cousin Phasael, son of her uncle Phasael.
2. Aristobulus, son of 2, married Berenice, daughter of Herod, his father's sister, Salome.

3. Herod Philip, son of 3, married Herodias, daughter of Aristobulus and Berenice.

4. Antipas, son of 4, married the same Herodias.

5. Philip, son of 5, married Salome, daughter of this Herodias.

In the next generation—

1. Herod, son of 2, married Mariamne, grand-daughter of Joseph, Herod's brother.

2. Agrippa, son of 2, married Cypros, grand-daughter of Phasaël, Herod's brother (see 2).

In the third generation—

Aristobulus, son of 1, married Salome, daughter of Herodias (see 5).

Agrippa (2) is "Herod the King."—Acts xii. 1.

He had children, who lived to maturity, and are named in the New Testament.

Agrippa (King Agrippa).—Acts xxv. 13.

Berenice, married Herod, King of Chalcis; then lived in the worst sense with her brother, "King Agrippa," Acts xxv. 13, 23, and was finally mistress to the Emperor Vespasian and his son Titus.

Drusilla, married to Felix, after he had seduced her. She had a son by Felix, who, with his mother, perished in the eruption of Vesuvius, A.D. 79.

* His character, a type of that of Roman governors as a rule, is given pithily by Velleius Pat. ii. 117: "Syriam divitem pauper ingressus pauperem reliquit," which may be translated: "He had nothing when he came to rich Syria; Syria had nothing when he left it rich."

† Crassus fifty years before (B.C. 54) had plundered them of £1,250,000.

* "A Tropaiikon, or Roman Victoriatus, so called from the image of the Goddess of Victory on it—of the value of half a denarius, the 'ponny' of the New Testament. Matt. xx. 2, 4, 7; ix. 10, 13." The denarius may be taken as having been equal to about 8½d.—*Dict. of Antiq., Art. "Denarius."*

† The Roman procurators were lieutenant-governors of divisions of Roman provinces, under the governors-general of each province. They were generally Roman knights, and were especially charged with the collection of the revenue of their governments, and with any legal matters connected with it. Occasionally, in smaller provinces, or in districts belonging to a larger province, they took the place of the governor-general, and in that case had, in part, the command of the troops, and were the judges even in criminal matters, but always in subordination to the governor-general of the province. This was the position of the procurators in Judea and Samaria after the incorporation of these as one district, with the province of Syria, on the banishment of Archelaus.—*Winer, R. W. B., Art. "Procuratoren."*

* The system of the Roman exchequer, by which not only the indirect taxation, but the revenue from the imperial domains, was raised by middlemen, secured the most excessive advantages to Roman capitalists, at the expense of the tax-payers. The direct imposts consisted either in fixed sums of money to be raised from the community; which precluded the intervention of the capitalists, or, as in Sicily and Sardinia, in a tithe of the produce of the soil, the collection of which, in each separate district, was farmed out, most frequently by the rich provincials, and often by the communities themselves, to keep away the dreaded middlemen. When the province of Asia came into Roman hands, the Senate had decreed that the former plan, in the main, should be introduced, but Caius Gracchus (B.C. 123) got this rejected by a popular vote, and not only loaded the province which, till then, had had scarcely any taxation, with the most excessive indirect and direct imposts, especially the tithe of the soil, but caused these burdens to be farmed for the whole province, and that in Rome; a plan which not only shut out all participation by the province itself, but called into existence a colossal association of capitalists, to purchase the tithes, the house tax, and the customs.

In addition to these imperial burdens, the local charges on the community (in the provinces) must have been heavy. The costs of government, the maintenance of the public buildings, and all civil expenses generally, were borne by the municipal budgets, the Romans only undertaking to pay military expenses. But even of these a good part was thrown on the communities. They had to build and maintain the military roads outside Italy, and the fleets in all other seas but Italian. They had even to pay the expenses of the army, in great measure, for the cost of the levies made in each province was raised from the province itself, and it was even required to pay its troops when they were sent off to other provinces.

Besides all this, the great chapter of wrongs is not to be forgotten, by which Roman officials and farmers of the taxes increased the burdens of the provinces in endless ways. Every gift accepted by a governor was, in effect, an extortion, and even the right to sell might be claimed by him. His official position, moreover, offered him abundant opportunity for doing injustice if he wished. The quartering of troops; free quarters for officials, and for a swarm of adjutants of senatorial or knightly rank, of scribes,

servants of the courts of law, heralds, physicians, and priests; the right of state messengers to free conveyance; the accepting and the transport of all natural productions due as taxes, and, above all, forced sales and requisitions, gave all officials the opportunity of carrying back princely fortunes from the provinces, and the plunder became even more and more general, as it grew clearer that the State would not interfere with it, and that the tribunals were only dangerous to honourable men.—*Mommsen's Römische Geschichte*, iii. 113, 392.

^b Tacitus (*Annal.* iv. 6) says this was the case in the year 17. Jesus would then be at least twenty-one years of age.

CHAPTER XIX.

^a It is often said, that the Zealots were the same party as ultimately became known in the last days of Judaism by the name of "Sicarii" or "dagger-men," and were deservedly infamous. But Pressel, in the *Art.* "Zelotes," in Herzog, shows that the Sicarii were mere hireling ruffians, who had already been in the pay of Gessius Florus, the Roman procurator.

^b Quirinius was the imperial Legate in Syria, and the governor-general of the province from A.D. 6—11. It is worth adding the following, from Cicero, to what has been said elsewhere, of the rapacity and lawlessness of the highest Roman functionaries in the East.

"Gabinus (Proconsul or Governor-General of Syria, B.C. 57—55) extorted, daily, an incalculable weight of gold from the well-stocked and rich treasures of Syria, and made war on the peaceful, that he might cast their ancient and hitherto untouched riches into the bottomless gulf of his own lusts."—*Pro Sestio*, c. 43.

"In Syria his one employment was to make corrupt agreements with tyrants, interested decisions, robberies, pillagings, and massacres."—*De Provinciis Consularibus*, c. 4.

For notice of Gabinus, see page 291.

CHAPTER XX.

^a A reed, an anchor, a ship, or a representation of the rock from which the hot spring flowed, were the varying symbols of the city on its coins.

^b The estimates of the size of Galilee vary. Keim puts it at 2,000 square miles, which is preposterously high. Mr. Phillott calculates it at 930 square miles. I have followed Monke's map. The boundary line of the province, which is minutely stated by Josephus, has not as yet been traced, owing to the disappearance of some of the towns named by him.

The nearest way from Galilee to Jerusalem by Samaria, was three days' journey. —*Jos. Vita.* 52. Scythopolis, at the south end of Galilee, was 600 stadia (seventy-five miles) from Jerusalem. Tiberias and Nazareth were each fifteen miles from Scythopolis. Capernaum was between five and eight miles from Tiberias. Tiberias was about ninety miles from Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXI.

^a גליל הנations (Isaiah ix. 1), from גל, to turn in a circle. *Lit.*—"The circle, or region of the nations." In Isaiah—Galilee of the nations (*i.e.* heathen).

^b "City of the Scythians," apparently thus called from the settlement in the ancient Bethshean of some of the Scythians, who invaded Palestine on their way to Egypt, shortly before the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.—*Rawlinson's Herodotus*, i. 246.

^c Sepphoris kept up a busy intercourse with Ptolemais, and in the last war sided, from the first, with the Romans, against the Jews.—*Jos. Vita*, 65.

^d The narrow spirit of the Rabbis is well shown in their way of speaking of Perea, "The Land of Israel," they say, "is holier than all lands, because the holy sheaves, the

first-fruits and the shewbread are taken from it. Canaan is holier than the land on the other side of the Jordan, for Canaan is chosen as the dwelling of the Shechina, but Perea is not so.—*Benidbar* r. 7, p. 188, quoted by Sepp, *Leben Jesu*, ii. 19. Perea means the land on the other side of *ḥ nepala* (χάπη)—*Sins*. Paras, the farther bank (of a river).

CHAPTER XXII

^a Josephus informs us that Pompey used battering rams in his siege of the Temple.

^b Pompey insisted on entering the Holy of Holies with his officers.—*Bell. Jud.* i. 7. 6. *Ant.* xiv. 4. 4. *Tacit. Hist.* v. 9. *Livii Epit.* c. ii.

^c Slaves were regularly branded. Cicero uses the word *Stigmatias* of the mark of the owner branded on a slave.—*Cic. Off.* ii. 7, 25.

^d Pompey was murdered ignominiously by an Egyptian centurion, who stabbed him in the back as he was landing. His head was then cut off, and his naked body left unburied on the sand. His freedman, Philip, alone remained by it, and gathered enough drift wood on the shore to make a funeral pyre and burn it, according to the Roman custom.—*Plutarch, Pompey*, iv. 150.

^e References to the Messiah, supposed to belong to the Maccabean times, are found by Hilgenfeld in Pa. lxxxiv. 9; lxxxix. 39; but the date of these Psalms is too much disputed to argue from any expressions they contain.

^f Psalm cv. 15. Is in the Hebrew, Touch not my Messiahs (Christa, or Anointed ones) *לֹא תַמְּשֵׁן מְשִׁיחַי*—so 1 Chron. xvi. 22.

The Jewish kings, also, are constantly spoken of as God's "Messiahs." The name is, "the anointed of Jehovah;" or, in the Greek version, "The Christ of the Lord." *ὁ χριστὸς Κυρίου*.—1 Sam. ii. 10, 35; xii. 3, 5; xvi. 6; xxiv. 7, 11; xxvi. 9, 11, 23. 2 Sam. i. 14, 16; xix. 22; xxiii. 1. Pa. xviii. 51; xx. 7; xxviii. 8. In Isaiah xlv. 1, the name is used of Cyrus, King of Persia.

^g They based its application to him on passages like Pa. ii. 2; Dan. ix. 26. Buxtorf (*s. v.* מָשִׁיחַ) gives a list of seventy-one passages of the Old Testament, which are made to allude to the Messiah by the Jewish Commentators. I copy a few as a specimen of Rabbinical interpretation. Gen. xxxv. 21.—"And spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar," (Migdal-Eder, the tower of the Shepherds, that is, Bethlehem, see p. 123). "This is the place," says the Targum of Jonathan, a contemporary of Christ, "from which the King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of days." Gen. iii. 15 and xlix. 10, are also applied to the Messiah. On Exod. xii. 42, the Jerus. Targum says, "Moses came out of Egypt; the Messiah will come out of Rome." The Rabbis, in fact, believed that there would be two Messiahs, for only thus could they explain the opposite allusions of suffering and triumph as marking the Messiah, which occur in the Old Testament. One Messiah was to be the son of Joseph, or Ephraim, and was to fight for Israel, and ultimately to die. To him they referred all the passages in which the humiliation of the Messiah is spoken of. The other was to be the son of David, who would reign for ever. Buxtorf quotes many passages showing this.

^h The approximate age of the principal Apocryphal Books may be set down as follows:—

Wisdom of Sirach. Alexandrian, about B.C. 175. Fritzsche.

Baruch. About B.C. 150. Ginsburg.

Wisdom of Solomon. Of Alexandrian origin, B.C. 145—116. Fritzsche.

Judith. Hilgenfeld, B.C. 147—145. Ewald, B.C. 130. Movers B.C. 105.

Esther, Supplement to Judith. Traditions dating back to the captivity. Ginsburg.

The Book of Enoch. About B.C. 110. Hilgenfeld, Dillmann.

The Book of Jubilees. From B.C. 110 to B.C. 64, and partly even during the reign of Herod. Küstlin.

The Jewish Sibylline Books. About B.C. 140. Hilgenfeld.

First Book of Esdras. At least, B.C. 100. Ginsburg.

Tobit. End of Persian Period, about B.C. 350. Ewald, Fritzsche.

Translated into Greek about B.C. 100. " "

1 Maccabees. About B.C. 90. Fritzsche.

The Psalms of Solomon. About B.C. 40. Hilgenfeld.

2nd Esdras. B.C. 50.—Ginsburg. B.C. 28—25.—Hilgenfeld.

The Song of the Three Holy Children. The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and the Prayer of Manasses are of uncertain age, but date *n.c.*
 The Assumption of Moses. About *A.D.* 40. Hilgenfeld.
 2 Maccabees. Before the destruction of Jerusalem in *A.D.* 70. Fritzache.

¹ The chapters from which some of these quotations are taken, may be later than earlier portions of the book, but this would not affect the generation of Christ's day.

² The friends of the Asmonean princes. The "pious" or "Zealots" supported the Maccabees while they fought for religion, but when they set up an earthly monarchy, with themselves at its head, instead of the theocracy, they turned against them.

³ The usurpation of the title of king by Aristobulus I. and the following Maccabæan kings.—*Langen, Das Judenthum in Palæstina*, 68. *Hilgenfeld, Messias Judeorum*, 31.

⁴ The warlike kings, Jannæus, Alexander, and Aristobulus II.

⁵ Antipater, the Edomite, father of Herod.

⁶ Aristobulus II. was poisoned, by Pompey's orders, *n.c.* 48; and his son, Alexander, was put to death the same year.—*Bell. Jud. i.* 9. 1, 2. *Ant. xiv.* 7. 4.

⁷ Pompey, *n.c.* 66, after him Gabinus, *n.c.* 57, and after him, Crassus, *n.c.* 52.

⁸ Pompey sent off great numbers of Jews as captives (slaves) to the western parts of the empire, including Rome.

⁹ King Aristobulus, his son Antigonus, his two daughters, and his son-in-law Absalom, adorned the triumph of Pompey, *n.c.* 61. *Ant. xiv.* 4. 5. Aristobulus and Antigonus were again taken prisoners by Gabinus, *n.c.* 56, and again sent to Rome.—*Bell. Jud. i.* 7. 6. *Ant. xiv.* 6. 1.

¹⁰ Part of the army of Hyrcanus was incorporated with the Roman army. Gabinus took 3,000 Jews for soldiers.—*Bell. Jud. i.* 8. 3. *Ant. xiv.* 5. 2. Cassius, when he took Tarichæa, on the Sea of Galilee, sold 30,000 Jews as slaves.—*Bell. Jud. i.* 8. 9. *Ant. xiv.* 7. 3.

¹¹ *χριστὸς κύριος*. See Luke ii. 11. Comp. Isaiah xlv. 1; *τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύριε*—to my Christ, Cyrus. Christ being *lit.* "anointed one."
 Comp., also, 4 Esdras vii. 28; *ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ χριστὸς*. My son, the Christ. xii. 32.

¹² I have given the Greek of these Psalms as literally as possible, without sacrificing the sense.

¹³ Dillmann and Frankel believe the Book of Jubilees to have been written in the century before Christ. Ewald thinks it was written about the birth of Christ.

¹⁴ Given in the Talmud, from the report of Abba Saül Ben Batnit, who was in Jerusalem in the time of Agrippa I., or shortly after, and heard it from the lips of Abba Joseph, a citizen of Jerusalem. Agrippa reigned *A.D.* 37—44, that is, almost immediately after the crucifixion.—*Geiger, Urschrift*, 118.

¹⁵ Sons of Eli, is a name given to the priests on account of their wickedness.—1 Sam. ii. 22 ff.

¹⁶ The worthless son of Eli.

¹⁷ Three hundred is a Rabbinical expression for an indefinite number. It is not, however, said for what time this supply was intended.

CHAPTER XXIII.

^a The question, whether the Virgin Mary had other children than Jesus, has been the subject of much controversy. As early as the second century, it was suggested, from a desire to maintain the dignity of Christ's birth and the perpetual virginity of Mary, that the "brethren and sisters" mentioned in the Gospels were either the children of Joseph, from an earlier marriage, or the family of Mary's elder sister, and thus, only cousins of our Lord. Hegesippus (about 160), Clement of Alexandria (200), Jerome and Augustine (400), advocated the opinion that they were cousins, while Origen (230) and many after him, in both the East and West, maintained the view that they were Joseph's children by an earlier marriage.

The idea that they were half-brothers of Jesus is thought to be justified by their hostility to Him, but this is a very weak argument. In support of the opinion that

they were cousins, it is urged that the same names occur in other connections. Thus there are a James and a Joses, sons of another Mary, the supposed sister of the Virgin, and of her husband Clopas or Alphaeus, the reputed brother of Joseph. Further, this James, the son of Alphaeus, it is said, appears in the number of the Apostles, and with him a Jude. It is held that Joseph, after the early death of his brother Clopas, took the widow and the children into his own house, and thus the latter came to be so identified with Joseph's household that, though cousins, they were always regarded as brothers.

In answer to this, it is replied, that the second Mary is indeed said to have been the mother of a James and Joses, but never of a Simon or Jude. Moreover, it is held that the true reading of John xix. 25, should be "There stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister;—Maria, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." This is the reading of Tischendorf, Davidson, Kelm, Hausrath, and others, and it makes four women, not three, present at the crucifixion. The relation of Clopas to Joseph, moreover, rests on the doubtful testimony of Hugesippus, in the second century. Further, there is no allusion whatever in the Gospels to a former marriage of Joseph, and no hint of the childlessness of Mary after the birth of Jesus. They rather assume that she had a family, since Jesus is twice spoken of as her "first-born" (Luke ii. 7; Matt. i. 28). Then, in the history of Jesus Himself, He is mentioned, without any limitation, as the brother of those named. The names of His brothers, and the fact of His having sisters, are given by His fellow-townsmen of Nazareth, without a hint at their being only cousins, or half-blood to him. In other places where "brethren" are mentioned, at times in connection with Mary herself (Matt. xii. 48), the current use of the word precludes the idea of any other than the full relationship. The substitution of cousins for brothers throughout, is, indeed, wholly arbitrary and contrary to the usage of the language.

^b There is, however, a difference in the original. Mary, the Mother of our Lord, is called *Μαριαμ*—(Mariam); her sister, *Μαρια*—(Maria). See *Schmidii Concord.*

^c The name is, correctly, not Cleophas, but Clopas (Κλωπας). See John xix. 25. Alphaeus or Alpheus (Αλφαῖος), and Clopas are different ways of pronouncing in Greek the Hebrew name *צפאי* (Chal'phai). Matthew and Mark give it without the aspirate *Αλφαῖος*, as the Sept. writes *Αγχαῖος*, for *Ἰ* (Haggai) Hag. i., while John exchanges the *π* for the Greek *κ* as *φασέκ* (Phasek) is used in the Sept. (2 Chr. xxx. 1), for *פסח* (Pesach). This is Robinson's view, but Mangold (*Bibel Lexicon*, Art. Judas) denies the identity of the two persons, maintaining that the Hebrew name, at the most, could only be Chlophas in Greek, yet Hausrath supports Robinson.—*Bibel Lex. Art.* "Alphaeus."

^d This is Keim's view. Hausrath, Delitzsch, and Schenkel, think James the Just was the son of Clophas-Alpheus.

^e The child was the son of Virgil's patron, C. Asinius Pollio, and was the youthful companion of Herod's ill-fated sons, Alexander and Aristobulus.

^f It was said to have bellows of elephant hide, and pipes producing a hundred tones.

^g The word righteous receives an illustration of its meaning among the Jews, from the name by which the Zealots of the Law were known, from the time of John Hyrcanus. *צדק* (Tsaddouk) or *צדק* (Tsaddouki)—Sadducees—was the name given to the party who prided themselves on strict legality. It came from *צדק* (Tsaddik)—just, righteous—applied both to God and men.—Isaiah xlv. 21; Prov. xxix. 7. Yet, besides legal exactness, it, in other cases, implied moral worth.

^h In Luke i. 15, it is said that John will drink neither wine nor strong drink (*οἶνον καὶ σικερα*). *Σικερα* (sikera), Heb. *סִיקְרָא*. Sikera Hebrew sermone omnis potio, quæ inebriare potest, sive illa, quæ frumento conficitur, sive pomorum succo, aut cum favi decoquantur in dulcem et barbaram poticnem, aut palmarum fructus exprimuntur in liquorom, coctisque frugibus aqua pinguior coloratur.—*Hieron. Ep. ad Nepotian.* i. p. 266 ed. Ver. (Sikera in Hebrew is every kind of drink which can intoxicate, whether that which is made from grain, or from the juice of fruit, or from honey prepared as a sweet and rude beverage, or from the juice pressed from the fruit of the palm, and thickened and coloured by fruit syrup.) It thus included all fermented liquors, whether prepared from grain, fruit, dates, honey, or the like. Pliny says, that Palestine was especially noted for palm wine.—*N. H.* xiv. 19.

ⁱ Authorities for this description of the Nazarite vow:—Dillmann, *Art.* "Nasiraer," *Bibel Lexicon*. Oehler, *Art.* "Nasiraer," *Herzog's Real Ency.* Ewald, *Alterthümer*, 113—118. Derenbourg, *Histoire de la Palestine, passim*. Jost, *Judenthum, passim*. Arts. "Nasiraer," "Wein," &c. in *Winer's Real Wörterbuch*.

^k Lipsius (*Art.* "Essaer," *Bibel Lexicon*) gives as the origin of the name the Aram.—*hasa* and *hasen*—to be pious—and thinks it meant "the pious;" also the apparently related

name Hasidim, the pious—of the Maccabean time. Derenbourg thinks an attempt at settling the point, hopeless.

¹ There was a gate of the Essenes at Jerusalem.

² Philo quod omni. pr. lib., 876.—*Bell. Jud.* vi. 8. 9; ii. 8. 6.

³ The Tigris ܬܝܓܪܝܢ means, "The swift stream." The *Zend*, Teger, *Pehr*, Tegera, from which our Tigris has come, itself, means "The Swift." Tigris, in *Median*, means "an arrow."

CHAPTER XXIV.

^a In the Talmud a certain Nathan Dezu Zilba is mentioned, who wore a dress of camels' hair as a penitent, that the suffering it caused might be accepted for his pardon.—*L. Sabbat.* f. 56. 2).

The sackcloth of Jewish mourners and penitents, and the hair-cloth shirt of later ages, had the same idea of penitential self-infliction. "The hair of the camel, especially the coarser woollen tufts, about the hump and back, is in some places torn off, but more generally, as I have observed, closely shorn once a year, and used for weaving into a close thick fabric by the Arab women. It is of this material that the 'black tents of Kedar' are generally constructed, as it is much thicker and stouter than woollen stuff. It is very harsh and rough to the touch, and thus his dress was in accordance with the austerity of the rest of the Baptist's mode of life."—*Tristram's Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, 66.

^b It is a touching illustration of the vitality of popular beliefs that the remnant of the Samaritans surviving at Nablûs—the last of the race—still cling to the fond Messianic dreams of the days of Christ. They call the Messiah ܡܫܝܚܐ (ta'ch)—He who restores the penitent—that is, who leads men back to God. He will appear in the 6,000th year after the creation of the world, which is close at hand. Hence, He is already on earth, but without knowing His dignity. In the year 1853, when the whole community numbered only 122 souls, they expected a great political revolution, and, in consequence of this, the kings of the earth, were, in 1863, to cause the wisest of all nations to assemble at an appointed place, to search out the true faith, by mutual consultation. One would be sent thither from the Israelites—that is, from the Samaritans, also, and this one would be the Messiah. He would gain the victory in this friendly discussion, lead the assembly to Mount Gerizim, where they would find, under the twelve stones* on the hill-top, the ten commandments, or the whole Law, and under the stone of Bethel,† which is also, as they think, on Gerizim, the sacred vessels of the Temple, and the pot of manna, so long hidden. All would then believe in the Law, and in the Messiah as their king, and acknowledge him as ruler of the whole earth. He will convert all men and make them equal, and will live 110 years on earth, but will then die and be buried on Gerizim, for his sepulchre can be nowhere but on the top of this pure, holy hill, which is fifteen cubits higher than Ebal, the next highest mountain on earth. Gerizim was the Ararat of Genesis, which was not overflowed by the flood, and, therefore, has never been defiled by a dead body. After this, the earth will last some hundreds of years longer, till the seventh thousand year be complete, and then will come the last judgment.—*Petermann, Art. "Samaria," in Herzog*, xiii. 373.

CHAPTER XXV.

^a ܝܪܝܚ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ—Kikkar-hayardân—ἡ περὶ ἧρας τοῦ Ἰορδάνου (Matt. iii. 5) is properly the valley, on both sides of the Jordan, from Tiberias to the Dead Sea. The tract near Jericho is so large in proportion to all the rest, that it often takes the name. The expression points, however, to John's ministry being carried on on both sides of the river.

^b Lord Nugent's description of the Jordan is striking. "The whole expanse of the great flat (the Jordan plain beside Jericho), uncultivated and dreary as it is, is everywhere broken into patches of green and flowering shrubs—the tamarisk, dwarf oak, myrtle, oleander, wild bramble rose, &c. At the end of some seven miles from the site of Jericho

* The twelve stones taken by Joshua from the Jordan.—Joshua iv. 3.

† The stone which Jacob used for a pillow. Another legend says, that the stone is that in the Coronation Chair, in Westminster Abbey.

are the thickets of Jordan, such as line it, I believe, along the whole of its course hither from the Sea of Galilee. Jackals and gazelles are the only wild animals now inhabiting these coverts, save a few wolves, which are rarely seen but when forced out upon the plain by the swelling of the waters from the mountain torrents, after the autumnal rains. The stream, when we saw it, at the beginning of March, ran strong, and at only a few feet below the level of its steep banks; the water, of a deep yellow hue (from the limestone), but not unpleasant to the taste. Its general breadth is of between fifty and sixty yards; perhaps, a little wider: and in most parts it is too deep, within a few feet out (when thus high) to allow any one but swimmers to trust themselves out of arm's reach of the brink, and of its drooping branches and tall reeds. The pilgrims who come thither in crowds at Easter bathe in this way. Some of us tried to make way against the current, but were carried several yards down before reaching even the full strength of it. The windings of the river are of great beauty."—Vol. ii. 100.

John's Baptism must have begun in summer, or at least not in the winter months or in the early spring. The waters are then so cold, as they flow from the snows of Lebanon, that even Arabs will not bathe. See authorities quoted by Sepp.—*Das Heilige Land* i. 778, &c. Nor would it have been fitting, then, as Sepp remarks, to have spoken of giving away an extra coat, though the self-denial of doing so in winter would, of course, be so much the greater. Even at Easter, no one but a foreigner thinks of bathing, and pilgrims are carried away every year by the rush of the yellow waters. The air and soil are, however, much warmer than the river, as may be judged from the fact that intertropical plants like indigo, cotton, and the sugar cane, flourish in the Ghor.

^a Haircloth (𐤇𐤍𐤏𐤍) was the garment of ascetics and prophets. Isaiah wore it (xx. 2) and Zechariah speaks of it as the usual dress of prophets (xlii. 4).

^a *Metanoia*—to perceive afterwards—to have another view. Hence, to change one's mind, or purpose.—*Xen. Cyr.* i. 1. 3.

^c This is clear from the presence of publicans and soldiers, and from the characteristics of all such great excitements.

^c The Semicha, or laying on of hands, was introduced by the Rabbis, about B.C. 80.

^c "John the Baptist."—*Irving's Works*, iii. 21. 41. Irving's Lectures on the Baptist are, perhaps, unequalled in the language as specimens of pulpit eloquence.

^b The threshing-floors were arranged all round the town. The most common mode of threshing is with a heavy wooden slab, into the under side of which, pieces of stone are often introduced, to serve as teeth. The slab is drawn round and round the threshing floor, by oxen or horses, over the grain and straw, the driver standing on it to press it down, till the grain is shelled out, and the very straw cut into chaff. The farmer then comes with a broad shovel, and throws up the whole into the air, against the wind, so that the chaff is carried away, while the grain ultimately remains, clean, behind.—*Land and Book*, 538. *Furrer's Wanderungen*, 249.

¹ Two words for repentance are used by John—*Metanoia*—to perceive afterwards, to have an afterview—hence, to change one's mind; and *Metamelomai*—to change or transfer one's care—hence to change one's mind or purpose.

² 𐤇𐤍𐤏𐤍 (Adōn). The word "Messenger" 𐤇𐤍𐤏𐤍 (Malach), one sent—an angel or a prophet—is the same in both places in the verses. It is used in chap. ii. 7 of a priest, as the messenger and teacher sent by God, and in Isaiah xlii. 19, of Israel, as the Messenger of God to the nations, and their teacher.

¹ See Matt. xxvi. 23. Mark vii. 4. Heb. ix. 10. The mode of John's baptism has been and still is much discussed, but the practice of the Eastern Church, and the very meaning of the word, leave no sufficient grounds for questioning that the original form of baptism was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters. The Western Church, doubtless in deference to the requirements of colder climates, the change of manners, and the convenience of custom, has changed the mode to sprinkling. In a spiritual system like Christianity, the essence of the symbol has seemed more important than the outward form, where that appeared only to have sprung from local circumstances.—*Stanley's Eastern Church*, 34.

² Dean Stanley makes a curious remark in his *Memorials of Canterbury*—I quote from memory—as to the change in English manners in the last five centuries. When news came of the Black Prince's death, the people thronged the cathedral, and bent their heads against the pillars with loud weeping and wailing. The self-control of the present day, is thus only an attainment of later civilization. At a certain stage, all nations, like children, appear to have no idea of concealing their emotions, whether painful or the reverse. The word *ἐκβολαγούμενοι*, used by the Evangelists—with the *ἐκ* intensive, seems to point to this characteristic.

³ Matthew only, uses the expression "Kingdom of Heaven," from Dan. vii. 13, 14. The other Gospels speak of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER XXVI.

* Caspari quotes a passage from the Talmud, to show that John must always have baptized in the upper parts of the Jordan, as the lower parts were "unclean" from their waters being "mixed."—*Geog. Einleitung*, 96.

† The most ancient MSS. read Bethany instead of Bethabara, but no site of that name is now known on the Jordan. Bethabara was introduced into the text by Origen. The spot supposed to be the scene of John's second ministrations suits the circumstances, and thus has probability in its favour, since there are, perhaps, no other spots on the Jordan which do so.

‡ Philip, Peter, and Andrew had come from Bethsaida, on the Lake of Galilee, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee.—John xxii. 1; i. 44.

§ Ænon, near Salim, is said in the *Onomasticon* to be eight miles south of Scythopolis, but the site has not been identified. A Salim was, however, found by Robinson close to Nablus, on its east side.

• The name "Word of God," on which St. John dwells in his first chapter, was one by which the Messiah was widely known in the days of the Baptist. Thus, Jonathan Ben Uzziel, a contemporary of Christ, in his Targum, interprets Num. xxiii. 21. "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them":—"The Word of Jehovah is their help, and the trumpets of the King Messiah are heard among them." In Gen. xxvi. 3, his paraphrase of the words "I will be with thee and will bless thee," is "My Word will be thy help." In Gen. xxxix. 2, the words "God was with Joseph," are paraphrased "My Word will be thy help." In Exod. iii. 8, it is "the Word of God, who is to go down to save Israel," and, so, constantly. It was the Word which protected Noah in the ark. It was the Word of God who revealed himself to Jacob at Bethel; who shone in the pillar of cloud and fire, and who, in Isaiah lix. 16 and 17, is sent by God to bring salvation to all. The Targum of Onkelos, a scholar of Gamaliel, abounds in such interpretations, and even in the Book of Enoch, dating long before Christ, "the Word" is frequently used of the expected Messiah, *e.g.*, ch. xiv. 21; xv. 1; xci. 1, &c. &c. See Langen, *Judenthum*, 248—281. Nork, *Rabbinische Quellen, passim*. Lepsius, in *Bibel Lex.*, i. 85—99. Gfrörer, i. 309 ff. Schürer, 659 ff.

† Paraphrase of John i. 31 in Ewald's *Geschichte*, v. 230. I have adopted Ewald's fine reflections in the preceding paragraph.

‡ Hitzig gives this as the meaning of Machærus. Sepp calls it the "Black Tower."

§ This description of Machærus is taken from Josephus. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 6; i. 3. Seetzen, quoted by Ritter, *Geog. of Palestine*, iii. p. 1; c. v. (Eng. Trans.). Tristram, *Land of Moab*, 253—265. Keim, *Jesu von Nazara*, i. 578—581. Hausrath, i. 329, 330.

† Her father, Aristobulus, was put to death by his father, Herod, B.C. 7.

* The sacredness of an oath to Eastern monarchs is strikingly shown in the same story. The innocent cause of the tragedy had pleased Xerxes, and he had promised, with an oath, to give her whatever she asked. Forthwith, she foolishly asked a splendid cloak he was wearing, which had been woven for him by his wife. Partly from liking for the cloak, but more for terror of his wife, he would not consent to this, but, to honour his oath, he gave her a city, and a vast sum in gold, and a military force which she alone should command. Amestris, thinking she had been led by her mother to ask the cloak, determined that that unfortunate lady should be destroyed, and succeeded, as we have seen, in her purpose.—*Herod*, ix. 108—112.

† Marcus Licinius Crassus, the Triumvir and Consul. Born about B.C. 115, was slain by the Parthians, after his defeat by them, B.C. 53.

‡ Hausrath thinks she was married after the death of John. Perhaps so. No one can speak except conjecturally on matters respecting which we have so few data.

CHAPTER XXVII.

* Milton rightly says, "the pinnacle." The article is used by both Matthew and Luke, but it is omitted in our English version.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

^a Martyred between A.D. 161—168.—*Semisch in Herzog. Art.* "Justin Märtyrer," *βειδης, ἄδοξος, ἄτιμος*.—*Just. Dial. c. Tryph.* xiv. 86, 85, 88.

^b τὴν ὄφιν αἰσχρὸς.—*Strom.* ii. 440. *Ped.* iii. 1. 3.

^c Nec humanae honestatis corpus fuit, nedum celestis claritatis.—*De. car. Chr.* Ne aspectu quidem honestus.—*Adv. Jud.* 14.

^d Born about A.D. 186, died about A.D. 254.

^e τὸ σῶμα μικρὸν καὶ δυσειδὲς καὶ ἀγενὲς ἦν.—*Orig. c. Cels.* vi. 75.

^f ἰχθὺς. ι = ἰησοῦς, Jesus. χ = χριστός, Christus. θυ = θεοῦ υἱός, Son of God. s = σωτήρ, the Saviour.

^g The word used is διπλοῖς (diplois). It was the large-sized pallium or blanket which was worn by the poor and by philosophers, over the tunic, or close-fitting inner garment, but sometimes, alone. It was thrown over the left shoulder, and fastened over the right one by a buckle, and thus hung down in easy folds over the person, leaving the right arm bare from the shoulder, the left one being used by pushing it from under the pallium, as with our long cloaks. This was not a Jewish dress, and of itself condemns the statue as certainly not one of Christ, or, at least, as simply a work of imaginative art.

^h It was said to be especially powerful in cases of consumption. Julian, or according to others, Maximin, is said to have destroyed it.—*Hofmann's Leben Jesu*, 293.

ⁱ The spithamē (σπιθαμή) was the distance from the tip of the thumb to that of the little finger, when the two were stretched apart to the utmost. It was thus equal to about 9 inches. This would make Christ only 5 feet 3 inches high. But it is likely that the measure was used loosely in a larger sense, in the days of Nicephorus, for the idea sought to be conveyed is that of unusual tallness.

^k Nicephorus lived at Constantinople, perhaps as a monk. He closed the list of the Greek Church Historians. The dates of his birth and death are equally unknown, but he was alive about A.D. 1320 or 1330. Legends and fables are largely intermixed with his facts.

^l "Various readings" add—"not less than 15½ palms." The Roman palmus was 3 inches (the breadth of the four fingers), which would make Christ a dwarf. The later Roman writers, however, had a palmus of 9 inches, and, by this, Christ's stature would be 11 feet 7½ inches. This is enough to show the worthlessness of this addition.

^m "Of the colour of a hardly ripe filbert, and smooth as far as the ears, but curly below them, and waving, and a very little darker, with a rich brightness."—*Var. Read.*

ⁿ The stole—(στολή, used for the Latin stola), was properly a female dress, worn over the tunic. It came as low as the ankles, while the tunic did not reach much below the knees. It was restricted to Roman matrons, and was not allowed to be worn by divorced women. In Christ's day, the word was used of male robes of more than ordinary beauty and length. Thus, the angel in the sepulchre was robed in this way.—*Mark xvi. 5.* It was the robe which the father ordered to be put on the returned prodigal.—*Luke xv. 22,* and in *Rev. vi. and vii.*, it is five times used of the white robes of the redeemed in heaven.

^o It is a great mistake to think of Jesus with the head uncovered. As the priests in the Temple, and worshippers at prayer, had their heads covered, so no one went with the head bare in common life. Indeed, apart from religious reverence, the fierce sun of Palestine makes exposure of the head impossible. The keffiyeh of the modern Bedouins is apparently the representative of the old Hebrew head-covering most in use. Strangely enough, the French word coiffe seems to be derived from it.

^p The majesty of Christ's appearance on the occasion of His arrest, overawed those coming to take Him (*John xviii. 6*); but it is not probable that there was anything striking in His usual appearance. If there had been, it seems as if His disciples would have recognized Him by it. *John xxi. 4.* *Luke xxiv. 13.* *Mark xvi. 12.* The legendary narratives of the portraits of our Lord are given more or less fully in *Hofmann*, 67, 292. *Hase*, § 34. *Winer*, I. 576.

^q Christ's dress was that of a Rabbi, for His seamless robe illustrates Abarhanel's remark that the robe of a Rabbi of Palestine had no seam in it. *Ursinus* says, that the dress of a Rabbi was a tunic, without sleeves, which reached to the knees, and had no other openings than for the head and arms.—*Nork*, xcxi.

^r I confess I have no sympathy with the critics who would seek to invalidate the fourth Gospel. To me it carries its evidence in itself, for of it, as of Him of whom it

tells us, we may confidently say, "Never man spake like this." An air as from Paradise breathes through its verses, and He who walks before us in its holy light is instinctively felt to be Divine. If, however, any reader should wish to perplex himself by seeing the foolish wisdom of critics refuted, he may turn to Professor Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, 235 ff.; Lange, *Das. Evan. Johannes, Einleitung*; or to Professor Lightfoot's Articles on "Supernatural Religion" in the *Contemporary Review* for 1875 and December 1874. A list of the literature on both sides is given by Meyer, *Kommentar, Johannes*, p. 33. For my part, I am quite willing to accept the leadership of such men as De Wette, Brückner, Luthardt, Bleek, Hase, Ewald, and Meyer. "The recognition of this Gospel as the composition of St. John," says De Wette, "remains ever more triumphant in the Church, after the last and fiercest attacks."—*Handbuch, zum Neuen Test., Johannes. Einleitung*, xl. "In fact," adds Brückner, at the same place, "the latest and keenest criticism has served conclusively to establish and confirm the Apostolic origin of this Gospel, more and more." "We may conclude from the experience of the past," says Meyer, "that this Gospel will always emerge from all the storms of criticism radiant and victorious in its calm inner majesty, as the last star of evangelical history and teaching, shining with the purest and highest light within the limits of the Apostolic age; the spiritual creation of that disciple, who was most intimate with his master. Nor will it ever set."—*Kommentar, Johannes*, 30.

* The words "is preferred before me" are wanting in the best MSS. They are, indeed, repeated in the next verse.

* The aorist used implies that this was the continued burden of John's ministry.

* ἀνὴρ, (anēr), a more honourable word than ἀνθρώπος (anthrōpos).

* ἔμεινεν—continued abiding on Him. The aorist is used instead of the participle of the former clause, to express the importance of the fact stated and its continuance. See Winer, *Grammatik*, 533.

* There is no ground for Dr. Farrer's speculation as to κόσμος (kosmos), "the world," meaning "the people of Israel." The word ἀφαιρεῖν ("to take away") is used in the Septuagint.—1 Sam. xv. 25: "Now, therefore, I pray thee *pardon* my sin." Lev. x. 17: "God hath given it you to *bear* the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Jehovah." Ex. xxxiv. 7: "*Forgiving* iniquity and transgression and sin." Isaiah vi. 7: Thine iniquity is *taken away*. δ αἶρων—present participle—He who even now is taking away, &c.

The genitive in "Lamb of God"—δ ἄμνος τοῦ θεοῦ—is that of property. It is hence equivalent to "The Lamb appointed by God" for sacrifice.—Meyer, *Kommentar, in loc.*

* Even so keen a critic as Meyer (*Kommentar, in loc.*) feels that this is the true explanation.

** Ipse tibi culpam attrahis, quia nem. habes, e. quo d. lege div. colloquaris.—Schöttg. (quoted by Keim ii. 204).

^{bb} He calls Himself, διδάσκαλος—didaskalos, teacher.—Matt. x. 24; xxvi. 18.

" " καθηγητής—(Kathēgētēs) *leader, guide*, in the sense of *teacher, master*—equivalent to Rabbi.—Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.

" " γραμματεὺς—Matt. xiii. 52. "Scribe," equivalent to "one instructed," a scholar—a learned teacher of religion. It is used of those who elsewhere are called "lawyers."

He is called διδάσκαλος.—By a Scribe.—Matt. viii. 19. By the Pharisees, ix. 11. By Scribes and Pharisees.—Matt. xii. 38.

By the collectors of tribute. " xvii. 24.

By the Sadducees " xxii. 24.

" " ῥαββί—(Rabbi). By Judas.—Matt. xxvi. 25, 49. Mark xiv. 45.

By Peter.—Mark ix. 5; xi. 21.

By John and Andrew.—John i. 39.

By Nathanael.—John i. 50.

By Nicodemus, a "ruler of the Jews"—John iii. 2.

By the disciples.—John iv. 31; ix. 2; xi. 8.

By the people.—John vi. 25.

" " ῥαββουρί (Rabboni) and ῥαββουρί (Rabbouni). By Mary Magdalene.—John xx. 16.

By Blind Bartimæus.—Mark x. 51.

Didaskalos is the Greek equivalent of Rabbi, and is used exclusively, as such, by St. Luke.

Rabbi was a title of respect implying dignity or age.

The Rabbis were very fond of being called "Father."—Matt. xxiii. 9.

The gradation of title is given thus:—"Major est Rabbi quam Rab, et major est Rabban quam Rabbi, et major est qui nomine suo vocatur quam Rabban." Rabboni or Rabbouni is simply this word with the affix for "my." "Rabbi is greater than Rab, and Rabban than Rabbi, but it is still greater than Rabban to be called by one's own name."

In ordinary cases, however, to call a teacher by his own name was not respectful. He must be called Rabbi.—*Nork*, xcxi.

For the various uses of the title, see Godwyn's *Aaron and Moses*, 30.

^{cc} Ewald (*Geschichte*, v. 322) supposes it was the tenth hour by Roman reckoning—that is, from midnight—when they entered Christ's abode. Meyer thinks it was the tenth hour by Jewish reckoning—that is, from 6 a.m.

The instance in John xix. 14, where the sixth hour must have been in the morning, (compare c. xviii. 28) shows that in each case, in John's Gospel, the connection must decide whether Roman or Jewish reckoning is used. Here, the long day suits much better than 4 p.m.—the tenth hour of Jewish reckoning.

^{cc} The confusion and transitory character of the times is well shown in the names of the two brothers—Andrew, a Greek name; Simon, an old Hebrew one, slightly changed from Simeon.

Dr. Newman has a beautiful sermon on Andrew calling Simon.—*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, v. ii. p. 1.

Schleiermacher, also, has admirable sermons on the whole incident.—*Predigten*, v. i. 376; iii. 161.

^{cc} Lange has a fanciful a play on the name of Simon's father—Jonas—a dove, and the name given to Simon himself. "Now the shy dove of the rock; in future, thou shalt be the protecting rock of the dove." But this is mere idle fancy.—*Life of Christ*, ii. 286.

^{cc} It is the fig-tree, verses 48, 50; doubtless the one which stood before or near his house, as others did before other houses. Vines and fig-trees were very commonly planted at the doors of country dwellings, so that the inmates might be able to sit under their own.—Micah. iv. 4. (Note by Ewald, v. 326.)

^{cc} Two titles of the Messiah. On the phrase, "Son of God," see Langen's *Judenthum*, 281, 296.

^{hh} *ἀρδρη*—"Hereafter" is wanting in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., and in various ancient versions. It has been omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Meyer retains it, with the remark that it was omitted from the different MSS., &c., because it seemed to clash with the following words, which were understood of actual angelic appearances.—*Kommentar*, in loc. Lange (*Kommentar*, in loc.) adopts Meyer's remark as his own.

"Hereafter" meant, when our English Bible was translated "from the present time," as in the words "that we may hereafter lead a godly, righteous, and sober life"—that is, from this time forward.

The title "Son of Man" applied to the Messiah, occurs in Daniel vii. 13, and had become familiar in Christ's day, through its use in the Apocalyptic literature of the Jews. Thus, the Book of Enoch (c. lxii. 6) uses it in a passage where it speaks of the mighty of the earth falling down before the Messiah when He comes to judge the world. Till then, I may say, it is taught that He will be hidden from all but the "Elect." The name occurs also, c. xli. 1, lxix. 29. But before this special application of it, the Old Testament writers had often introduced it, e.g., Ps. viii. 5; xl. 4; xxxiii. 13; xxxvi. 8; xc. 3, &c. In Ezekiel, Jehovah, throughout, addresses the prophet as "The Son of Man" (ii. 1; iii. 1, 4, 10, 17; iv. 1, &c.)—as if to mark the contrast between the greatness of the speaker and the low estate of him whom He addresses.

Jesus applies the title to Himself about eighty times, but it is not applied to Him by any of the New Testament writers, except in passages which refer to His heavenly exaltation (Acts vii. 56. Rev. i. 13—20; xiv. 14). Why He should have used it so especially admits of various reverent conjectures. Was it to awaken in mankind at large, wherever His name should spread, the instinctive feeling of His sympathy for all the race, and common relation to all its members? Was it to express the completeness of His humiliation, that, though Son of God, He had stooped to be, in the fullest sense, the Son of Man? Or was it to keep ever before mankind the fact that He came, not as a Scribe, or Priest, or Pharisee, or Sadducee, or Essene, or Nazarite, or Jew, or as anything apart from humanity at large, or as a representative of a school or class, but simply as a man—the Man Christ Jesus—the elder brother of the race? Was it to keep before all ages the fact, that as a man, feeling and acting for all men—the perfect flower and blossom of Humanity, its ideal Son—He stripped religion, for the first time, from the bands and fetters of nationality, and theocratic isolation; restored it to its divine spirituality; made it a gift for universal man, and embodied its loftiest conceptions in His own life, so that He stands before us as the author and finisher of the one faith

possible for all ages and races; the archetype of the race when it shall have risen to its highest; the guide, though all generations, into the not yet fully realized kingdom of God?

¹¹ Hilgenfeld (*Ep. and Briefe Johan.*, 271) thinks Nathanael the same as Matthew, but without apparent ground. Matthew may possibly mean "The gift of God," which is also the meaning of Nathanael. מַתְתִּיָּה (Mattathiah); נַחֲמָאֵל (Nathanael). But Matthew seems more properly the Greek form of Amittai, אֱמִיטַי (The truthful one), the Greek form of Mattathiah being Matthias, as in Acts i. 23. Späth tries to show that Nathanael was John, but this is still more hopeless.

¹² Talmi—(telem, a furrow)—"rich in land." Like Aretas—(a plougher).

CHAPTER XXIX.

^a Dr. Ziller (*Pal. Fund Rep.*, 1870-71) decides strongly in favour of a village called Kefr Konna, five miles north-west of Nazareth, as the Cana of St. John, and Dr. Farrer agrees with him, but Sepp (*Jerusalem u. d. Heilige Land*, ii. 106, 108) traces the history of the error which has led to this transference of the site, which was adopted only in the sixteenth century, for the convenience of monks and pilgrims. He, and Dr. Robinson, agree on Cana of Galilee, as it seems to be still called, twelve miles north of Nazareth, being the true site, and this view is supported by Winer, Raumer, Ritter, Meyer, Porter, Van de Velde, and others.

^b One tradition makes Alphæus and Mary, the supposed sister of the Virgin, residents in Cana, and the marriage to have been that of one of their sons. According to Greswell, it was the marriage of Alphæus and Mary, themselves. The Mohammedans say that John, the Apostle, was the bridegroom.

^c The common idea that Joseph must have been already dead, from not being named as at the marriage, seems to be brought in question by John vi. 42.

^d This explains how the deception of substituting Leah for Rachel could be played upon Jacob.—*Gen.* xxix. 25.

^e Lightfoot thinks the governor of the feast (ἀρχιτρικλῖνος, Architriklinos) was one "in place of a chaplain, to give thanks and pronounce blessings in such kinds of feasts as these." Among the Jews benedictions preceded and followed every act of a feast. Lightfoot, *Horæ Heb.* iii. 255. Rabbis were wont to attend such festivities, to pronounce these blessings, and also to secure that the conversation turned reverently towards the Law.

^f The *metretes*—the measure named, held about eight gallons. In our version it is translated—firkin, a measure equal to eight gallons. This would make each hold from sixteen to twenty-four gallons, and thus the six would hold ninety-six or 144 gallons, or nearly equal to from two to three hogsheads. Professor Westcott, however, thinks the exact words exclude the idea of all the water being made wine (*Characteristics of Gospel Miracles*, 153). Others think the Greek *metretes* used here for the Roman *amphora* of about five gallons.

^g That Christ thus sanctioned the use of wine in a country where the population were proverbially temperate, leaves the question open of the propriety of Christian men using their liberty in this direction in a country like ours, where drinking is a national curse, and where even the moderate use of what intoxicates only too often causes "a brother to offend," "for whom Christ died." If He died for such a weak one, Christians may well afford to give up wine, &c., for him.

^h Keim (i. 394 ff.; iii. 479 ff.) very exhaustively discusses the chronological question, but Schürer (*Neutestament. Zeit. Gesch.*) shows the fallacy of his calculations very conclusively. As a statement of opinions on chronological points, however, Keim is of great value. In *Andrew's Life of our Lord*, also, abundant details on the dates of Christ's birth, &c., are given, 1—46.

ⁱ See passages from the Targums, quoted by Oehler in *Art.* "Messias," Herzog, ix. 440. Also, Keim i. 590. But the Targums quoted are not the older ones, and represent the ideas of a much later age than that of Christ.

^k I assume that Capernaum was identical with Tel Hum. The grounds on which that site is accepted are given at length by Furrer, *Art.* "Capernaum," in *Bibel Lexicon*. The authorities for the description of Capernaum and the Lake of Galilee generally, in the text,

are Furrer, as above; also, his *Wanderungen*, 321—325; Keim, i. 596 ff.; Hausarath, i. 343 ff.; *Recovery of Palestine*, 343 ff.; Ruetschi, *Art. "Gonnzareth"* (in Herzog); Lightfoot, &c. Keim decides in favour of Khan Minyeh. Hausarath, Wiener, Ewald, Ritter, Furrer, Vaihinger (in Herzog), with many others, in favour of Tel Hum.

¹ See the words of Jesus, Matt. xii. 23, as given in the Vatican and Sinaitic versions. "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted to heaven? Thou shalt be thrust down to Hades."

² חֲנִינֶרֶת (chinnereth) lyres. חֲנִינֶרֶת (chinnereth) a lyre. Deut. iii. 17. 1 Kings xv. 20. Josh. xi. 2; xiii. 27. Num. xxxiv. 11.

³ Josephus says, elsewhere, that the town had 40,000 inhabitants.—*Bell. Jud.* ii. 21. 4.

⁴ Josephus says, all the ships on the lake were 230 in number, and into each he put four men. They must have been mere boats.—*Bell. Jud.* ii. 21. 8. Dr. Farrer says they were 4,000 in number, but he does not give his authority.

⁵ The name Gonnzareth is derived from the Hebrew name of the lake, in the Old Testament. The Sea of Chinnereth חֲנִינֶרֶת of which it is a corruption. The Rabbis, with their usual fancifulness, explain Gennesar as "The gardens of Princes"—(גַּנֵּי שָׂרִים)—*ganne sarim*, and thus make it equivalent to the word Paradise, which was the Persian name for the pleasure parks of kings. Capernaum means—"the village of Nahum"—נְחֻמִּיָּהוּ (Képhar Nahúm).

CHAPTER XXX.

^a The whole question of the sequence of events at this period is difficult. If the stay at Capernaum was only for a week or two before the Passover, Jesus must have been baptized about two months before, that is, at the end of January, when it is hard to conceive baptisms taking place in water so cold as that of the Jordan, supplied from the icy heights of Lebanon. But if He had been baptized in the autumn of the year before, He must have remained at Cana for some months, or have returned to Nazareth, and have made the one or other the centre of a preliminary activity, before his final removal to Capernaum. In the conflict of theories, I have followed Ewald's idea as the simplest.

^b Similar shops were to be found also, at least during the feast, on the Mount of Olives. — *Wieseler, Deit.* v. 209. It was a matter of pride with the Jews, that there should be a great display of lambs, &c., without which the "house was desolate."—Keim (quoting the Talmud), iii. 97.

The Talmud relates a story of one, Bava Ben Buta, which illustrates this feeling. Coming into the Court of the Temple one day, he found it quite empty of beasts. "Let their houses," said he, "be laid waste, who have laid waste the House of our God." Forthwith, he sent for three thousand of the sheep of Kedar, and having examined them, to see that they were without spot, brought them into the Mountain of the House—that is, into the Court of the Gentiles.—*Lightfoot*, i. 274. There was an officer who had the supervision of the traffic in doves, the *prefectus turturum*.—*Leyrer, in Herzog*, xv. 428.

^c The Jews had a sad reputation in this way even in the days of the prophets. See Hosae, xii. 7. Amos viii. 5, &c. Even at this day the Jewish money-changers in Jerusalem often charge 15 per cent. a month for interest on borrowed money.

^d "Igneum quiddam et sidereum radiabat ex oculis ejus, et divinitatis majestas lucebat in facie."

^e I have assumed that these reforms were subsequent to our Lord's public reproof of the neglect of their duty by the priests. Keim supposes them in force before, but how could they be in force if so much neglected even at the Passover season?

Thirty years later, under Agrippa II. (60—66) things had become worse than ever. False prophets misled the people; robbers preyed on them, and murderers plied their trade, in the very Temple, while rival high priests and their followers fought in the streets.—*Jos. Ant.* xx. 8. 5, 8; 9. 2, 4.

^f The Canaanites or Phœnicians, were famous in early antiquity as merchants and traders, and hence a "Canaanite"—the word used in the text, is employed for a trader generally. *Leyrer* (Herzog v. 509, *Handel*) and Ewald (*Gesch.* v. 336) think the verse implies the existence of the abuse in the days of Zechariah.

^a The studiously enigmatical mode of speech used by the Rabbis may be seen very fully in Duke's *Rabbinische Blumenlese*.

^b The striking comparison of the body to a Temple, or a tent, occurs first in the lament of Hezekiah, in Isaiah xxxviii. 12. "My life is struck, and rolled up, like a wandering-shepherd's tent, to vanish away from where it has been." So, also, 2 Cor. v. 1 ff.

^c Conqueror of the people, Victor Populi. The name was also Jewish—נִקְדֵּמֶן—Nakdemon. The Talmud speaks of a Nicodemus, son of Gerion, famous for his wealth, his munificence, and his prayers. It relates that once, when vast crowds had gathered in Jerusalem, at the time of the feast, there was a great scarcity of water. Nicodemus, seeing this, asked a rich man to hand over to him, for the time of the feast, twelve springs that were on some land belonging to him, that water might be secured for the poor pilgrims. In return, he promised to pay twelve talents of silver if they were not returned to him full of water by a certain day. It had not, however, rained when that day came. Nicodemus was in great trouble and betook himself to prayer, and forthwith the clouds gathered, and such abundance fell that the twelve springs were, presently, overflowing. The rich man, however, only laughed, and pointed to the sun, which, he said, had already gone down—so that the bond had been forfeited! On this Nicodemus prayed again, and the sun burst through the clouds, and the Shylock was cheated of his expected gain! This legend shows that this Nicodemus was a priest in the Temple, and had the charge of providing the water supply for the pilgrims, when they came to Jerusalem.

The proper name of Nicodemus, it is added, was Bonai, and it lends a probability that he may have been the Nicodemus of St. John's Gospel, to learn that this Bonai was accused of being a follower of Jesus. When Titus besieged the city, he was one of the richest men in it, but he is said to have fallen into such poverty that his daughter, long after, was found picking up what she could, in the streets and gutters, to eat. The passages in the Talmud containing these details are quoted by Nork—*Rabbinische Quellen*, 163, 4. Christian traditions say that Nicodemus was a relation of Gamaliel, and was baptized with him and his son Abiba, by the Apostles, Peter and John. It is added, that he was driven from his office and from Jerusalem in consequence of his apostasy, and that Gamaliel gave him shelter in his country house, where he lived till his death.—*Hofmann*, 352. *Winer* ii. 152. To account for the tradition of his surviving the fall of Jerusalem, it is supposed that he may not have alluded to himself in John iii. 4, and that he may thus have been a young man when he came to Jesus.

^k The Rabbis say that the devil Sammael, cries before God, "Lord of the world, Thou hast given me power over all nations of the world, except Israel."—*Nork*, 22.

^l The phrase "Kingdom of God," is used by John only in verses 3 and 5 of this chapter, a fact, in itself, a striking evidence that the conversation is given just as it took place. John, indeed, was, most probably, present.

^m There is a striking passage in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, in which Socrates says to his disciple Euthymius, "No one can see the wind, but its effects are apparent, and, when it comes, we feel it. In the same way the soul of man, if in some respects human, has something in it of the divine. For it is clear that it reigns with kingly authority in us, yet we do not see it. We should reflect on this, and not set light by what may not be seen, but since our soul shows its majesty by its effects, we should honour the divine that is thus within us."—*Xenophon, Memorabilia*, iv. 3. 14.

ⁿ The two words used of doing evil and doing good are striking. The former is *παράσσειν*—pursuing as one's end naturally, easily—habitual action as one's occupation. The latter *ποιεῖν* simply, doing—performance with difficulty and effort. Webster and Wilkinson, and Meyer. Alford includes, as implied, that the evil may be pursued and delighted in, but bears no permanent results: the good is something done, which abides. See Rom. i. 31; ii. 3; vii. 15; xiii. 4. John v. 29.

^o The Rabbis say that the text, "God saw the light that it was good," refers to the Messiah, whose works "the ever-blessed God praised already, before the beginning of the world. At that time, Satan said to God: 'Lord of the world! what is that light which I see shining forth from behind the throne of Thy glory?' God answered: 'He who will one day break thy power.' Then Satan replied, 'Lord, show him to me.' And when Satan saw Him, he fell down in despair, on his face, and cried out, 'Verily this is the Messiah, who will hurl into hell myself and the nations who serve me.'"—*Jalkut Simeoni* (*Nork*, 23). This is only one of many passages of the same character.

CHAPTER XXXI.

* Sepp (iii. 99) strangely makes the northern boundary only four hours (ten miles) from Jerusalem. Akkrabbim is twenty-five miles from the capital, in a direct line, on Kiepert's map of 1875.

^b Milman thinks it was in Perea; Lange, Neander, Reynolds, Robinson, and some others fancy it was in Samaria, though it is hard to believe that so strict a Jew as John would carry a Jewish movement into the polluted territory of the Samaritans. Sepp supposes it to have been at Beit Ainim, north of Hebron; Lichtenstein places it a little west of Hebron, at a spot also called Enon. Barclay thinks it was only six miles north-east of Jerusalem. Jerome (*Onomast. Art.* "Salim") speaks of a Salumias, which he seems to identify with Salem, as lying in the valley of the Jordan, eight miles south of Scythopolis, and speaks of Enon as near it. But who will decide where there is so much disagreement of authorities?

Buxtorf (*Lex.*, 1601) thinks Enon the Chald. pl. of יֵז (Ain), a fountain. De Wette thinks it is derived from יֵן (yōn) and יֵז (Ain), the dove's fountain.

o The Vatican, Alexandrian, and Sinaitic, MSS. read "A Jew," and it is adopted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford, Wordsworth, and Ellicott.

^d From τὸπος—a place, a tract of country, and ἀρχω—to rule.

o Akkrabbim is the pl. of אַקְרָבִים (Akkrab)—a scorpion. The heights of Akkrabbim, are, thus: "The Scorpion hills." The name occurs, elsewhere, at the south of the Dead Sea.

^f Mount Ebal is 3,029 above the sea; Gerizim, 2,898 feet. The contrast between Ebal and Gerizim is less real than is often supposed. The dip of the strata sinks to the north across the valley, and this causes a want of springs on the south side of Ebal, but its north side is almost as rich in them as the northern slope of Gerizim.—*Pal. Fund Report*, 1873, p. 66.

^g This picture of the neighbourhood of Shechem was taken from its appearance in April, but even in December, in fine weather, in sheltered parts like this, it is still largely applicable.

^h It is rightly called a well (Boer אֵי) not a spring—(יֵז Ain). It is a cistern, not a fountain. A very interesting account is given by Lieutenant Anderson of his descent to the bottom of the well, in the *Recovery of Jerusalem*, 465.

ⁱ Shechem (שֵׁכֶם), means a ridge or shoulder: in reference to its being the watershed of the district.

^k Ewald thinks it was six in the evening, but it would be dark at that hour, in December. There seems no reason for introducing the Roman reckoning of the day here.—See *Geschichte*, v. 348.

^l The question, whether Shechem was the Sychar of which the Samaritan woman was a citizen, has been warmly disputed. It seems hardly probable that she would have come a mile and a half for water when so many fountains were to be passed on the way. There is still a village called Askar on the north of the well, just outside the valley, at the foot of Mount Ebal, and facing the open plain. Between this name and Sychar there seems a close resemblance. On the other hand, between Sychem, the Greek name for Shechem, and Sychar, there is almost as little difference, for changes of letters are common in other cases. Sychar—(Συχαρά), seems to have been at first a name given in contempt, for it is constantly used against Shechem, as a taunt, by the Rabbis. It was, perhaps, derived from the Hebrew שָׁחַר (Shāḥar), falsehood, in reference to the alleged idolatry of the Shechemites, or from שֵׁכֶר—(Shīcher), a drunkard, in allusion to "the drunkards of Ephraim."—Isaiah xxviii. 1, 7. The name Samaria is from שֹׁמֶרֹן; (Shōmērōn)—a watch height, in allusion to the position of the city on a hill. Shechem was re-named Neapolis—the new town—by Vespasian. It had been destroyed in the last Jewish war so completely, that the new name has clung ever since to the town built on its site. The identity of Sychar with Shechem is supported by Furrer, Hilgenfeld, Hengstenberg, Olshansen, Lücke, and others. On the other hand, Hug, Luthardt, Ewald, Meyer, Delitzsch, Caspari, and others think Askar the ancient Sychar. Keim is undecided.

^m A gloss on the Megillat Ta'anith brings the feeling between the two races vividly before us. The tradition is a mere legend, but it was believed in Christ's day. "Mourning

is forbidden on the 21st Kislev (Oct.—Nov.). It was the day when the Cuthites demanded authority from Alexander the Macedonian, to destroy the house of our God. 'Grant us,' said they, 'five *kours* of land on the top of Mount Moriah.' The king gave it them. Informed of this, Simeon the Just put on his high priestly robes, and set out, accompanied by the nobles of Jerusalem, by a thousand counsellors robed in white, and by the young priests, who carry the holy instruments (of music). They marched, preceded by flambeaux, all night, two by two. 'Who are these?' asked Alexander, as he saw them from a distance. 'These are the Jews,' said the traitors, 'who have slighted your authority.' They reached the outpost, at Antipatris, as the sun rose. 'Who are you?' asked the officers. 'Inhabitants of Jerusalem,' was the answer; 'we are come to crave admission to the presence of the king.' Alexander, seeing the figure of Simeon the Just, at once came down from his chariot and prostrated himself before him. 'How is it,' asked his courtiers, 'that a great king like thee prostratest thyself before a Jew?' 'Because,' said he, 'that figure has always appeared to me before I undertook a war in which I triumphed.' Then, addressing the Jews, he asked why they came. 'These people, the traitors, deceive thee,' answered Simeon. 'They have asked for the spot on which we pray for thee, and for thy long reign.' 'What people are they?' 'They are the Cuthites,' said Simeon. 'Their fate is in your hands,' replied Alexander. The Jews forthwith cut holes through the heels of the Cuthites, and made ropes of their hair and tied these through their heels, and dragged them by them over the rough thorns and thistles, till they got to Mount Gerizim. There they ploughed over the site of the Temple of their enemies (after destroying it), and sowed tares on it, as the Cuthites wished to have done with the Temple of our God. This day was then appointed for a feast.—Quoted in Dorenbourg, *Histoire de la Palestine*, 42.

* The Romans acted in this deadly hatred between the two races, in their choice of Cæsarea as the capital of the procuratorship. Had Jerusalem or Samaria been chosen, it would have raised the bitterest jealousy. Cæsarea was, moreover, on the sea, and thus easy of access from Rome, and the high road from Syria ran through it. The President of Syria had always four legions (24,000 men) under his command. Samaria and Idumea formed part of the Roman procuratorship, along with Judea, but each was left with its own local laws, as the French have been in Canada, the Channel Islands, and the Mauritius.

• The bitter feud through generation after generation between the two races, blazed fiercely even among the descendants of the Jews and Samaritans carried off by Ptolemy to Egypt. The superior holiness of Jerusalem or Gerizim was fought out in bloody riots, time after time, in the streets of Alexandria.

† The word is כֶּסֶּיִתָּה—(kesitah).—Gen. xxxiii. 19, which the Greek translates by ἀμνός—(amnos), a lamb, and the vulgate by *agnus*—which means, of course, the same. But both Gesenius and Fürst reject the idea of barter as prevalent in the patriarchal age, and understand by the word money *weighed out*, from כָּסָה—(kasat), to weigh. Gesenius adds: "Most of the ancient interpreters understand by it a lamb, a sense which has no support, either from etymology or in the kindred dialects, and has none from the usage of the patriarchs, since in their age merchandise was no longer usually exchanged, but actual sales were common for money, either by tale or weight.—Gen. xxiii. 16; xlvii. 16. A coin of Cyprus, bearing the figure of a lamb, has nothing to do with the money in question.

• Davidson translates this clause, "For the Father also seeks them who worship Him to be such." For the sense given in the text, see Lücke, Luthardt, Lange, and Meyer, *in loc.* Winer (*Grammatik*, 395) has the remark, "'In spirit and truth,' is not to be translated 'spiritually and truly'; the preposition ἐν (in) indicates the sphere in which the 'worship' moves."

† Eisenmenger (ii. 723) gives passages from the Rabbis respecting the Messiah who was to be called "The Son of Joseph"—that is, of Ephraim. He was to be the head of the ten tribes. "The Holy Ever-Blessed God will clothe him with a robe whose brightness will shine from one end of the world to the other, and Israel will walk in its light and say, 'Blessed is the hour in which thou wast created, and the body that bore thee.'" He will reveal Himself first in Galilee; then gather the Jews: then go to Jerusalem, and fight against the followers of Jesus, by whom he will be regarded as Antichrist. He will perish in this contest and be lamented by all Jews. He is not a king but next after the king Messiah, the Son of David, † who will come in the clouds, re-establish the kingdom of David, rebuild the Temple, and gather the Jews. He will be David Himself, or of the seed of David, and will come after the death of the Messiah, the Son of Joseph. He will fight against the Heathen and Christians; overcome all nations, crushing them utterly, and dividing all the treasures of the world among the Jews. ‡ The resurrection of the dead will inaugurate His reign over a universal Jewish kingdom of which Jerusalem will be the capital. It is needless to point out that these ideas must in part

• Eisenmenger, ii. 740, 710.

† Eisenmenger, ii. 763; 778, 774.

‡ Eisenmenger, ii. 772, 849.

be later than Christianity, but the part referring to the Messiah, Son of Joseph, or Ephraim, may reflect some of the notions of the Samaritans. As a characteristic illustration of the puerility of some of the conceptions of the Rabbis, I may add that the Messiah, the Son of David, is to come riding on the same ass on which Abraham and Moses rode!—(Gen. xxii. 3. Ex. iv. 20. Zech. ix. 9). Indeed, Elijah, who is to appear before Him, is to do the same.—*Eisenmenger*, ii. 697. Nork (10) gives an extract from a Samaritan source that is worth quoting—"Be thankful that a great prophet is coming, whom God pointed out to Moses in the words 'A prophet like unto thee will I raise from thy brethren' (Deut. xviii. 15). This is the prophet who was promised to our forefather Abraham where it is said, 'A smoking furnace, and a burning lamp' (Gen. xv. 17). It is He to whom the gathering of the people will be (Gen. xlix. 10), and of Him also it is said 'He shall smite the head of the children of Seth, but Israel shall have the victory.' Our Rabbis maintain respecting Him that the nations, at his appearing, will believe in Him and in the Holy Scripture (The Pentateuch), and in Mount Gerizim. The doctrines of Moses, the Son of Amram, will prevail, and the royal prophet who brings this about will be called the Messiah. But He will die and will be buried in the grave of Joseph, the son of the Faithful one (*sic*). He will bring the Tabernacle to light again, and it will be erected on Mount Gerizim." See also, *Petermann*, *Art. "Samaria," Herzog*, viii. 373, and *Milman, History of Christianity*, 84.

* Goldsmiths, wool-carders, makers of handmills, spice-dealers, weavers, hairdressers, cloth-makers, blood-letters, and bath-keepers could be neither kings nor high priests, because their trades were more or less disreputable from the familiarity they were supposed to entail between the sexes.—*Delitzsch*, 41.

CHAPTER XXXII.

* (Sebastos (σεβαστός) is the Greek equivalent of the Latin Augustus—the awful—the august. The feminine (Sebastē) only could be used of a city.

* A stadium was 666½ English feet. A furlong is 660 feet. The wall was thus over 18 furlongs, or more than 2¼ miles, in length.

* It is curious to see how human nature has been always the same. I have already quoted Professor Wilson's experience on the subject of familiarity destroying respect, but the ancients had as keen a sense of this truth as he. Aristides used to say that no philosopher is esteemed in his own town, and Seneca (*de Benef.* iii. 2) re-echoes the complaint. "Vile habetur," says he, "quod domi est"—which is equivalent to our "Familiarity breeds contempt." Jesus, indeed, felt this so keenly that He speaks of one's enemies "as being those of his own household."

* Schleiermacher notes that the wonders wrought in Jerusalem are only stated generally, with no specific detail, and that nothing whatever is said of the "many mighty works" wrought in Bethsaida and Chorazin. We have thus only an imperfect idea, at best, of the measureless activity of Christ's beneficence.—*Leben Jesu*, 194.

* The word used in the Acts, is *συντροφος* (suntrophos)—*lit.* brought up with another, or nursed with another—living together—bound to another by being educated and living together. Manaen was evidently a Jew, from his name. It was very common in antiquity, for persons of rank to associate other children with their own, to excite them to greater emulation in their studies, and to be their companions. It was also common to have a child fed from the same breast as another whose mother was taken as nurse. Perhaps Manaen may have stood in both relations to Antipas, for it must have been he to whom St. Luke refers. He likely shared in the early education of Antipas and Archelaus. Nothing is known of him beyond the allusion in the Acts, which certainly seems to imply companionship in boyhood with Antipas.

* Sepp (iii. 177) conjectures that the "nobelman" may have been the imperial steward of Salome's domains, which had been left by will to the Empress Livia. But the word used—*βασιλικός* (basilikos) means any one in high position about a king or royal person, either in the army, or at court, or in the civil service.

* It marks the minute exactness of the narration that Jesus is asked to "come down" from Cana to Capernaum, the one place being 1,350 feet lower than the other.

* *חַכִּים*—(Hakkim), a wise man—orig. title of the Magi.—*Ecc.* ix. 17. *Gen.* xli. 8. *Jer.* i. 35. *Esth.* i. 13. *חֲפַי* (Rophai) a healer, properly, of wounds. This was the usual word for a physician. See *Jer.* viii. 22. *2 Chron.* xvi. 12. *Gen.* i. 2.

¹ The troops who formed the summer garrison of Samaria were marched to Jerusalem for the months of the feasts, to be ready to suppress tumults, just as Turkish soldiers are massed at Jerusalem, now, at Easter, for the same purpose.—*Ewald* v. 53.

² This passage is quoted freely, as if from memory, by the Evangelist. The words in the Septuagint are:—"The country of Zebulon; the land of Naphtali; towards the sea (of Galilee); and the populations dwelling by the shore of the sea; and beyond the Jordan; Galilee of the Heathen; the parts of Judea—ye people walking in darkness beheld a great light. Ye who dwell in the region and shadow of death, to you a light shall shine."

The Hebrew is—"The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali; the way of the sea, or, towards the sea (of Galilee); beyond Jordan; Galilee of the Heathen. The people walking in darkness saw a great light: on those who were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death a light has shone."

³ At that time the whole earth will tremble, as of old, from one end of heaven to the other, because the Messiah is about to be revealed in Galilee.—*Sohar*, *Exod.* f. iii. 3. It is appointed that the Messiah shall be revealed in Galilee.—*Sohar*, f. 88.

⁴ The word describing it is *περιπατών*—*journeying round* (the bending shore).

⁵ The fish was a very frequent symbol of early Christian art. Like the dove or the lamb, it is used in more than one sense, especially for Christians, after Matt. xiii. 47—49. Luke v. 4—10, for members of the Church. The Greek word *ΙΧΘΥΣ* (*ichthūs*, a fish), was very early used as a Christian anagram, its different letters forming the initials of a confession of Christianity—thus—*Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτὴρ*—Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour. It was hence used as a symbol among Christians, of Jesus Christ Himself. Thus, "Tanquam *ichthys*, filius aquosa petit."—*Jerome ad Bononum*, Ep. 43. "Nos pisiculi secundum *ichthyn* nostrum in aqua nascimur."—*Tertullian de Baptismo*, c. 1.

⁶ "To follow" a Rabbi was the common expression for becoming his scholar. Thus, in the Talmud (*Erubin*, f. 30. 1). "When *I* followed R. Jochanan."

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