

VOICES OF THE CHURCH.

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THE D. E. STEWART

LECTURE ON THE CHURCH

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1882

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BY THE REV. J. A. STEWART

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# VOICES OF THE CHURCH,

IN REPLY TO

DR. D. F. STRAUSS,

AUTHOR OF "DAS LEBEN JESU,"

COMPRISING

ESSAYS IN DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, BY DIVINES OF VARIOUS  
COMMUNIONS.

COLLECTED AND COMPOSED

BY THE REV. J. R. BEARD, D.D.

MEMBER OF THE HISTORICO-THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LEIPSIK, ETC.

*Contents:*

Non est religio à philosophis querenda, qui, de suorum deorum naturâ ac summo bono, diversas contrariasque  
sententias in scholis personabant. — AUG. DE VERA RELIG.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following pages contain several essays — in part original, in part translated — intended to furnish the English reader with some means of becoming acquainted with the aims and tendencies of the work by Dr. STRAUSS, entitled *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet von Dr. David Friederich Strauss*, 2 vols. 8vo, fourth edit. 1840 ; as well as of forming a calm estimate of the justness of its principles, the accuracy of its argumentation, the soundness of its views, and its general bearing on the historical verity of the gospel. This reply was undertaken in consequence of the wide diffusion in this country—not least among the labouring classes—of opinions and impressions adverse to Christianity, derived more or less immediately from the efforts and publications of Dr. STRAUSS. Even where the *Leben Jesu* was not known, and could not be read, a conviction has prevailed, that some great work had been put forth in Germany, which, as being destructive of the Christian religion, its ministers in England wished to keep from the knowledge of the people, and were afraid even to study themselves. So untrue and unsound a state of feeling may well be regarded with regret, if not alarm, by every enlightened disciple of Christ. The present work will enable the reader to judge how far the attack made by STRAUSS on the historical foundations of our common faith is of so deadly a character as may have been supposed.

As this is the first work in the English language which addresses itself to the Straussian controversy, it seemed improper to give a reply until the general nature of the objections was made known. Accordingly, the first Essay in the ensuing pages is designed to set forth the views which Dr. STRAUSS has advanced. In drawing up the statement which it contains, the writer was solicitous to give a fair and candid account. The same love of equal-handed justice has animated him throughout the volume, alike in the selection of his materials, and in the use which has been made of them. With the deliberate conviction which he has formed from a review of the



entire subject, that Dr. STRAUSS has had more than full justice done him in the public mind, and that his work owes much of its seeming force to a never-failing ingenuity and a dexterous rhetoric, the writer is not without a hope, that the impartial, whatever their peculiar opinions, will, if competent to pronounce a judgment in the case, declare that the laws of honourable controversy have not been broken or disregarded in this volume, and that more deference or larger concessions to the objector might have worn the appearance of compromising the cause of Christ.

Believing, as he does, that Christianity rests on an historical basis, and that that basis is perfectly safe, — believing also that the gospel, as revealed of God in his Son Jesus Christ, is the one hope of the world, and the sole sufficient remedy for our social ills, — the writer would suffer indescribable pain, had he reason to fear, that this attempt to defend its assailed foundations should prove nugatory, or altogether insufficient. Prompted, however, by a desire to learn, with some degree of accuracy, what were the real facts in regard to the injury said to have been done to Christianity by “the new learning” of the German theological schools, — he some years since applied himself to the study of the writers in question; and, having come to the conclusion, that rumour had aggravated the evil and disowned the good, and especially had given a false report touching the alleged damage to the gospel, he felt himself impelled to make his convictions known, the rather because he considers that every fear of the truth and certainty of the Christian religion should, without delay, be looked fully in the face, and have its real nature fully ascertained. The timid believer will of course deplore, and the self-seeking sceptic harshly condemn, the course the writer has pursued: he will, however, be neither dissatisfied nor discouraged, if the honest and candid lovers of truth shall not refuse him a place in their ranks, or shall admit that his efforts have given an impulse in a right direction.

It is deeply to be regretted, that a very exaggerated, if not a positively false, notion prevails in this country, that the new school of German theology is throughout bad; being wild, visionary, sceptical, destructive, running through nearly all varieties, except those of soundness and excellence. May the present work do something to correct this misapprehension! The reader will here see, that, if Germany has produced a STRAUSS, she has produced also a NEANDER and a THOLUCK. In truth, good and ill are found in her teeming theological literature; and scarcely any are qualified to determine the proportions in which the good and the ill exist, but those who have made a careful and impartial study of the chief works which it contains. Whatever may be thought of the conclusions to which some

German theologians have arrived, there can be no question that in sound knowledge, in patient research, in unwearied industry, in the love of religious liberty, in candour and impartiality, — all qualities of the highest kind, — German divines afford examples which may be beneficially imitated by Christian teachers and Christian learners, of all conditions and of every land.

It is not denied that the destructive, as contradistinguished from the reformatory and the conservative party in Germany, is a large and influential one. Yet is it gradually losing some of its worst peculiarities. Of late years, a strong re-action against the extreme negative school has manifested itself, and the most promising men of the new generation are becoming more and more inclined to receive and cherish the fundamental truths of the New Testament. In a word, the best minds are aiming at reformation, rather than destruction. Nor have the extravagances to which STRAUSS and the young Hegelian school have proceeded, been without an effect in making men cautious as well as persevering in their inquiries, and reverential no less than fearless in their ameliorations. A pure and holy love of truth — one of the highest affections of our nature — bids us be gentle and tender even towards the mistakes and errors of the past, and to renounce with regret what we cannot honestly continue to hold. In this, German theology has still something to learn.

The fundamental error, however, of its rationalist party has lain in the exclusive allegiance which in their inquiries they have paid to reason, considered as the mere argumentative and logical faculty. The gospel was given to *man*, and by man must it be appreciated and received. If man's faculties are sundered, and truth is submitted for acceptance to some one of them, to the exclusion of the rest, — no wonder if, man himself having been first marred, he should, when the intellect predominates, disown and reject, or, when the imagination and the feelings have gained the upper hand, amplify and pervert, the truth. But in religion least of all is man's faculty of ratiocination a safe or a sufficient guide; for religion is an appeal to all our higher endowments, and by them only — by the entire man — can it be correctly known, properly estimated, and satisfactorily received. Logic can no more make a man a Christian, than it can make him a poet or a sculptor. And if the name Rationalism (from *ratio*, reason) is intended to denote any thing more than the application of the reasoning faculty to topics, to modes of thought, and sets of ideas, in the formation and retention of which the imaginative and sensitive faculties have had undue scope, then is it as a religious guide condemned by its very name. And though



there doubtless may be conditions of society in which the decomposing influence of reason may be demanded, yet can the necessity be regarded in no higher light than as an evil which should not by any means be enhanced, but be removed and put out of the way as speedily as possible. The negations which it occasions have no life to infuse into society. It is not on denials that men can live, but on every word that cometh out of the mouth of God. The food of the soul must be something definite and pure indeed, but on that very account something positive,—the bread that cometh down from heaven to be the life of the world. To use the words of AMBROSE:—“Non in dialectica complacuit Domino salvare populum suum.” The difference there is between an age of inspiration and an age of negatives has been well described by CARLYLE (“Miscellaneous Writings,” vol. iii. p. 62):—“Religion was everywhere; philosophy lay hid under it, peacefully included in it. Herein, as in the life-centre of all, lay the true health and oneness. Only at a later era must religion split itself into philosophies; and thereby the vital union of thought being lost, disunion and mutual collision, in all provinces of speech and of action, more and more prevail. For if a poet or priest, or by whatever title the inspired thinker may be named, is the sign of vigour and well-being; so likewise is the logician, or uninspired thinker, the sign of disease, probably of decrepitude and decay. Thus, not to mention other instances, one of them much nearer hand,—so soon as prophecy among the Hebrews had ceased, then did the reign of argumentation begin; and the ancient theocracy, in its Sadduceisms and Phariseisms, and vain jangling of sects and doctors, give token that the *soul* of it had fled, and that the *body* itself, by natural dissolution, with the old forces still at work, but working in reverse order, was on the road to final disappearance.”

“The old forces” are in Germany hastening to disappear. A new life is springing up under the quickening and genial influence of new powers. Man is again becoming one; thought is regaining its unity. Reason and imagination have met together; the present and the past have embraced each other. Happy those who can do aught to promote so desirable an accordence. The acceptance as well as the essential unity of religion depends on the harmony of man’s nature. When the heart is allowed to feel, and the imagination to soar, no less than the head to think; and when all these functions proceed in well-adjusted proportion; then will the divine perfection of the man Christ Jesus approve itself to, and be welcomed, loved, and revered by, the human soul, and an era of new religious life display its gratifying results.



The title of Dr. STRAUSS's book points to its origin, *Leben Jesu*, — "Life of Jesus." Towards the close of the last century, the contents of the evangelical narratives began among the Germans to be considered, not only in their separate portions and constituent elements, but in their mutual relations and totality, as forming one combined history of the life of Christ. Special attention was drawn to the subject by publications, the tendency, if not the aim, of which was to impair or even destroy the historic verity of the recorded facts. We may specify *Vom Zwecke Jesu, noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbüttler Ungenanten* (H. Sam. Reimarus) Hrsgg. v. Lessing. Brnsw. 1778, 1784; Berlin, 1835; — *K. Fr. Bahrdt, Briefe über d. Bibel*, continued under the title, *Ausführung des Plans u. Zwecks Jesu*; Berlin, 1784-93; — *Venturini Natürliche Gesch. des grossen Propheten v. Nazareth*; Kophenh. 1800-2.

These and other assaults gave rise to works of an apolegetic character, the authors of which made it their object to solve the alleged difficulties, and to describe the life of Christ, in such a manner as to gain acceptance for their views, while they professed to ground these views on the gospel records. The sentiments, however, thus put forth were in reality as diverse as were the several theological tendencies, which now took in each case a decided tone, as well as a definite and individual shape; giving rise, within a brief period, to an affluence of literature which is perhaps unparalleled in theological history, and which, in its abundance and multiplicity, seems almost to justify the notion of a learned professor, who, in that love of subdivision for which German scholarship is remarkable, proposed to make the subject — the life of Christ — a separate branch of theological study. Those who wish to prosecute inquiries into the subject will find very ample references to the chief works in *Das Leben Jesu von D. K. Hase*, third edit. Leipzig, 1840; *Einleitung*, p. 27, seq.; — a work which, owing to a power of condensation that strikes with amazement one who is young in German studies, comprises, within some two hundred pages, the substance of very many volumes, and an almost complete course of New Testament theology.

In the midst of the thickly-crowded arena appeared Dr. STRAUSS, who, following the fashion of the day, rather than the simple dictates of an honest mind, denominated his attack on Christ and Christianity, not *a* but "*the* Life of Christ," *Das Leben Jesu*. The appearance of this work was the occasion of an outpouring of publications, so numerous, so different in aims, and so diversified in character, that it would be idle to attempt here to enumerate their several titles. We refer, for a pretty full account

of them, to the following works:—*Stimmen der Deutschen Kirche über das Leben Jesu von Doctor Strauss für Theologen und Nichttheologen, von Johannes Zeller*; Zurich, 1837;—*Allgemeines Repertorium für die Theologische Literatur, von Professor Dr. Rheinwald*; Bd. xxi. xxiii. xxiv. xxxi. xliii. For the sake, however, of those who may wish for some guidance, without having recourse to these sources of information, we will put down the title of a few works, in addition to such as will be found cited in the ensuing pages. It may be not undesirable to premise, that the reader may in part judge from the following Essays, which, out of these numerous publications, we consider best suited to an English public. Yet, to prevent misapprehension, we must add, that our choice has been influenced by considerations which involved indeed the intrinsic merit of the pieces, but also took into account that the present work is the first effort which has been made to bring the questions raised by STRAUSS before an English tribunal, in a manner befitting their importance. The following are works that treat with more or less merit the general subject of the life of Christ, the tendency of which is in favour of an historical Christianity, and more or less of a positive form of faith:—*Otto Krabbe, Vorlesungen über das Leben Jesu für Theologen u. Nichttheologen*, Hamb. 1839;—*Kuhn das Leben Jesu wiss. bearbeitet*, Mainz, 1838. HARTMANN (*Das Leben Jesu nach d. Evv. für gebildete Leser*, Stuttg. 1837) has written a life of Christ, especially designed and suited to Christians of cultivated minds, which presents to the reader the historical and divine elements found in the four evangelists. THEILE (*zur Biographie Jesu*, Leipzig, 1837) has successfully maintained a middle course in his views of the life of Christ, between those who believe and those who deny all that is historical and divine therein. WINER also, in several parts of his valuable *Biblische Realwörterbuch* (second edit.), furnishes not only very useful literary notices, but views and explanations, which bear with good effect on our subject. CREDNER has given a general view, not merely of the events comprised in the life of our Lord, but of the contents of the New Testament (having continual reference to all the great questions at issue), in his excellent work, *Das Neue Testament nach Zweck, Ursprung, Inhalt, für denkende Leser der Bibel*; Giessen, 1841 and 1843;—which, though a popular exhibition of the rich contents of his very learned and accurate “Introduction to the New Testament” (*Einleitung in das Neue Test.* Halle, 1836), and presenting ascertained results, apart from the more strictly scientific processes by which they have been gained, offers to the reader (though with some rationalistic tendencies which we dislike) a very



solid and trustworthy, as well as interesting, compendium and guide in the study of New Testament theology. FLECK, professor of theology in the University of Leipsic, has, in his *Vertheidigung des Christenthums*, Leipzig, 1842, one vol. 8vo, given a judicious review of the whole question, both philosophical and theological, involved in the Straussian controversy, with great fairness, moderation, judgment, and skill. The work, in the hands of a judicious translator, would be useful and acceptable to a large and growing class of English students. The latest treatise on the subject (*Das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien dargestellt, von Dr. J. P. Lange*; Heidelberg, 1844) manifests that disposition to return towards what is positive in history and in doctrine, which is so marked a tendency in the German theology of the present moment.

The battle to which the publication of STRAUSS's work gave occasion in Germany was fought, on the part of Christianity, not merely by ecclesiastics, and professors of theology: laymen and literary works took part in the strife. Among other journals, the *Litteraturblatt*, conducted by WOLFGANG MENZEL (known in England by GORDON's bad translation of his work on German literature, in which a useful historical sketch of German theology may be found), came forward with a view to explode the mythical doctrines, by a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* similar to that which will be found in the seventh of the Essays here presented to the public:—*Des Doctor Strauss, "Das Leben Jesu," eine Sage des 19ten hundrets, von Dr. V. Keyserlingk*; August, 1836. Making use of the principles and modes of reasoning adopted by STRAUSS, the writer aims to show, that the learned assailant is nothing more than a legendary personage of the nineteenth century, as was Dr. FAUST of the fifteenth. Not least decided and valuable of the answers issued by laymen is that which may be found in a work by a benevolent educator, a friend of the justly celebrated PESTALOZZI, — *Laienworte über die Hegel-Straussische Christologie, von Dr. Nügeli*; Zürich, 1836. Among the direct replies on the part of persons who had drawn conclusions from the New Testament different from those which established creeds set forth, we may mention in terms of approbation, as containing a calm and moderate view of the matter, and the opinions of a very learned divine (not long since deceased), who has not improperly been termed the modern SEMLER, — *De Mythicæ Evangeliorum Interpretationis indole atque finibus*, by BAUMGARTEN-CRUSIUS, in his *Opuscula Theologica*; Jenæ, 1836. HARLESS, a divine of orthodox opinions, has with excellent effect turned the tables on STRAUSS, and put him on the defensive, in his essay, *Die kritische Bearbeitung des Lebens*



*Jesu von Dr. Strauss, nach ihrem wissenschaftlichen Werthe beleuchtet*; Erlangen, 1836. The *Tübingen Zeitschrift* for 1838 and 1839 contains valuable papers on the subject, — *Erörterung des Hauptthatsachen der Ev. Gesch. in rucks. auf Strauss's Schrift, das Leben Jesu, von Dr. Kern*. The works which STRAUSS himself judged most worthy of reply may be found enumerated in his *Streitschriften zur Vertheidigung meiner Schrift über das Leben Jesu*; Tübingen, 1841. A general view of the rise and progress of the influences which led to the state of mind that produced STRAUSS's *Leben Jesu*, accompanied by an estimate of its character and tendencies, may, but in a somewhat discoloured form, be found in *Histoire Critique du Rationalisme en Allemagne, depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, par Amand Saintes*; second edit.; Paris, Brockhaus; London, Williams and Norgate, 1843. A sound and searching critique on the philosophical influences under which STRAUSS was led to undertake his task, and guided in its execution, is presented in a short compass in *Die Speculative Dogmatik von Dr. D. F. Strauss, geprüft von Dr. K. P. Fischer*; Tübingen, 1841.

The English language contains very little of value on the subject. HENNELL, in his "Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity," London, 1838, broke ground in the same direction as that taken by STRAUSS, with an equal desire, but incomparably less ability, to undermine the historical foundations of Christianity. We are not aware that his volume has been deemed worthy of any formal answer. It was not till the year 1841, that a set effort was made to introduce into this country the views which are developed in the *Leben Jesu*, when PHILIP HARWOOD published his "German Anti-supernaturalism: Six Lectures on Strauss's Life of Jesus;" in which, while nothing is done towards confuting STRAUSS, his faults are made worse, and his good qualities marred, by the rhetorical manner in which the subject is treated, — a subject on which, of all others, the arts of rhetoric are misplaced and deceptive. Not more sufficient and correct, as a representative of the views of STRAUSS, is the pamphlet, "The Opinions of Professor D. F. STRAUSS, as embodied in his Letter to the Burgo-master Hirzel," &c. translated from the second edition of the original; London, Chapman, 1844. To say nothing of its brevity, this letter, specially designed by STRAUSS to avert the popular odium occasioned by his being elected Professor of Theology at Zürich, is, from first to last, a piece of special pleading, fitted to throw dust in the eyes of the good people of Zürich. There has been one translation of the *Leben Jesu* into our tongue, published in penny numbers, and designed for circulation among

the working classes, under the auspices of HETHERINGTON. The work appears to have been done into English from the French translation (which is a scholarlike production), *Vie de Jesus traduite de l'Allemand sur la troisième Edition, par E. Littré*, — and has not the slightest literary value whatever; being obviously brought out to supply food to the unhappily depraved appetite for sceptical productions, so prevalent in these times among our manufacturing populations. The translator is ignorant of the most ordinary facts and circumstances connected with his subject. One instance will suffice. In John xi. 6, these words are used of our Lord: "He abode still two days in the place where he was." By referring to the fortieth verse of the tenth chapter, we find this place was beyond Jordan (Peræa), whither Jesus had fled from his enemies. STRAUSS, in his criticism on the resurrection of Lazarus, referring to the fact, says that he abode in Peræa. This Peræa is, with the usual manner of Gallic travesty in regard to proper names, rendered in the French translation by the word *Pérée*, which our English handicraftsman, in his ludicrous ignorance, translates by the senseless term *Pireus*, — "He still remained two days in the Pireus" (verse 6). An English work in which a scholar may find an estimate of the *Leben Jesu*, as well as of the German theology of the last three hundred years, is "German Protestantism and the Right of Private Judgment, a brief History of German Theology, by E. H. DEWAR, M.A." Rivington, London, 1844. The writer is not uninformed on his subject, and affords to the student valuable materials, though he has obviously made free use of the work by SAINTES, previously mentioned. Viewing German theology, however, as he does, with the eyes of Puseyism, he sees nothing but confusion and disaster; and the work, in its general aim, calls to mind BOSSUET's famous attack on Protestantism, — *Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*. The only just view of the opinions of STRAUSS that we are acquainted with in the English tongue, may be found in a few pages contained in the first volume, p. 115, of Mr. MILMAN's "History of Christianity," in which there breathes the same spirit of sound scholarship and Christian candour which are conspicuous throughout that excellent work, — a work which well points out the way in which the character of British theology may be redeemed from its actual bondage, inertness, and degradation.

The writer requests of a candid public, that he may not be held accountable for any opinions found in the ensuing volume, to which he has not himself given expression. In a work in which are found labours emanating from many persons, nothing more can be expected than that, in its



general tendency, each part may carry forward the argument, and promote the aim, in favour of which the publication was undertaken. Wishful that each contributor should enjoy full liberty of speech, the conductor of the work did not think himself justified in requiring an exact agreement with his own views on every point. His sole purpose has been to contribute something in defence of the assailed foundations of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as developed in the New Testament. He will be glad if others shall agree with him in thinking, that the general argument herein conducted, with a view to advance that important end, is rather strengthened than impaired by any diversity of opinion on other points which may prevail among the several contributors.

It only remains for the writer to acknowledge his obligations to those friends who have kindly favoured him with their valuable aid. For the translation of the second and third Essays, and for the translation and abridgment of the eighth piece, he is indebted to three ladies, whose names he is not at liberty to mention. For the first and the sixth Essay, the projector of the work alone is responsible. In regard to the rest, his office has, for the most part, not extended beyond selecting and furnishing the materials employed. The fourth and the seventh Essays were drawn up by the Rev. G. V. SMITH, B.A. of Macclesfield. The fifth Essay was translated by the Rev. R. SHAEEN, M.A. of Lancaster; and the reader is indebted for the Index to the diligent care of the Rev. W. MOUNTFORD, M.A. of Lynn.

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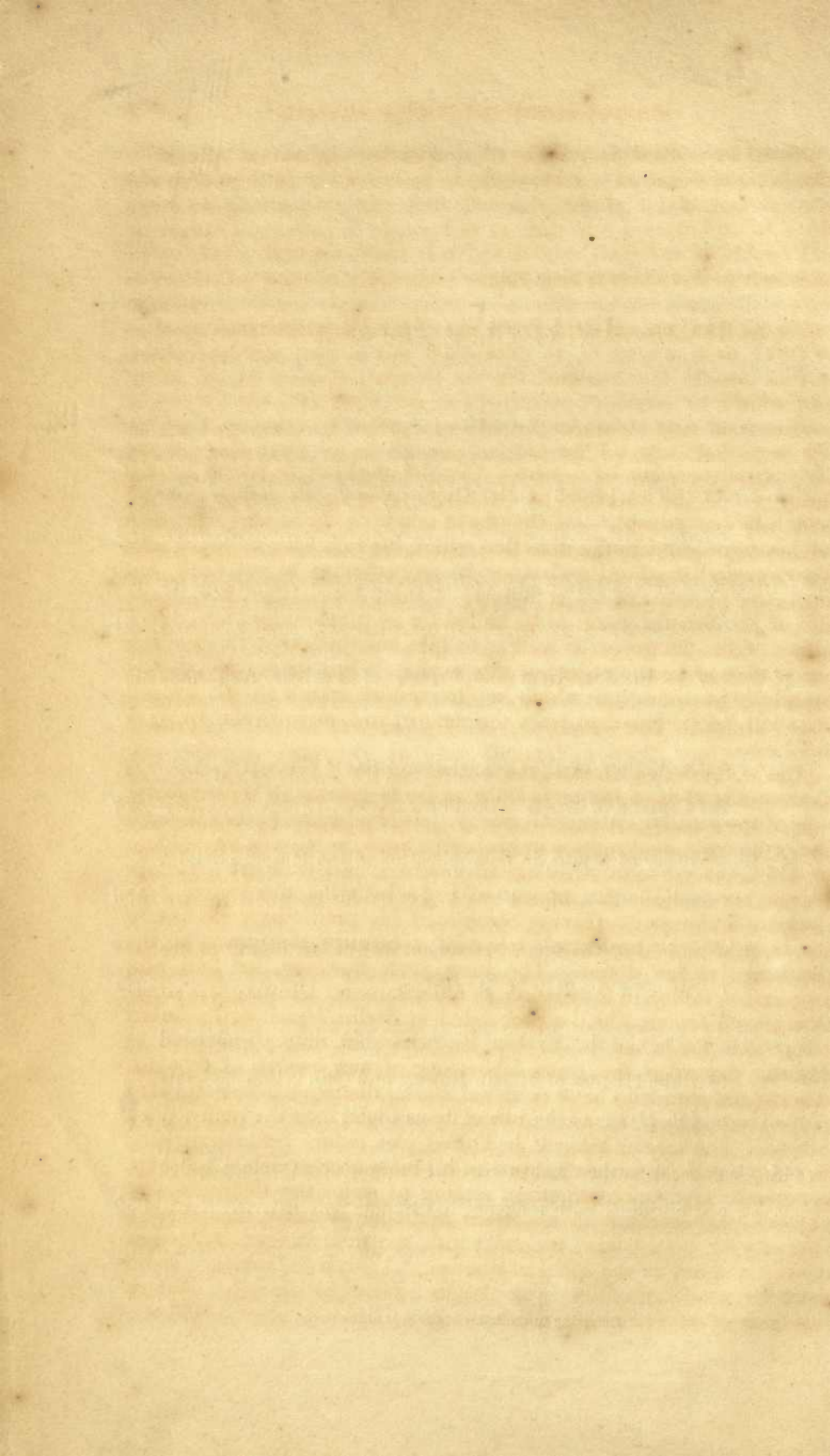


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# R E P L Y

TO

DR. STRAUSS'S BOOK, "THE LIFE OF JESUS,"

BY

ATHANASE COQUEREL.

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THE substance of the eloquent answer to Strauss, whose title we have placed above, will be found in the ensuing pages. The Editor has taken leave to omit a few passages, found in the original, both at the commencement and at the end of the Reply, because they contained matter which, however appropriate in the essay itself, were not required in this work.

The essay itself first appeared in *Le Lien*, a religious newspaper, conducted by liberal members of the French Protestant Church, and was then published in the year 1841, in a separate pamphlet. The essay has been translated into Dutch.

The writer, whose publications are numerous, holds most deservedly a high place among the Protestant clergy of France; being distinguished alike for learning, for eloquence, and for personal worth. Among his works, it may be enough to mention here his "Sacred Biography" (*Biographie Sacrée*, second edition), which is in itself almost a cyclopedia of sacred history, containing a compendium of most of what is good and Christian in the German and Dutch theology of the present day.

Our readers will be pleased to read the following sketch of M. Coquerel's history, which is given in his own language:—

"I was born in Paris, in 1795, and never knew my mother. My grandmother was a Hay, of Norton, of the ancient and numerous Scotch family of that name; and I believe, that, on my mother's side, I quarter (according to the English phrase) with the Earl of Erroll; his Lordship being the head of this family, well known in the history of Scotland. My mother's vacant place was filled by her sister, one of the most distinguished female authors of the day, Helena Maria Williams, who justly bears the title of English historian of the French Revolution, whose works have been translated into all the modern languages, whose poems were put into French verse by Esmenard and the celebrated Chevalier de Boufflers, and whose English translation of 'Paul and Virginia' ranks among your classics. This remarkable woman brought me up. I spent my youth with her, in the midst of the first society, both of Paris and London; and whatever I am, I owe to her. She was intimate with the first men of the day, under Napoleon; and I might have entered any profession with brilliant hopes. But I never thought of becoming any thing else but a minister of the gospel. I went through the four years' course of theological studies at



Montauban, our Protestant Academy in the south of France. At their close, I returned to Paris. I was then too young to expect a call in France: twenty-five is the age according to our rules, and I was then twenty-one. A place was vacant in the French Reformed Church of Amsterdam, and I was invited to Holland to preach a few sermons during the vacancy. I had appeared only three times in the pulpit, when the situation was offered me; and, after arriving at Amsterdam with the intention of remaining six weeks, I remained twelve years! Nothing can surpass the kindness with which my ministerial labours were rewarded, and my sense of the excellent and generous marks of friendship which I received from all sides. But the celebrated Cuvier, the geologist,—who, as Counsellor of State, and of the University of France, was—in 1830, before the Revolution, at the head of the administration of the reformed churches and academies of France,—insisted (though I was then personally unknown to him) on my returning to this country, and offered me the situation of Professor at Montauban. A trifling circumstance prevented my arrival in Paris soon enough to have my name on the presentation-list; and the consequence was, that Cuvier, who would not let me go, determined on the erection of a new (and fourth) situation of *Pasteur de l'Eglise Réformée de Paris*. I have now, for these fourteen years past, fulfilled this laborious and difficult task in the capital of France; and I believe I may say, that, under the divine blessing, my endeavours have not been without some success in the holy cause of the Protestant faith. I preach to a very crowded congregation (at the Oratoire, our principal church, I suppose that there are assembled in general from fifteen hundred to two thousand persons); and I may say, that the Reformed Church of Paris is increasing and prospering in every way. A considerable number of Catholics are constantly present at my sermons, particularly at the Oratoire.

“I forgot to say, that in the beginning of 1839, after three years' professional duties in Paris, I was very unexpectedly named by the king, *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*,—a distinction usually awarded only to a few senior ministers.”

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In this reply, we intend to take a survey of the arguments which confute the system of Dr. Strauss, and to explain the service he has unintentionally rendered to the cause of the gospel. In short, we will prove, by quoting the very words of the unbeliever, that, in the midst of his unbelief, he is obliged to leave portions enough of Christianity yet standing, on which we can reconstruct the whole.

Had Christianity, at its origin, in the main only the confused mass of religious opinions current in the day when it appeared, and out of which credulity formed a history for Jesus in the Gospels, and for the apostles in the book of the Acts?

I. The first objection which presents itself, in refutation of this strange error, is the very existence of Christianity; for, in the system of Dr. Strauss, Christianity is an effect without a cause. No other moral revolution, of which we have any record, approaches in grandeur, in importance, or in duration, to the influence of the Christian religion: even its enemies concede this. To use the expressive language of Holy Writ, “All things became new.” The pure knowledge of God, and of the spiritual worship we should offer him; the rooting out of all idolatry, and its revival rendered impossible; the relations between man and God placed in their

true light, and the necessity of a reconciliation proclaimed; the equality and brotherhood of man given as the basis of a new social state; families restored to their primitive foundations, divinely instituted in the time of innocence (Gen. ii.), but forgotten in the pagan world, and even amongst the Jews; the value of human life at last appreciated; the tomb laid open, and disarmed of its terrors; immortality brought to light, and promised to man; peace of mind, forgiveness of injuries, charity—those three things, of the very names of which antiquity was ignorant; the rights of conscience re-established, and the broad way of human perfectibility ever opened to our steps; the glories, the knowledge, the joys, the affections of a purely spiritual heaven calmly anticipated by the most humble and most simple disciples of a crucified Saviour;—this, in a few words, is the whole of Christianity; for which, according to our Christian faith, the whole of antiquity, till the advent of Christ, was under God engaged in preparing; which, since the birth of Christ, occupies eighteen centuries, teeming with events, and which in some degree constitutes their sole history; and which, as to time to come, seizes beforehand upon the whole of futurity, until the end of the world, and of eternity beyond. Yet, in the system of Dr. Strauss, Christianity, which has exercised so wonderful an influence over the race of man—Christianity, which man sees everywhere around him, in the past, the present, and (if he have faith) in the future—Christianity, which has penetrated through all the veins of the social body, for eighteen hundred years—Christianity, that religion which martyrs have borne witness to at the stake, and Leibnitz, Newton, and Grotius, in their studies—Christianity has for its origin a few popular rumours, a few obscure fables, a few traditions, that superstition borrowed from the Old Testament, in order to construct the New. It may truly be said, in the system of Dr. Strauss, Christianity is indeed an effect without a cause. But no: every river has its spring, and religion comes to us from that source whence all truth comes—from God: the effect is too great to have arisen from a less cause. The workman is known by his work: Christianity has God for its author.

II. How is it possible to believe with our adversary, that Christianity, of which we have just drawn the picture, is the production of nothing more than some popular legends, collected at random, when, from this sketch, brief as it is, it follows that Christianity alone, amongst all religions, is suitable for all nations, all governments, and all degrees of civilization? False religions can only exist on a certain zone of the earth. The sun and its fires are as necessary to them as to the Greek mythologies, and to the poems of Homer; or as the north and its ice to the Scandinavian mythologies, and the poems of Ossian. And, to cite but one more instance, who does not see in Mahometanism the impress of the climate which gave it birth, and beyond which it has not been able to spread,—bounded on the globe by a line marked by the Caspian



Sea in Asia, and by the Danube and the Pyrenees in Europe? Who does not see, in each false religion, the spirit of the government of the time when it originated, the extent of the civilization and the manners of the period, the degree of knowledge then diffused abroad? Christianity alone rises above all these diversities; it is equally adapted for every portion of the earth; it is not dependent on differences of temperature, or the aspects of the heavens. As to forms of government, it flourishes in liberty and peace, but dies not in tyranny and war. It sanctifies every advancement in civilization; it embellishes the most polished manners; it reasons with the philosopher; it studies with the sage; it legislates with the lawgiver; it assimilates itself with every thing, excepting what is evil and what is false; it is suitable to all circumstances; iniquity can introduce no scourge for which it cannot find a remedy, nor can genius invent an improvement which it does not appropriate, and turn to profit. How is it possible to believe, that this admirable religion, at the same time so human and so divine, so perfectly adapted to all the conditions of man, from year to year, and from age to age, is mainly the product of popular legends, obscure, unconnected, varied without end? How is it possible, that from such a source could emanate a religious system, in which each century in its turn finds all it requires, and where every nation and every government can learn the lesson it most requires. The dreamers, who, according to Dr. Strauss, imagined the history of Jesus by the help of reminiscences from the Old Testament — were they such diviners as to presage all the future conditions of man, and adapt their dreams to them accordingly?

III. The question, thus placed, presents itself under another aspect, which gives a new contradiction to the system of Dr. Strauss. That which he calls a myth, or legend, — that is, the personification of the ideas of the age effected in a certain person, — must necessarily bear the deep impress of the period when those ideas prevailed, and of the opinions, sufferings, and wants of that age. The more profound these opinions, sufferings, and wants, — the deeper will be the impression of them in the legends of the times. Thus, in reading Homer, we discover, throughout his poems, an age when Greece had as many kings as towns, when corporeal strength was the great resource in the art of war, when manners were yet rude and savage, and when religion imagined rude and savage gods, — gods but little civilized, if this term can be applied to an Olympus. And if a poet, in order to give his work what is now called an historical colouring, is obliged to put nothing into the mouth of his heroes but what is suitable to that period, — how much more should writers, whose aim is to reform religion, ceremonies, manners, and laws, censure, in every page and every line, the great abuses which prevail, and urge the necessity of great reforms, — those necessary consequences of the moral revolution they had either attempted or dreamed? But the gospel, the date



of whose origin Dr. Strauss himself places at the same epoch with ourselves, — about eighteen centuries ago, — sprang up in an age of frightful tyranny; yet it does not contain a single word directly in favour of political liberty, or against despotism. In an age when slavery prevailed everywhere, it does not declare it illegal. In an age when polygamy was universal, it does not break those destructive bonds. Why this silence, which is by no means a concession? Why this caution, which is but a useful procrastination? Because Christianity did not aim at a political revolution: it did not come to change by violence the social state, and to totally destroy all things, in order to reconstruct all things anew. Christianity had another mission. It assailed the human heart, whose correction was its aim; and it knew well, that to change the heart of man was to change every thing. It struck thus at the root of all evil. It was not by the shock of revolutions, but by the sway of principles, that it sought to destroy all despotism, slavery, and polygamy. Is it thus that public opinion left to herself, the opinions of the mass, the prejudices or passions of the multitude, would proceed? The men who, according to Dr. Strauss, dreamed the gospel were either Jews, subjects of Herod, or Gentiles, subjects of Cæsar and of their proconsuls; and yet they dreamed nothing against tyranny. Their dreams end in the scene of Christ's submission before the infamous Pilate, so hated by some, so despised by others; and in the command of Paul, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." The oppressed dream not thus.

IV. Dr. Strauss is obliged to own, that Christianity commenced eighteen centuries ago, which, of all the epochs of ancient history, was perhaps the least favourable to the growth of a religion that had mainly fables, and not facts, for its foundation. This was, throughout antiquity, the epoch which most resembled our eighteenth century; — an age of doubt, of unbelief, of continual derision and scorn; wanting in respect for all ancient faiths; — an age when every thing was questioned, when novelty was desired in all things; — an age, of which the true representative is Lucian, he who has been called the Greek Voltaire, — Lucian, the celebrated author of "Dialogues of the Dead," "Dialogues of the Gods and Goddesses," — Lucian, who jested with Olympus, regardless of the Pantheon at Rome, which was filled with innumerable divinities. What a time was that to frame, for an obscure moralist of Judea, a marvellous history, composed of wonders borrowed from the Old Testament, appropriated, ill or well, according to circumstances; and to found on the fragile base of a manger, a cross, and a tomb of three days, the belief in a universal and immortal salvation! What a time was that to invent an ideal of human perfection; to create an allegory of divine virtue; to propose a reconciliation between God and man! and then to tell the world, that this ideal had presented itself — that this allegory was realized — that this reconciliation was effected — in whom? In a renowned philo-

sopher of one of the Greek schools? In a sage of Asia, hastening towards the West, with all his holy reputation? No: but in this Jesus, the son of a carpenter, who lived in poverty and obscurity; who, contrary to the constant custom of the philosophers of mankind, taught only in his own country, and who died the ignominious death of the Roman slaves. It is very true, that the inhabitants of the East have always been, and still remain, more meditative and more credulous than those of the West, and that the East was the cradle of Christianity. But it is a remarkable fact, that Strauss cannot find in this any support whatever for his system. Two equally powerful reasons prevent this. Firstly, that was precisely the epoch when, the victorious arms of the Romans continually advancing, the East and the West mingled more and more together; when the spirit of Europe had begun to modify that of Asia, to teach it to doubt, and not to believe without examination, to prefer facts to theories. Secondly (and this reflection is worthy of the most attentive consideration), was it in Asia, where the people were more in the habit of believing than in Europe — was it in Asia, where traditions had preserved greater sway, that primitive Christianity penetrated the most quickly or the farthest? No: at that period, it made but slow and uncertain steps in Asia. We know nothing of St. Paul's three years' sojourn in Arabia: it is only by a mere remark in the Epistle of St. Peter, we discover that he carried the faith to Babylon; and it needed all the science of Michaelis to prove, that this letter was dated from the Babylon of the Euphrates. No: it was in unbelieving Europe that Christianity at once took root, and established itself in a decisive manner without delay. It was in the most civilized, the most corrupt, the most learned cities — Corinth, Athens, Rome — that the gospel found its first converts and its first martyrs. Strange contradiction, that the people who believed nothing — of whose thoughts Pilate was the very echo, when he scornfully asked, "*What is truth?*" — should so quickly learn to construct a new religion, by the assistance of some worn-out legends from the East! Dr. Strauss in vain combats this overwhelming reply, — that a mythology can be established only in a simple, ignorant, and credulous age, and not in one of dispute and doubt. Besides, the things of all others which at that period were least believed and least esteemed, were the Jewish traditions. Josephus, the Jewish historian, was well aware of this; for, in order to make his work agreeable to the tastes of the Romans and Greeks, every time that he relates the marvels of the Old Testament, he stops short in his recital to add complacently some limitation of unbelief, and to flatter thus the propensity of his age to discredit the Jewish traditions. The satires of Juvenal give abundant proofs of the contempt in which the Jews and the chiefs of their synagogues were held at Rome, where they were placed in the same rank as the priests of Isis. According to Dr. Strauss, the whole fabulous scaffolding of the gospel was erected on the recollection of the



prodigies of the Old Testament; so that the people who were sceptical towards the Jews became all at once credulous towards the Christians, who were successors and disciples of the Jews, and were ready to adore in a church that which but the day before they had mocked in a synagogue. For us, we believe with St. John, that "salvation is of the Jews." But, in spite of Dr. Strauss, we do not believe that the Roman world would of itself, or from preference, have sought among them for its salvation.

IV. The state of Judea, in particular, was not at that time more favourable to the triumph of vague, mythological ideas, than the state of the world in general. We have already seen, that Europe and Asia drew nearer to each other; and that the unbelieving spirit of the inhabitants of the West had, by the force of example and the interchange of thought, lessened the former credulousness of the inhabitants of the East. The same effect was produced in Judea. The ancient simplicity of the Hebrew faith was no more; men no longer believed, only because their fathers had believed; they did not feel themselves pledged to the faith of their ancestors; and the only remembrances of the past which still kept any empire were traditions, not abstract and cloudy, in which mysticism could lose itself with ease, and hide its dreams, but traditions of a substantial kind, poor in fancies, but rich in facts, in minute observances, in rigid austerities, and especially in doubts,—doubts which were changed into sarcasms. All that the New Testament, as well as other authorities, teach us of the state of opinion in Judea, near the time of Christ, shows that it was impossible for a purely mythological religion to get established. The spirit of the two great rival sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who at that time contended for the favour of both the high and the low, is a confirmation of this. The Pharisees, it is true, loved to trace their origin back to Moses, and to follow from century to century,—from Moses down to the latest times,—the long series of their traditional expositions of the law. But upon what points did their theology especially dwell? On outward customs, on observances, altogether material and ceremonial, which had the double advantage of soothing and lulling to sleep their consciences, and of surrounding them with a great reputation for sanctity. This excessive love of form—whether it originate in a superstitious but sincere ignorance, or serve as a mask for hypocrisy—is diametrically opposed to that tendency of thoughtful minds, to give form and life to the traditions they cherish, or the novelties they deify. The Sadducees, on their side, denied precisely those doctrines which favour abstract ideas, and in which ardent and gloomy imaginations have in all ages sought the notions which they delighted to realize, and to change into facts: they denied all Providence, all immortality, all resurrection. The other sects, less numerous, less powerful, and less known, the Zelots and the Herodians, which were sects more political than religious,—the one, whose patriotism was pushed to the extreme of fanaticism



against the violators of the law, and the enemies of the nationality of Judea; the other, which served the interest of the dynasty of the Herods, and strove earnestly to rally around it the interests and passions of the Jews, — were not more disposed in favour of those popular legends from which Dr. Strauss holds that Christianity originated.\* In short, what is above all things worthy of remark, and above every thing else gives a striking contradiction to the assertions of the learned German, is, that the bias of the public mind in Judea, at the period of the establishment of Christianity, was far more political than religious: the gospel throughout bears traces of this. Judea, then taken in the vast network of the Roman conquests, governed by procurators who had not even the moderation to spare Jerusalem the affront of seeing graven images within her walls, humiliated by its subjection to a pagan, and harassed by the publicans, who, Jews though they were, troubled themselves far more about the impost of the Romans than the didrachm of the temple, — Judea had lost the real intent of its oracles, and expected in the Saviour only a political liberator, a king of this world, a conqueror who would break the Roman yoke, and bring back again the glorious days of a David and a Solomon, an Asa and a Jehoshaphat. The memorable and fortunate struggle of the Maccabees against the kings of Syria had resounded far and wide, and flattered the national pride; and, in the spirit of a haughty and jealous people, such remembrances become hopes. Thence all those false Messiahs who called the Jews to arms, and promised them an impossible independence; fanatics who, in deceiving others, were themselves first deceived; or audacious impostors, who worked upon the faith and passions of the moment, to serve their own selfish ambition, and fell upon the power of Rome with an indescribable fury. The Romans drowned these seditions in floods of blood; and the blood of the last rebels was scarcely dry, ere other unhappy wretches covered it again with theirs. One of the greatest difficulties which Christ encountered in his mission was the obligation to keep at a distance from all political parties, to advise tranquillity and obedience to the people, to refuse the crown of Judea, and to accept instead a cross for his trophy. The gospel abounds

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\* It appears unnecessary to bring forward the Essenes, as the absurd doctrine is now renounced (and it was high time) which made Christ a secret pupil of the Essenes, and Christianity an offshoot from that sect. On this point, science has yielded to faith. If the spirituality of this sect, and even its virtues, have appeared to superficial and prejudiced critics to bring its disciples near to those of the gospel, it must certainly be granted that the principles to which they attached the most importance were in direct opposition to the spirit of Christianity. It is not less evident, that the Essenes stood aloof from the events of the gospel, and the foundation of the church. Their very opinions enforced their absence; and the silence of Holy Writ, which makes no mention of this sect, is a proof of their authenticity and truth. Those sectaries remained beyond the pale of the gospel history, because they did not and could not take any part in its facts. Strauss himself attaches no importance to the hypothesis, now abandoned, that the Essenes were the precursors of the church. — Sect. i. chap. ii. § 41.

with proofs of the profound wisdom with which, without clashing with the national sentiment, he avoided nourishing a vain hope, and came forth to fulfil his mission as a religious Messiah and spiritual Saviour. This wisdom he displayed even at the time of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem amid the loudest acclamations. In perfect confidence we ask this question: — Where, in the midst of a nation engaged to this extent in that which bears the most absolute sway over the whole world, namely, political interests, and amid all this rivalry of religious sects of which the one bestowed all its attention on the mere letter and form, and the other endeavoured to materialize religion and admitted no immortality, — where is the place for a system of myths, a systematic union of mystic fables and abstract legends, such as Christianity could arise from? So many clouds could be seen only by stedfastly gazing on the heavens; and the Jewish people especially looked towards the earth.

VI. Dr. Strauss acknowledges (and we shall have occasion to return again to this point) that the Christian movement began in Jerusalem and Judea: there was its cradle, and thence the gospel cast its beams around. This fable, engrafted on ancient fables, — to speak the language of the learned unbeliever, — took in this centre, form, consistency, and life. And this is according to the nature of things; since the gospel, according to Strauss, being only a counterfeit of the Old Testament arranged to meet the taste of the day, it was very natural that the new illusion should be fabricated on the scene of the former errors; it was very natural that Jerusalem, filled with remembrances of the law, should serve as the starting point for the legends which credulity drew from those remembrances. But here again our adversary furnishes us with weapons against himself. Christianity, he owns, sprang immediately from Judea, and advanced triumphantly amongst heathen nations. But Judea at this epoch was, as it were, surrounded by pagan science, which met her everywhere on her frontiers. On one side, Judea had, at her gates in Egypt, the celebrated city of Alexandria, with its gymnasia, its schools, and its far-famed library; — Alexandria, at that time filled with Jews, whose connexion with Jerusalem was so intimate that in the latter place there was an Alexandrian synagogue (Acts vi. 9); — Alexandria, whose doctors were acquainted with the mission of John, the precursor of Christ (Acts xviii. 25), and where study more abounded than at Athens. Towards the east was Arabia, where one portion of Greek science had taken refuge from Roman conquest and oppression. On the north were the cities of Asia Minor, almost all of them the abodes of science; Pergamos, whose library, so long the rival of that of Alexandria, had, under Cleopatra, just been transferred thither; Tarsus (which gave its name to St. Paul), where even the Roman youth were educated, and whose schools, according to Strabo, surpassed those of Alexandria and Athens; Antioch, to which Cicero, in his oration in defence of Archias, rendered in strong terms the most honourable testimony, on account of the great number of learned men



who dwelt there, — Antioch, where the name of Christian was first employed. Christianity, in extending beyond Judea, had to cross these different centres of historical, critical, and philosophical learning, to pass these barriers, to submit to this scrutiny, influenced far more by partiality than by justice. Is it possible to believe, that legends adopted by popular credulity, and circulated under this single guarantee, could have deluded these schools so far as to fill the Roman world with Christians even so early as the time of Trajan? What had become of the science of Asia Minor, Greece, and Egypt? and how was it that it failed to discover, nearly eighteen hundred years before Dr. Strauss, that these fabulous legends were nothing more than fables? This argument, to any one who understands the scientific spirit of that age, is an extremely forcible one, because at that time philosophy was essentially critical: the great and glorious works of antiquity are, as it were, smothered under an enormous mass of notes and explanations. The poems of Homer especially served as the subject for interminable criticisms, in which verse by verse, word by word, and syllable by syllable, all was analyzed, dissected, and sifted in a thousand ways; sagacity and patience were tasked in order to discover a new manner of understanding a word of the great poet; and the school of Alexandria was distinguished, above all others, by this unfruitful abundance; its learned men tortured their minds in order to conceive in their own way, by philosophy alone, what the great poet had by his genius conceived many centuries before. In a word, dry, minute, inflexible criticism, armed with innumerable inquiries and quotations without number, was the order of the day. Yet Christianity escaped safe. This new mythology, the enemy of all others, did not excite the curiosity, the suspicion, or the censure of that contemporary criticism which so boldly explored all the inmost recesses of ancient traditions. That criticism did not convict of falsehood, fables made by the aid of more ancient ones, and which threatened to change all things, including poetry, literature, and philosophy. Subjects for commentary and disputation began to fail, and yet it did not seize upon that which voluntarily presented itself! This is in direct opposition to the unvaried habit of the human mind. The critic seeks but to criticise. If Christianity rests on facts, one can very easily understand why those endless commentators of the school of Athens, and their rivals of Greece, long neglected it,—one can understand how it remained unobserved; for that kind of criticism, preferring antiquity, always applies itself the least to contemporaneous history. But if, as Dr. Strauss contends, Christianity rests on traditions, fancies, and remembrances, of which credulity framed a history, one can no longer comprehend why the criticism of the day did not interfere, — why, without remonstrance, it suffered this trenching on that antiquity which was its own domain, its treasure, — why it allowed this transfer, as it were, of ancient fables into present times, without contending for its own property. This reply to the errors of Dr. Strauss is so much



the more forcible, because all testimonies concur in exhibiting Christianity, as from the period of its origin, addressing itself not only to the low and ignorant, but also to the high and educated, classes of society. The Acts and the Epistles are full of narratives and allusions which prove this. It is impossible to conceive how men of letters, casting off all at once the habits of the public mind of this period, should have abjured the convictions and doubts of their whole lives, to accept without inquiry, as a positive religion, a mere collection of fables, whose imposture a very little attention would have sufficed to discover and defeat.

VII. If the political and religious tendencies in Judea, the scientific tendencies in the most flourishing of the Pagan schools, and the popular tendencies in the whole Roman empire, offered but little hope of success to fables converted into real events, and but little means of causing all these scattered legends to be adopted as the history of Jesus of Nazareth, — would not these states of feeling have had sufficient time to change between the appearance of Christ on the one hand, and the foundation of the church and the compilation of the Gospels on the other? Dr. Strauss, in effect, asks whether, “the space of rather more than thirty years, which intervened between the death of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem, during which time the greater portion of the evangelical narratives must have been produced, or even the interval to the middle of the second century, which is the latest period that can be granted for the development of the most recent of these narratives, and the compilation of the Gospels, be not far too short for the creation of a mythology so rich” as Christianity. The objection has often been advanced, and appears to us fatal in its nature. The indifference with which our opponent affects to treat it, and the little skill which so learned an unbeliever employs in his answer,\* seems to us a proof that he closes his eyes on its importance, and can find no reply. The whole of history gives to it a force which a few lines of criticism cannot take away. History exhibits to our view all the mythological religions as lost in the night of time, going back to an immemorial antiquity, forming themselves with an extreme slowness, and taking, in the minds of the people, the colour, appearance, and distinctness of positive facts, only in consequence of growing old, when their origin was forgotten, and the lapse of ages had formed a mysterious veil which concealed from men their rude beginnings. The mind of man is so constituted, that, in order to accumulate error upon error, it is necessary to accumulate age upon age. How many ages passed away before the fables of China, India, or Persia, took the consistence of a system, or the form of a history! Olympus, such as Homer represents it in his poetry, is very different from the *Metamorphoses* of

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\* Introduction, § 14.

Ovid; but then what a number of years, and what a mass of events, had produced this great modification in the received opinions about the gods sung by the two poets, and who in the two poems have nothing in common but their names! Was it in thirty or even a hundred years, that Rome passed from the more moral worship instituted by Titus and Numa, and from the first temples constructed under the republic, to the deification of its emperors, and to the conception of a Pantheon,—that vast assemblage of foreign idols, privileged with the right of Roman citizenship? In less remote times, was it in thirty or a hundred years that the imagination of the people of the North created the mythology of Odin, Thor, and Frega, with their palaces of ice and mist? To cite one more example, less remote from the period of the Holy Scriptures,—that of Egypt. The Egyptian mythology (though perhaps, in studying it, sufficient care may not be taken to mark its different epochs) presents, according to both the Bible and profane history, a progressive march, the traces of which one can only regret not being able to follow on the monuments. It is very probable that, in a very remote antiquity, all those symbolic figures that are now considered as so many Egyptian idols, represented the attributes of a Supreme God, and not those of different divinities. Thus Moses, who prohibited the Hebrews from having any relations with foreign countries, and whose laws are so severe on this point, authorises friendly feelings with Egypt:—"Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land," Deut. xxiii. 7. And if the Egyptian worship at the time of Moses—however infected it might then already be with superstitions and errors—had resembled the Canaanitish and Syrian idolatries, Moses would, no doubt, have extended to the Egyptians his general interdiction against all relations with Pagans; and the long sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt would only have been another reason for condemning a connexion which their remembrances of the land would have rendered only more dangerous and more easy. In the sequel, it was especially with Egypt that the prophets so earnestly endeavoured to prevent the Jews from having any alliance or intimacy. Isaiah vehemently opposed that fatal inclination which drew the Hebrews towards the Egyptians; and Jeremiah perished, the victim of the intrepid perseverance with which he, in his turn, opposed it. The Egyptian worship had become more gross, more material; the idolatry had become, as it were, more idolatrous; the darkness, more dark; and this progress still continued, though fettered by the foundation of Alexandria, till towards the reign of the first emperors. But through how many ages must we not follow this imperceptible movement, in order to mark any certain differences! All history attests, that, thirty or forty years after the death of Christ, Christianity existed everywhere, and everywhere amongst the most polished nations. Dr. Strauss contends, that, in that brief space of time, popular credulity, as if by a common plan, from East to West,



from the Euphrates to the Tiber, was able to build upon the soil of the Old Testament, the immense fabric which he calls the Christian mythology. The birth and mission of the precursor; the birth and mission of Jesus; all his wonders, precepts, and oracles; his passion, his death, his resurrection, his ascension; the wonderful foundation of the church, comprising the calling of Saint Paul; — all this system, such as the four Gospels describe it, and still more, not only they, but all the supposed Gospels that Christianity rejected (Strauss owns this, *Intro.* § 13) before the end of the second century; — all this system, which is so firmly knit together, that not even the apocryphal writers have been able to tear it asunder, was then imagined, divulged, repeated by a thousand voices, committed to writing, believed above all, believed and formed into a regular system of worship, and raised into a positive religion in the short space of thirty or forty years! No: imposture does not succeed so quickly as this, — imposture does not so easily gain credit; and, what most completely proves the force of this reply, having almost the force of a demonstration, to the allegations of the learned German, is the very refutation with which he attempts to oppose it.

"I reply," he says, "that it was not during this space of time that the greater portion of the evangelical cycle was produced. The first groundwork of it was laid in the myths of the Old Testament, composed before and after the Babylonian Captivity. Between the time of the rise of the first Christian community, and that of the composition of the evangelical narratives, there was nothing more to be done than to transfer to Jesus the Messianic myths, already for the most part entirely formed, and to modify them according to the Christian signification, and after the individual convictions of Jesus and his followers. Only a small proportion of them remained to be composed."\*

Who does not feel the weakness of this argument, the falseness of this distinction? Who does not see that this is precisely the point in question? We will freely and unhesitatingly grant to our adversary, that, if the gospel be a fable, it is a fable borrowed from the Old Testament. But the human mind has so much progress to make, and credulity so many delusions to embrace, that the question at issue is either the creation of new fables, or the re-establishment and realization of old ones, and their transference into present times, in order to frame a history of them, and especially a contemporaneous history. In the system of the German doctor, the idea of a Messiah amongst the Jews went back as far as Moses; and it would be easy to prove, that it could be traced still farther, even to Abraham. Here, then, according to him, we meet with a popular credulity many centuries old, which was slowly formed; which, gaining new strength from generation to generation, added unceasingly new features to that imaginary form of a Messiah which it dimly saw in the future. Here the darkness thickened with time: not less than from one to

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\* Introduction, § 14.



two thousand years were necessary to bring into vogue this preparatory mythology, formed altogether on a hope, a trust, an expectation. Yet when this hope was looked upon as fulfilled, when the mythology of accomplishment was added to that of preparation, and when the New Testament had just completed the Old, thirty or forty years sufficed to gain credence for it, not only amongst the Jews, but amongst heathen nations, at that time entirely occupied with national religions or ingenious scepticism. Thousands of years for the growth of the Old Testament with the Jews, and half a century for that of the New with the Jews and Gentiles, does not make the balance equal. It is important to remark here, that, at first view, the gospel seems even less probable, humanly speaking, than the sacred annals of Israel. We shall have occasion to return to this question of probability: at present it is sufficient for our purpose to remark, that, to the readers of the Old Testament, the gospel added one more, and that one the least credible of all, to the ideas of Pagan antiquity, the most contrary of all to its experience, — that of an ideal of perfection, purity, and holiness. Thus people took centuries to believe the less, and only a few years to believe the greater. The names of Moses and the prophets deluded people credulous and prone to idolatry, only by the aid of time: the name of Jesus deceived the most argumentative and most sceptical nations; on a sudden, in the space of a day, in the course of a single generation. We do not fear to affirm, that the edifice of Dr. Strauss here totters on its basis, and what he wishes to maintain is simply an impossibility. The progress of the human mind has been otherwise at all times. Error needs age: it is powerful only when it is old. Truth alone has no need of the consecrating influence which comes from antiquity, and causes itself to be received at its first appearance. If Christianity is only composed of unfounded legends, it will never be explained how these wondrous legends so far gained a credence in the East and in Europe within the space of half a century.

VIII. It appears as if Providence had condescended to offer us, even in the annals of the Christian ages of the world, an example which shows how an historical personage can become a fabulous one, and how fable may be substituted for history; thus furnishing us with an unanswerable argument against the opinion which makes of Christianity a simple amalgamation of badly arranged legends. The last name which appears at the same time in history, and in popular legends, belongs to our own country: it is that of Charlemagne. Even the briefest study of the reminiscences which this great prince has left in history, properly so called, and of the place which credulity, and even religious credulity, gave him in the romances of chivalry, show what conditions are necessary for the formation of a myth, an ideal, or a dream, in the popular mind; — conditions which are not found in connexion with Christianity in its birth. Let us call to mind the principal passages in the life of Charlemagne, and the most glorious events of his reign: — an immense empire;

the title of emperor of the West, which spoke so powerfully to the imagination; an extraordinary activity, which led him to be continually travelling over his provinces; the project of joining the Danube with the Rhine; a constant protection accorded to the church, and an intimacy maintained with the court of Rome; religious wars in the North against the Saxons, and in the South against the Saracens of Spain; relations with the Greek emperors at Constantinople and the caliphs; his projected marriage with the empress Irene, widow of Leo IV.; the celebrated presents of Haroun-al-Raschid, who, it is said, sent him the keys of the holy sepulchre, and even seeds, shrubs, and fruits, to improve cultivation in his states; — these were memorable facts, which struck the minds of the people, seduced by their grandeur, and were engrafted in the popular memory.

Charlemagne died in the beginning of the ninth century (814), leaving one of those reputations which are obscure from their very magnitude and brilliancy. Tradition took possession of it, and covered with embellishments, at will, the soil already so rich. Two powerful influences had begun to excite the imagination; one, the institution of chivalry, if chivalry can be considered an institution: it was rather the natural effect of the ideas and wants of the age. In whatever manner the origin of chivalry may be explained, it is evident that its appearance and rapid progress greatly modified, in peace and in war, in religion, and in the relations of the sexes, the manners of the West, and at a later period affected even those of Asia; it is evident that the principles of honour and of chivalrous courtesy, the customs new or renewed, introduced by this brotherhood in arms, which became universal, appealed most forcibly to the imagination of the people, dazzled their eyes, and rendered the world more poetic. People were roused on every side, in presence of this confederacy of the choice men of the age, which was established by the threefold enthusiasm of religion, valour, and love. The crusades, where chivalry found the field of exploits and adventures most suited to its tastes, to its faults, as well as its excellences, was the second spring, which, in the course of the middle ages, agitated the public mind; the crusades completed the flight of chivalry, and reduced the powers and the virtues of society to this single element, which gave its colour to every thing, — to the art of war, the union of families, the springs of government, poetry, literature, even to religion. People were much less the disciples of the gospel, than soldiers of the Virgin, or knights of the Holy Church.

With the crusades, and from the time of their commencement, the marvellous, as it were, overflowed. So little was known of the East, that every thing marvellous was credible, provided it was oriental. Chivalry became more and more flourishing; it was the heroism of the time, and, like all heroism, it must have a type, an ideal, a model; Charlemagne was chosen: no other name, no other reputation, lent itself better than his to the illusion. Towards



the close of the eleventh century, a monk, borrowing the name of Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims, during the reign of Charlemagne, wrote or compiled the famous book\* which became the model for so many others of the same stamp, and in which a Charlemagne of fable takes the place of the Charlemagne of history, — a knight Charlemagne, who meets with the most extraordinary and most fantastic adventures, who travels about the world followed by his twelve peers, and who even undertakes a crusade, and goes to make war in Palestine. Stories were heaped upon stories; the false Turpin became quite otherwise celebrated than the true one, contemporary with Charlemagne. Traditions and legends, adopted, embellished, or invented by romancists or poets, were interwoven with facts; and this chivalrous mythology attached itself so firmly to the renowned name of the son of Pepin, that, for a long time, fable and history were confounded in the reminiscences of his reign; and, even at the present time, it is not possible to write his life without a separate chapter devoted to the marvellous which imagination added to his history. It is important to recollect, that the centuries which intervened between the epoch of the historical Charlemagne and that of the mythical Charlemagne, as found in the romances of chivalry, were the most ignorant and credulous. The most absurd magic had no difficulty in gaining credit; geography and chronology were completely violated; Jerusalem was placed in the centre of the earth, and only three or four generations were reckoned between the siege of Troy and the foundations of the kingdom of France: even religion had scarcely any light or knowledge, and the most profoundly absurd superstitions were revived during this period. Here, then, we find united all the conditions favourable to the invasion of fables into the territory of history, and for the creation of a popular mythology: — the hero's great renown; an interval of nearly three hundred years between the real history and the written fiction; generations of unparalleled ignorance and credulity; the vast extent of the theatre of events; an excessive power of superstition, and the double flight that chivalry and the crusades gave to the imagination; — here a mythology was possible: thus fable became engrafted upon history; but not one of these conditions can be found around the cradle of Christianity.

IX. In all periods, it is true, fable has been mixed up with history; and Christianity did not escape this common law of human chronicles. In the early ages of the church, apocryphal Gospels, invented and propagated by imposture or credulity, disputed their place with the true Gospels. But when the point is to forge, in a

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\* *Chronique et Histoire faite par Turpin.* — "Chronicle and History, by Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims, containing an account of the prowess and exploits which came to pass in the time of king Charlemagne and his nephew Roland, translated from the Latin into French." There are several editions of this work; but the latest were printed at Paris and Lyons, with some variations in the titles, at the beginning of the sixteenth century.



supposed narrative, events of a nature so peculiar as those of the mission of Christ, — events circumscribed within a very brief space of time, and upon a very limited extent of country, — events occurring in the midst of political circumstances, to which nothing bore any resemblance for some years before and afterwards, — events, in short, which had for witnesses and actors a people so different from all others as the Jews, and a priesthood so strongly characterized as theirs, — imposture must have been wrought with a very rare ability, or credulity have been well served by chance, for fraud or fable not to be visible on every side. The truth of the gospel lost nothing of its brilliancy, when human inventions attempted to rival it. In the commencement of Christianity, and when, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of the Jewish nation, Christianity removed farther and farther from its cradle, a large number of apocryphal gospels were spread abroad, several of which, for a time, deceived some churches. Of these writings we must carefully distinguish two kinds: some are serious books, of which, without any doubt, St. Luke makes mention in the introduction to his Gospel (i. 1): these books, founded upon reputable documents, testimonies, and traditions, reproduced, more or less exactly, the accounts of the evangelists, and added deeds, and more especially words, of Christ which they had omitted. There is nothing in this avowal to disquiet or astonish the most timorous piety. St. John attests positively, in his last page (xxi. 25), that our divine Master said and did infinitely more things than he had related of him. St. Paul, in Acts xx. 35, cites a saying of our Lord's, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive,*" which is not to be found in any of the four Gospels, — not even in that of St. Luke. It is evident that the greater part of the conversations, discourses, and replies, of Jesus are only given in a summary way. A single example is sufficient to show how the words of Christ, not related in the Holy Scriptures, could be preserved in the memory of the believers, and be at last committed to writing. Our Lord, on the way to Emmaus, talked for a long time with two disciples, and "*beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.*" Is it possible to believe, that Cleophas and his companion, so deeply impressed with this divine instruction, should retain nothing of it in their memory, or repeat nothing of it in their discourses and conversations? \* It is quite useless to add, that all these works were without inspiration or divine authority. The second kind of apocryphal books of the New Testament is very different from the first: it consists of collections of borrowings from the canonical Gospels, mixed up with fables, legends, and

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\* See, in a collection, by Fabricius, of the Apocryphal Writings of the New Testament, the curious piece entitled, "Words of Christ our Saviour, which are not found in the four canonical Gospels." Prem. part. p. 321.

wonders, so puerile, gross, and absurd, sometimes impure, and more frequently barbarous, that the mythology of Christianity, so vainly searched for by the ingenious scepticism of Dr. Strauss in the Sacred Writings, is here. Remarkable fact! It is especially the works of this second class which have escaped the shipwreck of time; and, according to our deep conviction, not any defence of Christianity, nor any introduction to the New Testament, is so well adapted to enlighten an unbeliever — if he has not surrendered himself to some system — as a simple perusal of the remains of this heap of falsehoods, compared with our Gospels, though they affect to be moulded according to the Sacred Records. The difference is so palpable and so striking, that it compels belief; and the reader, turning with disgust from these fables invented by raving imaginations, reposes with a pious delight upon the divine and touching majesty of the word of God. Would that we had the power to read these two collections — the one in which the spirit of the Lord spoke, the other where the inventions of men dared to counterfeit the heavenly truth — to all the superficial sceptics of our day, who understand the one no better than the other, and who confidently admire Christianity without tracing it to its source, and without acknowledging that that source is a revelation! We can only just glance at the subject of the apocrypha, and but simply point out the contrast between the Scriptures and these miserable imitations. One feature, however, must detain us, because it furnishes a powerful argument against the system of Dr. Strauss. It is known, and we have already mentioned this, that the idea of a temporal Messiah was prevalent amongst the Jews at the time of our Lord's advent, and during the period of his mission: the whole Jewish nation was imbued with it; and the wisest and most pious, sharing this common error, were satisfied with joining the hope of a moral and religious reform with that of a political revolution and the foundation of a new empire, of which Israel would be the head. This hope misled the friends, the disciples, and even the apostles of Jesus to such a degree, that his passion and death did not undeceive them; and only a short time before his ascension they again asked him, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" Acts i. 6. Hence it is easy to see, since the whole of Christ's ministry took place in Judea, that true and exact Gospels ought everywhere to offer traces of this idea, ever present to the minds of all; and, in fact, such traces may be found throughout the four Gospels, and, as we have just had proof, even in the beginning of the book of Acts. But, on the contrary, the false Gospels, compiled or fabricated by superstitious or deceitful writers, strangers to the Jewish nationality, to its religion and its history, and to all the interests of the day, would present no marks of this error with which the patriotism of the degenerate posterity of Abraham at that time fed itself; and this is precisely the case, — for in all the apocryphal writings now extant there is not a single allusion to



the expectations of a temporal Messiah. One single exception is perhaps to be made for a sentence in the Gospel called the "Egyptian,"\* quoted by Clement of Rome in his second epistle (§ 12); and yet this sentence, attributed by Clement of Alexandria to Salome, the mother of the apostles John and James, and very probably borrowed from a disfigured recollection of Salome's request to Christ in favour of her two sons, may, in the apocryphal writing, be with far greater justice applied to the heavenly kingdom of the Saviour, than to his pretended temporal reign. What a simple and yet powerful proof that the canonical Gospels are history, and the apocrypha, which are extant, a true mythology! In our sacred books we recognise the results of the epoch, the fruit of the soil, if we may so speak: Israel, such as it then was, — the Israel of the time of Tiberius and the proconsulship of Pilate; — Israel, with its passions, its errors, its hopes, its vices, and its virtues, — a true Israel, breathes throughout, and constantly fills the scene. Thus its favourite allusion to a Messiah, king of this world, glitters everywhere in the most lively national colours, even to the question of the apostles, when the cloud of the ascension was already lowering upon their heads. In the apocryphal writings we find ourselves transported into the midst of an imaginary Israel, which has no marks of the true one. The Jewish tint of nationality and religion is effaced or falsified, and the idea of a temporal Messiah disappears. Dr. Strauss wished to separate in Christianity fable from history, legends from realities: the distinction to us appears already made.

X. The *internal* proofs, furnished by the New Testament against the system which sees in Christianity the simple produce of popular and traditional allegories that the credulity of the age grouped around Christ, are worthy of profound attention, and would demand a separate work. It must be acknowledged, that the Gospel has nothing of the appearance of a mythology, nothing deep nor abstruse, nothing empty and sonorous, no trace of emphasis, no affectation of profundity, no love of mystery; the most wonderful things are spoken of plainly, and the most solemn and most grave are always simply attired; the narrative unrolls itself, and goes on its way along the earth without attempting to rise, because the subject is lofty enough of itself. We do not there find any of those artifices of preparation and transition, by the aid of which the compilers of fictions introduce their most extraordinary and most incredible fables. We remark a uniformity of colour, a unity of manner, a steady familiarity of style, which present the profound impress of truth; the narration never changes its tone; and the most striking wonders, the most marvellous scenes, the baptism and consecration of Christ in the river Jordan, his transfiguration, death, and resurrection, are depicted with the same gentle shadowings and the same

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\* Fabricius. Codex Apocryphus, N. T.; part. i. p. 335.



quiet artlessness as his benediction on little children, and the hospitality shown to Jesus by the two sisters of Lazarus at Bethany. This continued uniformity of language, this similitude in the contexture of the narratives, exclude all idea of mythology or allegory. Peaceful annalists write thus; and it is *not* thus that impostors write to delude the people with the fables which they even borrowed from them, or credulous enthusiasts occupied with changing mythology into history. Fanatics, who are first to consecrate legends, and introduce them into the region of facts, are delighted with the brilliant dreams whose perpetuation they attempt; they admire and extol them; they remain in ecstasy before the picture they have set themselves to paint. This is all natural; the human mind is thus constituted; it realizes, by a powerful effort of imagination and credulity, only what strongly excites its admiration, its love, its fear; it describes and relates with all the ardour of its sentiments, and the subject foams beneath its pen. It is a torrent which overflows, and rushes precipitately down its banks; and people believe in the torrent by fancying they hear it roar. In the Gospels all is calm; it is a pure and transparent stream, of which we can see the bed, and the bed is divine. The remark of Rousseau, so justly celebrated and so true, receives here a new application: it is not thus, he says, that people invent, or the inventor would be more astonishing than his hero; nor is it thus that people dream, or the dreamer would be more astonishing than his dream. No: allegory does not borrow with so much success the mask of history.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Sacred Writings, attaching itself to that inimitable form of narration which is exclusively their own, and which we have endeavoured to define, is that which may be called *the spirit of detail*. Under this aspect again the Gospel is unique: the historians of the Saviour, in their pious and admirable candour, saw nothing that might not be admitted into their records, nothing that appeared to them low, mean, or trifling; they collect and relate every thing; every thing, in their view, partook of the greatness of the redemption of the world, and their writings are full of *minutiæ*. In the most solemn of their narratives, suddenly, and when least expected, they turn their attention to some circumstance, out of all proportion with the rest, with the event itself; and then, without transition, they return to what is most august and most divine. St. Mark especially, accustomed to hear from the lips of St. Peter the scenes of the ministry of Jesus described with all the perspicuity (we should now say all the actuality) of an eye-witness, so often an actor in the events he relates,—St. Mark, in his short and concise book, is astonishing in this respect. The exact appreciation of this characteristic of the Gospels is only possible by an attentive and diligent comparison of the four accounts: then, at every step, we are struck with surprise to find, sometimes in one, sometimes in another, a word, a touch, a figure, which, taken separately, is insignificant, but which, in its

proper place, gives a new interest to all the narrative, throws a new light upon it, a new air of truth, and acts like the last stroke of the pencil which in the hand of a great artist perfects the resemblance.

One more observation corroborates the argument drawn from this extreme abundance of details. It is, that these details are, as it were, Jewish: they not only do not deviate from the subject, but they do not wander from the nationality and religion of the Hebrews, and moreover the Hebrews of that time; they suppose an accurate and profound knowledge of the thousand trifles which enter into the every-day life of a nation, and into the habitual practice of a religion; they suppose a familiarity with the events that no imitation can copy; they suppose an historical foundation, and, as it were, scatter truth through the whole tissue of the narratives. Incontestably, this fidelity in details can belong only to a history, and not to a compilation of ideas. A mythology is differently fabricated and constituted; it is a continuation of mosaics; it may, it is true, be rich in all kinds of details, and descend to *minutiæ*, which, however, but betoken a poverty of imagination. What, then, betrays the myth or the dream is, that the embellishing details are of foreign origin, drawn from afar, chosen at random, borrowed here and there from the manners, opinions, and chronicles of diverse nations,\* whilst the local colouring is wanting. The reason is, that error is multi-form: truth alone is one, truth alone is faithful to itself.

XI. That candour, and that historical humility, which lead the sacred writers to scatter through their recitals a multitude of details, where real life is the subject, by no means prevented their allowing imagination the share it had in the teachings of our Lord; nor did it hinder them from introducing, in their work, allegory in the midst of history. In short, — and this fact is most worthy of notice, — Dr. Strauss has written four volumes of astounding learning to prove, that Christianity rests on a fabulous foundation; that its sacred book is a work of imagination; that the wonders of the Gospel are inventions, myths, and fables, of which the Old Testament gave the first idea. Well, this book, to which Dr. Strauss refuses all credence, because it is, as he says, an assemblage of popular fictions, contains vast numbers of allegories and apologues, which form that highly important part, the parables; and these parables are throughout so different from the recitals, so carefully separated and distinguished from the simple narrative of events, that it is impossible to confound the two. From one line to another, one feels the difference, and sees it clearly: the least attention discovers that we have left the region of reality, and passed over to the land of fiction. It is true that these inimitable parables of our Lord, which nothing

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\* The myth, says Olshausen, whether it be historical or philosophical, adorns the idea it contains by mixing with it unimportant traits, taken from the customs and opinions of various nations. *De Integritate Posterioris Petri Epistolæ*, sect. post. cap. v. § 3.



in the literature of any other nation resembles, and which the productions of human genius have never approached; it is true that these parables, when borrowed from the ordinary scenes of the world, are so exact to nature, so wonderful for their probability and simplicity, they so exactly resemble human life, that, when detached from their frame, we are tempted to take them for history; we sometimes ask if the *good Samaritan* is not an anecdote rather than an apologue. But for the illusion to be produced,—illusion which adds to the glory of the gospel,—it is really requisite to take these parables from their frame, to detach them, to contemplate them separately, and choose a new point of view. By leaving them where the sacred historians have placed them, by examining them within their frame, the apologue is as evident in the *good Samaritan* (Luke x. 17), as the allegory in the *rich man and Lazarus* (Luke xvi. 19); the *sower* (Matthew xiii. 1), or the *marriage feast* (Matthew xxii. 1). Ordinarily the evangelists interrupt the course of the recitals and conversations, to give notice of the parables: when this indication is not given at the beginning, it is often found at the end; and, even when omitted, the march of ideas, the connection between questions and replies, the contexture of the narrative, all unite to prevent mistake, all serve to maintain that line of demarkation which separates the facts from the lessons given under the simple form of an apologue, or in the colours of a brilliant allegory. This is why, without fear, the inspired authors of the New Testament throughout so fearlessly enclosed, interwove, as it were, the one with the other,—facts with parables,—certain that no confusion could possibly result. This mixture of the real and the fictitious, the facility and ease with which the text passes and repasses from the field of history to that of imagination, furnishes grave objections to the system of Dr. Strauss. It follows, that the authors of the Gospel made, long before him, and in a very different manner, the distinction that he now wishes to make between that which is historical and that which is imaginary;—it follows, that the groundwork given as history differs essentially from the accessory which does not belong to it; that, if the facts are, as Dr. Strauss believes, myths and fables, the sacred writers, in reporting their parables, must have embellished very complicated and learned allegories by very simple and clear ones, and it is the contrary course which the human mind follows in the invention of a mythology; it passes from the simple to the complex, from that which is clear to that which is dark: it follows, in short, that the contemporaries of Jesus and the early Christians, to whom there was no fear of presenting the most solemn lessons under the form of ingenious and striking fictions, being able to admit the moral value of apologues only after having admitted the historical certainty of the facts, would have made this fundamental distinction in time; they are, therefore, so many well-informed and sincere witnesses who unanimously attest that Christianity rests upon history, and not upon mythology.



XII. All the considerations we have just brought forward, acquire new force if we reflect, that, besides the parables, the New Testament abounds in figurative language. We there frequently find, by the side of the history, a representation of the facts, and an exposition of the doctrines, of the Gospel, under the form of either pure allegory or historical emblem. Thus — without stopping to cite a multitude of examples of this kind, which offer sometimes images, sometimes comparisons—John the Baptist is announced and received as the “Elias which was to come.” Here is an historical parallel between John and Elias, — Elias the reformer of the ten tribes, the contemporary of Ahab, and the precursor of the Messiah ; — a parallel that the evangelists did not hesitate to retain, in spite of the error prevalent amongst the most ignorant of the Jews, that Elias himself would arise from the dead, and re-appear. Again, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, giving notice that he is about to make use of allegory, employs the name of Hagar, bondwife of Abraham, and of Ishmael her son, a slave like her, in order to represent the Jewish people groaning under the servitude of the ceremonial law of Moses ; and the name Isaac, son of the free wife, and like her free, to represent the Christian community restored to the liberty of a purely spiritual religion. The Epistle to the Hebrews is filled with historical emblems. Most interesting to study, but far too lengthened to be possibly developed here, is that of Melchisedec, who represents the Messiah. The sacred author, with admirable skill, discovers traits of allegorical resemblance\* between the Saviour and this Canaanitish prince, — all most interesting to the Christians of Jewish origin, to whom he addressed himself, and which a superstitious ignorance alone caused to be taken for realities, and not for allegories. Finally, evangelical allegory is found especially in the Apocalypse : there it reigns alone ; there all is imagery and emblem, taken from the poetry of the Hebrew prophets. The struggle of Judaism and Paganism with the gospel — their ruin, and the triumph of Christianity — are depicted in a series of imposing scenes, in which three cities occupy the background of the pictures : — Sodom, the city of the crucifixion of our Lord (Rev. xi. 8), which represents Jerusalem and Judaism ; Babylon, the city with seven mountains (xvii. 9), which represents Rome and Paganism ; and a New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven (xxi. 2, 10), which represents the church. However brief this summary of the figures of the New Testament may be, and even without including amongst them the description of the Temptation in the desert, what confusion is possible between those pages where allegory predominates, and the simple historical narratives of the Gospels, where all is so positive, so circumstantial, so characteristic, so living ? Are we not compelled to recognise,

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\* See my “Sacred Biography” (*Biographie Sacrée*), article *Melchisedec*, where this parallel is developed and explained.

between the parts where the form is imaginative, and those which are purely historical, differences so clear and decided, that it is as difficult in the sacred text to mistake allegory for history, as history for allegory? The very place that the Apocalypse has always occupied in the collection of Sacred Books, since it has been admitted amongst them, speaks in our favour: it closes the sacred collection. Evangelical allegory came after evangelical history: such is the order followed by truth. History commences, and imagination terminates, the series. We should find less difficulty in comprehending the error of Dr. Strauss, if the Apocalypse were the first book of the New Testament.

XIII. The introduction to the Gospel according to St. Luke — namely, the first four verses of the first chapter — excludes all idea of a mythology. It is not thus that a collection of fables opens; and with good reason has sacred criticism, from the commencement of theological science, attached great importance to this short introduction; which is confirmed by that placed at the head of the second book of St. Luke, the Acts of the Apostles. The sacred author attests, firstly, that there already existed several histories of Christ; — secondly, that these writings had been drawn up from statements supplied by eyewitnesses; — thirdly, that these witnesses had had cognizance of the facts from the beginning; — fourthly, that they subsequently had become ministers of Christ, and of his word; — fifthly, that he, St. Luke, had carefully investigated all these things from their origin; — sixthly, that he had resolved, in consequence, to relate them in order; — seventhly and lastly, that his purpose was, not to instruct Theophilus, an eminent person to whom he addresses his work, but to make him certain on those things of which he was already informed. Without admitting conjectures, or without drawing inferences, and merely following word by word the first lines of this Gospel, this is the purport of what St. Luke states — these the guarantees that he offers — the details that he enumerates. Is this the beginning of a mythology? Is this the imprudent preface of a collection of legends? Is it thus that an enthusiast enters upon his subject, or that an impostor, skilful enough to write two such books, prepares himself afar off against inevitable contradictions?

If we compare the first lines of the Gospel according to St. Luke, with the pretended sacred writings which deluded and still delude so many Asiatic nations, or with the apocryphal gospels, the difference is palpable, and all to the advantage of the New Testament. Two of the principal books of the Apocrypha are, at their commencement, given as extracts from works which never existed, — “The History of the Twelve Tribes of Israel,” and “The Book of Joseph the High Priest, commonly called Caiaphas.”\* It

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\* The Gospel of St. James, and one of the Gospels of the Infancy. — See the *Codex Apocryphus N. T. Fabricii*, prim. part. p. 66 et 168.



must not be forgotten, that St. Luke was a physician; a profession which no more in ancient times, than in our own day, disposed men towards an easy credulity, but which, in all ages, has fostered the spirit of research. A physician, in becoming one of the ministers and historians of Christ, would feel so much the more inclined to doubt and inquiry, because the greater part of our Lord's wonderful works were healings.

XIV. To these different internal proofs of historical reality offered by the New Testament, we must add that which may be drawn from the individuality of the personages whose names shine in the Holy Scriptures. In order to develop this argument the better, and to show its force, we shall point out a parallel, whose profane colouring need cause neither scandal nor fear. Strauss is an adversary who can be combated only by descending to his own ground. We have already cited the poems of Homer and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Between these two monuments of fabulous antiquity, one may remark curious and profound differences, which it is important to seize upon. One of the best proofs that the poems of Homer are based on history—a proof which no critic refuses, not even those who deny the existence of a Homer, and are resolved that the poems transmitted under his name are a collection of ancient songs of the rhapsodists, compiled, at the latest, about the time of Pericles—is the individuality of the heroes of this epic poem; that is, the strongly marked and distinctly drawn character of all the principal personages. In these celebrated poems, the combats resemble each other: the men are not alike. Achilles, Agamemnon, Nestor, Ulysses, Diomedes, Patroclus, Ajax, Priam, Hector, and many others, have each their own genius, language, and valour, their strength and their weaknesses; and whatever embellishments the poet may have added to these portraits, and however he may have exaggerated the heroism of his characters, one feels that they *are* portraits. The manners, religion, exploits, and festivals, in which they are actors,—all, even to the private and national calamities they suffer,—lay bare the human heart, in all its variety so harmonious, and its similitude so varied. Every thing shows, that imagination has worked upon recollections; and the fabulous embellishments, in spite of their richness, have not been able to completely cover and hide the historical foundation. On the contrary, in that long gallery of pictures which Ovid has drawn in his *Metamorphoses*, fable, with a very few exceptions, discovers itself throughout by the similarity and monotony of the characters. All these false gods are alike, and may be mistaken for each other. They all possess the same air of falsehood: they all bear on their front the same evidence of deceit, which deceives not. The adventures of one might be transferred to another, without changing any thing in the recitals, except the name. The prolific mind of the author has not succeeded in throwing into his verses that variety of character, that appearance of individuality, which reality



alone — life alone can give; and it is this fault which, in the end, renders so fatiguing the perusal of the verses of the most ingenious of Roman poets. In a word, fable or poetry invents, and the imagination suffices to introduce upon a scene of its own choice, characters which are only half-men, and whose hearts are but half formed like our own. But history does not invent: it has not yet found a Prometheus, to steal the creative fire for its service, and to paint characters which are altogether men, which are always consistent, and whose hearts are truly human hearts. They must have existed: the pencil must borrow its colours from the realities of life. The master-stroke of the greatest writers the world has ever produced, consists in imitating some of these shades of character; in seizing, at distant intervals, a stroke of nature with an extreme delicacy of touch, which makes one involuntarily exclaim, "This is nature; this is life; this is man!"

Let us with confidence apply these principles to our Gospels, and they will stand the test better than any other book could do. All the personages of the Gospels, those which are always on the scene, and those which occupy but a corner of the picture, have each the most decided, most distinct, and most clear individuality, and always without a shade of exaggeration: there is not a single forced trait. It is a curious circumstance, that hyperbole appears sometimes in the names they bear: witness the surname of Boanerges, the sons of thunder (Mark iii. 17), given by Christ to the two disciples James and John; but hyperbole never appears in their words and deeds. It is essential to remark, that all these observations apply with equal justice to the wicked as well as to the good. Who is not struck with the individuality and character of the principal apostles — Peter, so sudden in action and speech, so impetuous, but of an impetuosity so natural; John, so faithful without vowing fidelity, so mild without affecting charity, and who everywhere appears surrounded, and in a manner covered, with the name of the *disciple whom Jesus loved*; — of the principal enemies of Christ — Caiaphas, the Jew at once wily and fanatical; Herod, so curious to witness miracles, and who consoles himself with mockeries for the mere satisfaction of his curiosity; Pilate, the great Roman lord, so indifferent when his indifference costs but a little blood; and Judas, that traitor whom it would have been impossible to invent, who betrays but to get gold, and whose avarice is disabused only by blood; — the inferior characters, in short, which appear less frequently in the course of the mission of our Lord — the Pharisees, so pharasaical, to express the fact in one word; the Sadducees, who were Israelites after the same manner as the encyclopedists of the last century were Roman Catholics; — and those pious friends of Jesus — Mary Magdalene, the first witness of the resurrection, so absent in the perplexity of her grief, so prompt in the outpourings of her joy; Nicodemus, that type of a Jewish doctor, not knowing what course to take in order to become a Christian; the two sisters

of Lazarus, who occupy the scene but for a moment, and who at once show themselves as different as two sisters can be? Is it possible to believe, that the credulity of the age, collecting and retouching certain legends, extracted from more ancient ones, could draw this rich gallery of portraits, which one is forced, in spite of oneself, to take for exact resemblances? What other example does the intellectual annals of the world furnish of a credulity thus skilful in its reveries? And by what art could religious falsehood, in giving so much relief to its inventions, and in painting such decided characters, have effected in a collection of popular fables, through the records of four books differing in a thousand details, but agreeing in the main, that which the most extraordinary geniuses the world ever produced, have had so much trouble to accomplish, at distant intervals, in their masterpieces?

XV. To the names we have just mentioned, we must add one more, which alone would be sufficient to prove our last position, and which forcibly brings into relief the value of this argument against the system of Dr. Strauss. The name is that of Mary. If there is one subject in the gospel which could furnish to the mystical imagination of the people of the East, and to the more sensual imagination of the populations of Greek or Latin origin, a field where it could revel at will, in covering the truth with fables, sometimes gross, sometimes elegant, — it certainly is the history of the Mother of the Saviour. This page of the gospel could so easily be turned to the purposes of pious fraud, of sentimental reveries, or of calculating deceptions, that it is precisely on this portion of the Sacred Records that the authors of the apocryphal Gospels have, from preference, exercised their ability; — authors who occupied themselves even more with the Virgin than with Christ, and accumulated upon her name, fables the most serious in appearance, but the most absurd in reality. In later times, and especially since the Council of Ephesus, in 431, when Mary was declared the *Mother of God*; during the middle ages, and even to the present day; the whole of ecclesiastical history loudly attests, that the name of Mary became the central point of the errors with which the gospel has been burdened. How many reminiscences it would be easy to revive on this subject, by searching in the annals of the dark ages, which preceded the revival of letters! How many examples of curious superstitions would the Christianity of the South of Europe disclose to our view! What a long course has not credulity had to pass over from the retreat chosen by the dying Christ for Mary in the home of St. John, to the house of Nazareth transported from Judea into Italy by angels, and to the throne that error has decreed to her as the Queen of heaven! But, when we return from all these superstitions to the august simplicity of the records of the word of God, what honest and pure heart is not struck with the immeasurable difference? Where can one better measure the distance which separates the delirium of super-



stition, thickening century by century the bandage before its eyes, and the accents of truth, which naturally shun all embellishment and all exaggeration? If we suppose for a moment, that, under the names of St. Matthew and St. Luke, two collectors of ancient fables, agreeing to frame a Gospel, were resolved, in their credulity, to attribute a miraculous birth to the Messiah, and for some reason put his mother into their narratives,—we must know very little of the human heart and mind, and must have formed very false notions of the mysticism of antiquity, to imagine that in such a case the accounts of the nativity would have been what they now are,—stamped with that simple and heavenly sincerity which shines therein; or to think that forgers or enthusiasts would have contented themselves with giving Mary the place she occupies in the series of Sacred Records. We have said elsewhere, and we here repeat it, the Gospel does not contain one word of panegyric upon Mary. It speaks of her happiness and of her anguish, but not of her virtue or her glory. What authors, animated only by human genius, would have written the history of Jesus, without reflecting his divine greatness upon his mother,—without admitting her to share their admiration,—without paying her some tribute of honour? The absence of all attempt at panegyric—that indirect humility, as it were—is certainly an effort of skill far above the credulity which collected the legends, or the imposture which invented them. Not only do the evangelists not offer one word to environ the name of Mary with a useless lustre, but she very seldom appears in the events of the gospel; and the more the mission of Christ advances, the more Mary remains in the shade,—the more rare becomes her presence. She is only present at his death; and, save one remark of St. Luke in the Acts (i. 14) that she prayed in the midst of the first assembled church, there is no other mention made of her. There remained nothing to be said of Mary. Her task, her glory, her virtue, and her grief, were finished. She occupied a position unique in human nature, and it would have been indiscreet and useless to wish to fathom her emotions: language would fail to express them, as would experience to analyze them. She had no longer her son near to her in this world, nor his grave over which she could weep. Silence alone was suitable in regard to her, as sequestered solitude became the rest of her life. This the inspired historians well understood; and they ceased to make mention of her, at the point where good feeling commanded it. It is not thus that a myth or dream proceeds. History can pause, and fear to say too much: the myth never stops, and always thinks it cannot say enough.

XVI. Let us now turn to the Apostle to the Gentiles. As to St. Paul, it is truly unnecessary to stop to examine whether forgers could have succeeded or not in imagining such a scene as that of his call, when on his way to Damascus, or in writing in his name such and such of his Epistles. We must consider St. Paul under



all aspects: St. Paul, the Jew and Christian; — St. Paul, the apostle and writer; — St. Paul, the persecutor and martyr; — St. Paul at the martyrdom of Stephen, and at the approaches of his own death; — St. Paul, the author of the eulogium upon charity, in his Epistle to the Corinthians; and the rigorous logician, who compares the law and the gospel, in the Epistle to the Romans, — St. Paul before the Areopagus at Athens, before the people at Jerusalem, before Felix, before Agrippa, and before Nero; — and one then feels profoundly penetrated with the truth of the doctrine, and with the veracity of the teacher. Is this a portrait of fantasy? If religious credulity makes choice of deceivers and enthusiasts to write, of heroes to fight, of apologists to preach, and of martyrs to die, — can we believe it skilful enough to suppose such a character, or to employ such an impostor? We spake of *individuality* — what individuality approaches that of St. Paul? What man amongst mankind resembles him? He does not resemble even his colleagues in the apostleship: he is an apostle after his own manner. The Jewish type of apostles was exhausted: St. Paul is, as it were, the gentile apostle, the universal apostle. His greatness of soul, which shines as brightly in his acts of contrition as in his virtue and his faith, possesses something unique. We must take a survey of time to find two names which we dare place by the side of his — two only, those of Moses and Luther. Equal perhaps in energy of character, in perseverance in duty, in humble confidence, — equal perhaps in their devotion to the end of their lives, it is delightful to think that the meekness of Moses (Num. xii. 3) corresponds with the charity of St. Paul. Many centuries after is found one, the reformer of Christianity, who may probably endure a comparison with its principal founder, especially by the indefatigable ardour — the unshaken courage of his apostleship, the simplicity and the boldness of his faith. Furnished with an imperial pledge of his personal safety, of which the martyrdom of John Huss had, a century before, shown the value, Luther proceeded to the Diet of Worms, to testify to the truth, “not knowing the things that would befall him” (Acts xx. 22), precisely as St. Paul repaired to Jerusalem and Rome; and how many other traits of equal courage might be mentioned on both sides! In the religious history of mankind, and during a space of three thousand years, are three names too many to place at the same altitude? What renders the powerful originality of St. Paul’s reputation so valuable, in the defence of Christianity, is, that his history is mingled with that of Christ in an indissoluble and intimate manner. The name of the Saviour, and that of the greatest of his ministers, are henceforth united: it is a bond, formed by the holy spirit, which nothing can sunder. Dr. Strauss himself does not attempt it. The bond consists in this, that Christ was not “sent” — thus he declares it — “but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. xv. 24); so that his immediate and personal action was not out of Judea, however in principle

Christ taught the universality of Christianity: but it was St. Paul who was charged to overthrow the last wall of separation between the Jews and the Gentiles, and to point out to the view of all, that the Sun of Righteousness rose, not only for the horizon of Israel, but to shed its light over all the world. That a man like St. Paul could allow himself to be deceived, or wish to deceive others, touching the nature of the religion which he transplanted from the Jewish to the Pagan soil; that a man of his genius, the author of the Epistles we possess in the New Testament, could take for contemporaneous facts some old legends, repaired according to the wants of the moment; or that a man of his character — witness his letters — should become the accomplice in so flagrant an imposture, — dupe or accomplice; — these are two moral impossibilities in direct opposition to human nature, without analogy in the annals of mankind, and a thousand times more improbable and more incredible than all the gospel. No: man is not thus constituted, and such a man as St. Paul is not a witness to challenge. We do not fear to say, that in him the apostle proves the apostleship, the Epistles prove the individuality of the writer; so that (if we may be pardoned this mode of speaking) if Paul is real, Christianity is so also; if Paul is an apostle, Jesus is the Messiah; if Paul has indeed *planted*, God has truly *given the increase*. The glory that our Lord dispensed by this chosen instrument returns to its source, and the excellence of the work is attested by the choice of the workman.

These reflections are not a begging the question, nor are they by any means reduced to a circle of errors: they repose on an irresistible alternative. If Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, — if he came to reconcile, not a nation, but all mankind, — if the gospel is the real and inspired history of his mission on earth, — Paul's character may be understood. One easily understands, that, in the companion of the executioners of Stephen, our Lord saw from afar the author of the Epistles, and the apostle of the Gentiles; and whatever there is extraordinary, unique, and individual in St. Paul, corroborates the task that he accepted, and the faith that he spread abroad. But if Christianity be a mythology, the gospel a badly arranged collection of popular legends, and Jesus a moralist, a sage, a philosopher, the Socrates of Nazareth, as people have wished to call him, — then Paul's character is no longer clear, either as an enthusiast, who is deluded — he has too much penetration and learning; or as an impostor, who deludes — he has too much devotion and virtue. In a word, let the objector explain to us a St. Paul with a fabulous Christianity, or a fabulous Christianity with a St. Paul! Neither one nor the other is possible. What, then, remains? There remains the historical certainty, that Christianity is, as it were, *individualized* in St. Paul. There remains the certainty, that his Epistles are a living witness of the truth of the Gospels. There remains the certainty, that if, accord-



ing to his powerful expressions, *Paul is Christ's*, then *Christ is God's* (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

XVII. The two names of Mary and St. Paul, then, appear in the New Testament — the one encircled by a halo whose glory and purity are beyond the reach of human invention; the other assuming a genius too real not to exclude the idea, that his apostleship was an enthusiasm or a falsehood. If these two great and holy names give the strongest of guarantees to Christianity, what can we say of the name of Jesus himself? Here our courage begins to fail: here, especially, we find it difficult to descend into the mere earthly arena where Strauss stands, or to borrow his own language in order to reply to him. What a strange perversion of mind — what a strange disposition of heart — is that which considers, not only the discourses, benefits, wonders, and excellences even of Christ, such as the Gospels describe, as the produce of fabulous traditions drawn from Jewish antiquities, but also his character! It is quite necessary to go that length in order to be consistent, and to maintain the system to the end. In vain, Strauss, like so many other unbelievers before him, pays Jesus a cold tribute of historical and moral admiration.\* In vain does he grant, that “the necessary fire for so great a work, Jesus could have drawn only from the depths of his own soul.” It is evident, that, if the gospel be a mythology, the virtues of Christ are mythological also, or at least for the most part; since it is quite impossible to separate them from his discourses, his oracles, his sufferings, and his triumphs. It is in this respect with his excellences as with his miracles — they cannot be detached from the whole of the records of the gospel, without destroying the body itself. By not admitting the historical reality of the New Testament, — by maintaining that Christ, as the Messiah and as the Saviour, is only a myth, — it must also be admitted, that, as a model, he is but an ideal. To pretend that religious credulity supposed an imaginary Messiah, is to pretend that it endowed him with an imaginary perfection. The dream is there also, if it be elsewhere; and one remains painfully amazed in discovering, that the delusion of party spirit can go so far as to see, in the holiness of him who is the *Holy One of God*, only abstractions, emblems, and legends; and not the palpable realities of life — not the simple efforts of active virtue — not devotedness, sacrifice, and love, in all the glory of its energy. When one has thoroughly contemplated this world of sin, and selfishness, and war, in its moral nakedness, — when one has studied it well, not through the deceitful prism of a system, but in the broad daylight of conscience and history, — how can one help being struck, awed, and moved by traits of character which form, and have been called — in language doubtless too disrespectful, but expressive and clear — *the incomparable originality*

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\* Sec. i. chap. v. § 41.

of Christ. Our adversary will pretend, that that is the Christian point of view, and that we have by no means the right to take our stand there, in order to reply to him; that it is proving the question by the question itself, and certifying the faith by the faith. No: it is to take one's stand in the centre of conscience, which is his own as well as ours; and, according to conscience, — according to that reflected admiration which the benignity and holiness of Jesus obtain, not only from the religious sentiment which animates believers, but from the moral sense which ought to animate all mankind, — according to that instinctive admiration which made Clovis frankly regret that he was not present at Jerusalem and Calvary with the Franks, the benignity and holiness of Jesus can be only facts, and not dreams: our world is too sinful for dreams so pure. It has been said, Why dispute about the certainty of a creation, or the excellence of the universe? If there is a God, there is a Creator: let the Creator make you believe in the creation; let the infinite perfection of the Supreme Workman make you believe in the excellence of his work. This reasoning is just, and is only a summary of the remarkable system of optimism, produced by the genius of Leibnitz. The vast and profound thoughts of this great man upon the work of the Creator may be applied to the work of Christ: thus, as the attributes of God demonstrate creation, so the virtues of Christ prove Christianity.

To these general considerations, we would add but one more thought, which it will be sufficient to point out rapidly to the attention of our readers. Jesus is the ideal of virtue, such as the human conscience conceives it, — so perfect that all the efforts of the most delicate conscience, the most fertile imagination, and the most expansive charity, cannot add to it the least trait; — that, from circumstance to circumstance through all the gospel, one continually asks oneself, but in vain, what Christ could possibly have done more, otherwise, or better, than he did; — that, in a word, to figure to oneself Christ more virtuous (may we be pardoned "the foolishness of our preaching," according to the words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 21?) is a moral impossibility. But what forms an irresistible demonstration against Dr. Strauss, and his deplorable doctrine, is, in our opinion, that Jesus, the ideal of virtue, is a practical ideal. His perfection has nothing of that impossible heroism which the imagination of poets, and even sometimes the imprudent exaggeration of moralists, attach to the models they exhibit. His perfection has nothing of that of heroes, according to fable, or of angels, according to revelation. His virtues are all human, and do not quit the earth, or step out of the just proportions of humanity. He is virtuous, as people may be in a world like ours, in the interval comprised between a cradle and a tomb. He never forgets, in his struggles with the wicked, in the devotedness of his charity, in the most sublime flights of his piety, even in his indignations — he never forgets, that he had not taken the resemblance of angels



(Heb. ii. 9), but "the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7), and that he was made "in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15). Man amongst men, he was Israelite amongst the Israelites, taking part in all the interests of his age and nation, as well as in the worship of his country; mingling with all the agitations of the moment; suffering his heart to beat with the same emotions which swelled all breasts; "the last Adam," as St. Paul again says (1 Cor. xv. 45), keeping so close to all of us, sons of Adam and his brethren, that he condescends even to weep with mourners at the very moment of a resurrection, as if to authorise and sanctify at the same time our sorrows, our tears, and our hopes. From this complete and continual absence of impossibility in the virtues of Christ, there results to Christianity one advantage, which alone, amongst all the religions of the world, it possesses and will possess; namely, that of having exhibited to the world a model which is the ideal of perfection, but which is not inimitable; which does not leave the sinner, who is invited to follow this perfect model, the pleasing and legitimate excuse, "I cannot." When contemplating the virtues of Christ, we feel ourselves in the presence of *the ideal*, but at the same time of *the possible*. We admire, we extol, we worship, we seek for some holiness beyond this, but find none. We search in the most sublime conceptions of human genius for some virtue more virtuous, some charity more charitable,—an effort, an appearance, a shade of devotion more generous, but find none. All is in Christ; and when, after these ecstasies of admiration, we come back to ourselves, and recall the sanctities of that life into the midst of our own, we are quite surprised to find them on a level; and when, after having embraced the cross, we by anticipation carry the heroism of that death to that which awaits us, we are quite confounded to see, that this heroism is suitable to us, adapted to our end, and placed within our reach, so that we are all obliged to endeavour to descend into our tomb, in the same manner as he ascended his cross. And the ingenious and cold learning of incredulity would fain rob us of this example, as reflection dissipates the prepossessions of a dream of the night. No: poets, in their dreams, and the people, who are poets also, in theirs, may create an ideal, and make it act in the midst of accumulating impossibilities; but a practical ideal is necessarily real. If Jesus were perfect only as the Son of God, incredulity might be in the right; but Jesus has clothed himself with a perfection proportional to our faculties: he is perfectly human, and consequently the Gospels are a history.

XVIII. The personal questions, if our preceding remarks may be thus designated, are all in direct opposition to the error which makes of Christianity a collection of mythological legends; and the philosophical questions that the gospel raises, are equally contrary to that system. The fulness given to the preceding topics of reply permit us to compress this important part of the refutation, which would otherwise require, in order to be treated thoroughly, discus-

sions that the limits of this essay do not permit. We must confine ourselves to some indications.

In all the false religions of antiquity, there was pantheism; there was, under one form or another, something of that great error which confounds, assimilates, intermingles the creation and the Creator; which identifies them, which delights to present this axiom in all its forms,—“God is every thing, and every thing is God;” and which, in our day, we have seen essaying to get into credit again.\* The false religions of antiquity either commenced or finished with this; and, if we reflect upon it, we shall easily discover how mythological religions are lost in the error of pantheism, that is, those in which opinions are personified, and presented as the history of certain fabulous personages, instead of being admitted as a doctrine, a faith, or a morality. These religions are, by the force of circumstances, infinitely varied; yet, on the other hand, they proceed from abstraction to abstraction. Fables are added to fables without number, judgment, or connexion; and when the want of connexion is felt, pantheism alone can supply this defect: every thing even in God is changed, in order to justify having changed every thing in religious doctrine,—the events of history, and the passions of the human heart; the phenomena of nature, and the movements of the celestial bodies. Christianity is free from all these absurdities: it is not the apotheosis of nature, or of humanity, or of the universe. Christianity sees God only in God; it in no way sanctions men in confounding the Creator and the creature; it separates them completely and profoundly; it effects the consecration only of individuality. The Supreme Being, according to its precepts, is a being entirely individual, distinct from all that is not himself; and this enlightened simplicity of the idea of the Divinity is owing to the circumstance, that the gospel does not contain the least dissertation on the nature of God. In a word, God, in Christianity, is only God. We see at what a distance from Christianity the allegorical and fabulous religions remain.

XIX. In religion, philosophy, morals, and even in politics and jurisprudence, Christianity is essentially one: it never contradicts itself, and it is the same in its origin, however far they may be traced back, as in its applications and provisions, however far they may extend. Its last words answer to its first. It is the same in the first scenes of the world, where, after the origin of evil, God shows himself as witness and as judge—in the warning given to Cain,† and the sentence pronounced against him; and in the final judgment, which St. Matthew has depicted in words so simple, yet so divine

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\* “The universe—that is the God we adore,” said the Journal of St. Simonism, 8th January, 1831.

† “And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.”—Gen. iv. 6, 7.



(xxv. 31—46). Again, we find them the same when we muse, with its consolations and hopes, upon the first death mankind ever saw, that of Abel; as, when we are in imagination transported to the side of the last tomb, this world will ever see opened. All the great principles whence it emanates—the holiness and goodness of God, the responsibility and the brotherhood and equality of man; the great destinies it announces—a retributive immortality, and the chief event which establishes it, that is, the work of Jesus, placing himself between man and God, to bring us unto him in this life and in the next;—these sentiments, clearly the most glorious that can occupy the human mind, form a unity, a series, and a harmony, with which the most resolute of sceptics have often been struck. This goes to the extent, that all the variations of different Christian communions lie between these extreme points. The field, closed against controversy, is closed only by these starting points, and these conclusions of faith—God, the Father; Jesus, the Mediator; humanity, a family; and immortality after judgment. We may discuss at will in the interstices and intervals of these admitted truths; but upon these bases themselves all discussion is impossible between Christians, unless by undermining the very sanctuary itself; that is, unless by passing into the ranks of infidelity. And why does controversy expire before these august truths, like those poisoned arrows that, according to the fable, could not even graze the buckler of Minerva? Because Christianity is one; because, in its unity, it is far above our disputes; because, in its essence, it is so simple, that it must be all admitted or all rejected at once. In the mathematical sciences, we may discuss the value of such and such a demonstration, the certainty of such and such a method of analysis; but we cannot dispute about the characters of the point, the line, the curve, or the triangle, without ceasing to be mathematicians. The same in Christianity: we vary on many points of doctrine, whose importance is a subject of contention; but to carry the dispute to the question, Whether God is the common Father of men—whether men are brethren—whether Jesus is the Mediator between God and man—is acknowledged by all sects, all churches, and all clergy, from the sacred college of Cardinals to the assembly-room of the Quakers, to be stepping beyond the bounds of Christianity. This unity is again found under all forms of worship, all varieties of opinion, all the influences of priesthoods; under the rule of infallible authority, as well as under that of liberty of conscience. This unity represents itself, from age to age, to all intellects—to those of Leibnitz and Newton, as well as those of the most humble believers. This unity has moved the most exalted imaginations, the most ardent sensibilities; and sufficed for the love of a St. Theresa, in the midst of the most exaggerated Spanish ascetism, and for the calm and unshaken piety of a Protestant of the North, who methodically arranges his affections in their legitimate order: God and Christ first, his family next, his country and

humanity beyond. Is it conceivable, that this powerful unity of Christianity, a unity so strong that it is inviolable, is the result of popular traditions, of legends subject to a thousand interpretations, a thousand different falsifications? How could a most confused medley of fables, heterogeneous and of very ancient date, have given birth to the unity of Christianity? How could order arise from disorder, the simple from the complex, or a single colour of a uniform tint from that camelion confusion of a thousand diverse reflections? The Christianity of theologians, we own without scruple or fear, is very complex; but the Christianity of the apostles, the Christianity of Christ, is extremely simple; and this simplicity, ever shining forth in spite of all the corruptions which veil it — which every one can at his leisure study in the gospel, — this simplicity, which could not have been subsequently interposed in the Christian faith, proves the fact, that the basis of Christianity is historical and divine, and not fabulous and popular. It comes from heaven, where truth can appear only simple and radiant, and not from the dust of the earth, where truth is too often broken, disjointed, and fragmentary, and loses its lustre by losing its simplicity.

XX. All the systems of scepticism that faith has encountered in its progressive march through time, including that which we are now combating, grant that Christianity is about eighteen centuries old; that is, that it commenced under the reign of the first Roman emperors; that it had Judea for its home, the Jewish nation for the first proselytes, or for the first opponents, and Jerusalem for its starting point. These facts are obtained from history, and considered as beyond all dispute. It is also granted, that, thirty or forty years after the epoch assigned for the death of Jesus, Christianity already had numerous converts, in the most populous provinces and the most flourishing cities. Unexceptionable testimonies, especially those of Tacitus and Pliny, leave no doubt about this rapidity of the first progress of Christianity, the place of its origin,\* or the date of its birth. And Dr. Strauss himself, in a remarkable passage of his book,† agrees with Ullman (in his treatise upon the question, “What is implied in the Foundation of the Christian Church by one who was crucified?”) in acknowledging, that “the apologists were right in insisting upon this point, that the immense transition which took place in the minds of the apostles, from the deepest discouragement and utter hopelessness at the time of the death of Christ, to the faith and enthusiasm with which they announced him as the Messiah at the following Pentecost, could not be accounted for, if, during the interval, there had not unexpectedly happened some event, full of an extraordinary consolation, and, in particular,

\* *Judæum originem ejus mali*, “Judea the source of the evil,” said Tacitus. — (*Ann.* xv. 44.)

† Sect. iii. chap. iv. § 137.



an event which convinced them of the resurrection of a crucified Jesus." — From these facts, which cannot be called in question, and from these words, most worthy of meditation, the least that can be concluded must be, that, about the epoch of the commencement of Christianity, the spirit of religion received in Judea a powerful impulse towards substituting the new law for the ancient law — the Christian principle for the Jewish principle; that, leaving Jerusalem, and consequently before the ruin of that city and the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, this impulse was sufficiently powerful to make its way abroad, and install Christianity in the very heart of the Pagan world; that this impulse was able to triumph over the obstacles which the Pagan world, of all degrees, — from the emperor down to the meanest slave in his dominions, from the pontiffs to the lowest servants of their temples, from the heads of the principal schools of philosophy to the most humble of their disciples, — would necessarily raise against the projected conquest of a new religion, that descended towards the palaces, the temples, and the academies, from the summit of a mount commanded by a blood-stained cross. Where was this impulse, — this necessary impulse, since the result is before us? If Christ is the Saviour of the world; if the Bible is a revelation; if the wonders of the mission of that Saviour present a positive historical truth, — this truth, we apprehend, is the impulse we seek to discover. Let us, for one moment, admit the system of Dr. Strauss. Let us suppose the gospel a collection of legends; Jesus, a mere reformer; his death, simple martyrdom; his resurrection, a myth, an emblem; and his ascension, a fabulous apotheosis; — where is the impulse that alone can explain the facts of the case, and of which our adversary himself owns the necessity? The religious and moral world, the world of Tiberius and Nero, sunk so deep in the sleep of selfishness, would have in that case had then awoken of its own accord, without the voice of God crying in its ear. A few obscure Jews, without credit, learning, or renown, — artisans and fishermen one day, changed themselves the next into founders of this great society, which, in its principles, was the same at its dawn as it is at the present hour, and which they named Christianity; — these obscure and timid Jews conceived the idea of so great a work, and succeeded in founding it upon borrowed fictions, upon legends plundered here and there from the books of the Old Testament! The mythological Christianity of Dr. Strauss, without the force of impulse at its rise, is a thousand times more incredible than the real Christianity of the gospel. At the beginning of this essay, we endeavoured to show that the work of Dr. Strauss is reduced to making Christianity an effect without a cause: it has just been seen, that we could say much more. He acknowledges, that Christianity was a living body, which progressed, fought, and triumphed, on leaving its cradle, thirty or forty years after the day of its birth; yet in its cradle he sees nothing but a cold corpse, without motion and without life.

XXI. There remains one more consideration, which appears to us so much the more important, as it proceeds from the very heart of Dr. Strauss's system. Christianity, according to him, is a mythology, the elements of which were furnished by ill-arranged reminiscences and ill-understood texts, from the sacred books of Israel. A mythology is always a popular creation. The learned and the wise may adopt it at last—may endeavour to disentangle it from its absurdities, to insinuate skilfully a little specious philosophy, where the traditions had brought only coarse fictions. Then the discovery is made of a hidden meaning, which spiritualised and purified it from the superstitions, of which they thus struggle to disguise the folly, and re-animate the decrepitude. This was precisely the resource employed by the last of the Pagans to resist the attacks which the Christians unceasingly directed against the indefensible absurdities of Paganism. This was the kind of tactics adopted and established by the emperor Julian, whose genius knew well that this ground was the only one on which Paganism could defend itself.\* But this progress, if it be one, belongs to the decline of religious mythologies, and not to their rise. Far from commencing thus, it is thus that they end. At their origin, mythologies are a popular production; they are produced in the minds of the multitude; they spring from the inferior classes of society; they fortify themselves in the heart of ignorance; they enrich themselves from the prejudices, traditions, and superstitions, in circulation. It is very slowly that they reach the more enlightened classes, and become adopted. In a word, mythologies do not descend from the elevated classes to the crowd. On the contrary, they mount from low to high. A senate of legislators, a council of politicians, an order of priests, or a college of philosophers, will never found a mythological religion: they might receive it, favour it, work it for their profit, and even sanction it, but not found it. If, then, Christianity be a mythology, it is the people who formed it; it is in the ranks of the people we must search for its rise. Yet who can believe, that Christianity originated with the multitude, whether Jewish or Pagan, of that time? It is morally and religiously impossible for Christianity to be a mere produce of the popular mind. Every thing in Judaism, in the history, in the manners and opinions of the period, is inferior to it, so much so that the greatest difficulty it had to combat in its infancy was this evident inferiority. The apostles themselves, after three years of intimate connexion with Jesus, did not comprehend his mission, and understood it only after the events of Pentecost. Christianity was so superior to the century in which it appeared; it was to so great an extent, according to the energetic expressions of St. Paul, "*a stumbling-block* to the Jews, and to the

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\* "When contradictory and absurd fables are circulated touching divine things," said Julian, "they warn us in some degree, and cry out to us not to give credit simply to the words, but to consider, and seek again and again for what is hidden therein." (*Orat.* vii.)



Greeks *foolishness*," that one ought to be even more astonished that it found adherents to believe it, than that it found apostles to preach it. The spirit of Judaism and the spirit of Paganism, without being leagued, were equally opposed to it. One characteristic of the new faith was especially revolting to the spirit of Judaism, so impregnated with that old national and religious pride which the title of *people of God* had nourished from father to son. This characteristic of the new faith was its universality. Israel, in becoming Christian, desired not to cease to be Israel: it went so far as to wish that Christianity should drag after it, through the world, the long and heavy chain of Mosaic ceremonies and observances. This fundamental error prevailed with so much force, that, in spite of the teachings of our Lord on the universality of his work, a new direction from Heaven was necessary to inspire Peter with courage to baptize a Roman, or to share the hopes of the faith with a Pagan family. This great error not only formed an obstacle to the gospel in Judea, but it misled and exasperated minds at Rome, — witness the Epistle to the Romans; and in Asia Minor, — witness the Epistle to the Galatians. This prejudice gave great trouble to St. Paul, in the course of his ministry; and, in order to struggle against it with advantage, it was necessary to hold a solemn council of the apostles at Jerusalem. Besides its characteristic of universality, the absence of all ceremonial worship, and of the buying-off of sins, — the absence of a sacerdotal hierarchy, and of an ecclesiastical discipline, — the absence of an hereditary system, all things so dear to the Jews, — formed so many points of decided opposition between the Israelite mind and the new faith. Without swelling the list of these repugnances, — without longer searching how far the Christian conceptions were superior to these disfigured reminiscences of the Mosaic institutions, we lay down the inevitable alternative which this superiority furnishes to our cause: — A mythological religion proceeds from the people; but "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" and how could the withered trunk of Judaism, loaded with so many parasitical branches, which destroyed it, produce a fruit so excellent as Christianity? The gospel could still less have been produced in the midst of Paganism, because it is even more superior to Paganism than to Judaism. Here the distance is truly immeasurable; here the difference is in every thing. This goes to the extent, that we could draw a picture of the opinions, manners, and vices of the social state of antiquity, by taking the reverse of the Christian truths and virtues, or by uniting all the censures found in the gospel in one general act of accusation. The celebrated historian of the "Decline of the Roman Empire," Gibbon, and all the critics who have followed him, appear to us to have very well proved two things, — which, moreover, no one doubted, — namely, that Paganism fell from old age and absurdities, and that the social state, under the reigns of the first emperors, had become insupportable. Is it possible to avoid perceiving with the least reflection, that the

principle of Christian charity, the system of human brotherhood, and the sentiment of peace of mind, such as the New Testament represented and taught, were completely beyond the efforts of Pagan wisdom and virtue? The system of man's carrying on a trade in man, — from an emperor working the Roman empire for his profit, down to the meanest but one of his subjects trading in the meanest, — this was the predominating feature in the social state of antiquity; yet it is asserted, that from these elements issued the command to love one's neighbour as oneself! In this universal degeneracy, that which man had above all forgotten, was his own dignity. The emperors and the proconsuls knew this well, and acted accordingly; but, whatever they might do, they always found men more vile than they needed: the slave consented to his slavery, the client to his life of beggary, the gladiator to his holiday death, the suicide to his extinction, as if rejoicing in a release; and Christianity raised the individual man to the dignity of a child of God, and the brother of Christ; yet it is maintained, that popular rumours imagined this redemption of mankind. We will add only one more reflection: — Paganism, when purified, was so little able to produce Christianity, that the most admirable men of the age failed to form any conception of the gospel, small though the distance from it was at which they stood. The celebrated chapter of Tacitus on Christianity, and the persecutions of the Christians in the reign of Nero, have often been made the subject of remark. But one observation still remains. If, from the time of the birth of the Christian religion, there was one soul worthy to comprehend and appreciate the gospel, it was that of Tacitus; and he so misunderstood it, that the horrible tortures invented by the monster whom his immortal work so eloquently brands, — Christians covered with the skins of beasts and torn to pieces by dogs in the circus, or serving for torches at the imperial feasts, and buried alive before the tyrant's eyes, — all these atrocities were required in order to move the soul of a Tacitus for a moment in their favour. Yet this sublime religion that Tacitus so indifferently comprehended, our adversary holds to be a mythology; and, to be consistent, he must maintain, that the multitude devised that which Tacitus did not even conjecture. Benjamin Constant believed in the divine mission of Moses, because the epoch when that legislator appeared was, in his opinion, incapable of furnishing the idea of one God, such as is found in the books and institutions of the Old Testament; but if Moses is superior to his age, far more is the Lord Jesus Christ superior to all the combined influences which the first century of our era can gather from what is best both in the Jewish and the Pagan world.

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