

Th. Sect.

THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT
on the
FORM OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS
by
HUGH SKINNER MACKENZIE, B.D. (Abdn).

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F O R E W O R D.

The aim of this thesis is to show that the environment of Jesus helped in various ways to determine the form in which He proclaimed His Gospel.

The general plan is, first, to give some idea of the surroundings and atmosphere in which Jesus lived and taught, and, second, to show that these conditions are reflected in His teaching.

Within the limits of the following pages, it is impossible to do little more than touch the fringe of a vast and fascinating subject. Neither the environment nor the Gospel is here exhaustively dealt with; and many relevant matters have necessarily been left untouched; but it is hoped that what has been written is sufficient to indicate how profound and how varied was the influence of the environment of Jesus on the form of His Gospel.

Jesus and the Gospel are inseparable; and constant reference is made to the Revealer Himself. Through the whole thesis there runs the conviction, sometimes explicitly stated, that, while full value is given to the influence of environment, it is the personality of Jesus which alone

accounts for the Gospel.

The Person of Jesus is here studied designedly as a Figure in history; but this thesis has been written in the belief that an intimate study of the Gospel leads to the conclusion that the Jesus of History is the Eternal Christ.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON THE FOUR GOSPELS.

At the outset of the study of the Gospel of Jesus, there inevitably arises the question whether we certainly know what Jesus taught. It is not within the province of the present thesis to gather and sift the evidence for the credibility of the Gospel narratives; but it is desirable to state, what measure of reliance is here placed upon the Gospels; as sources of our knowledge of the Teaching of Jesus.

1. THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

Despite the personal bias and distinctive purpose of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and their individual interpretations of Jesus and His mission, there is no serious discrepancy in their several accounts of His Teaching, and in their pictures of His life and character; and there is no sound reason why they should not be relied upon as historical and trustworthy.

Theories such as those of Wellhausen and Dr. Kirsopp Lake, which contend that Jesus did not preach the Gospel that the New Testament puts into His lips, are devoid of any solid foundation, and they are contradicted by the harmony of the synoptic narratives with the political and social conditions of Palestine, with the religious ideas of the Jews, and with the form of Christian doctrine in the period before the destruction of Jerusalem.

2. THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

In the Fourth Gospel, which was admittedly written at a

much later date than the Three, it is only natural to expect that, owing to the greater illumination by the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus (John 16.13.), there would be a decided advance upon the Synoptic account of the Teaching of Jesus. But, in spite of obvious differences, there is an inner harmony between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. In his Preface to "Ecce Homo", Sir J.R.

Seeley wrote, regarding the four Gospels: "The detection of discrepancies in the documents establishes a certain degree of independence in them, and thus gives weight to their agreements; in particular, the wide divergence in tone and subject-matter of the Fourth Gospel from the other ~~two~~^{three} affords a strong presumption in favour of all statements in which it coincides with them." Then he proceeds to deduce from St. Mark, twenty-one propositions referring to the Person and habitual acts, and teaching of Jesus; and he observes "that they are equally deducible, with scarcely the alteration of a word, from each of the other three Gospels." There are striking similarities, in style and thought, between some Synoptic passages and the majestic discourses characteristic of the Fourth Gospel (e.g. Matthew 11.25 ff., 16; 13-20; 25; 31 ff; Mark 13; 3-13 and 31-32; Luke 10; 21-22; 21: 8-19; 12: 11 f; Matthew 24: 3-14; 10; 17 ff): there are affinities in doctrine; the whole Johannine doctrine of the Paraclete can be found in germ in the Synoptic Gospels, (Cf. Matthew 3: 16 and John 14: 10; Matt. 16: 17, and John 16: 13): all four Gospels agree in emphasising the inner motive as the great principle of the ethical teaching of Jesus (Matt. 12: 34; Mark 7: 15; John 3: 3): and there are notable instances of unde-

signed coincidence in the historical narratives, (e.g. John 6:15; Mark 6: 45). The Synoptic account and the Johannine account of Jesus and His Gospel are mutually corroborative and supplementary. John's record of the Judaeian ministry supplements the fragmentary Synoptic history of the Galilæan ministry: his picture of the Person of Jesus illumines the claims to authority and sinlessness recorded by the Synoptists. Thus, the Fourth Gospel is both a historical and a religious necessity of the situation.

In his recent book, "The Ethical Teaching of Jesus" (page 4) Professor E.F.Scott describes the Fourth Gospel as "not so much a record as an interpretation"; but is it not possible that it may be both? The Gospel of John may be regarded, on the one hand, as the classical example of the adaptation of the form of the Gospel to meet a changed world, and the requirements of a fresh environment; yet, on the other hand, there is no sufficient reason to doubt that it is a trustworthy record based upon the reminiscences of the aged Apostle John, who combined a vivid memory with a keen spiritual insight, and a deep personal devotion.

CHAPTER II.

THE VALUE OF STUDYING THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT ON THE FORM
OF THE GOSPELS.

The Gospel is the message of God to the children of men. In its Divine aspect, it may be regarded as beyond the reach of any human, or worldly influence. Before the foundation of the world, the Divine purposes had taken form in the mind of God, being moulded by no other influence than the compassionate character of the God-head, and the Divine foreknowledge of human need. The Gospel of God remained "the mystery hid from all ages and generations", (Col.1: 26), until it was revealed in Jesus Christ. It is true that, of old time God spoke "unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners" (Hebrews I:1); but, in the fulness of time, He spoke in His Son, Who is "the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance". (Hebr.I.3.). That is the standpoint of the Synoptic Gospels and of the Gospel of St. John, no less than of St. Paul, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe in the Gospel!" (Mark I: 14.15).

It is noteworthy, that Jesus Himself appropriated the name 'Gospel' to designate the contents of His message. In the synagogue at Nazareth, He read the passage from Isaiah 61: 1: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath annointed me to preach good tidings (the gospel) unto the meek....." (ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς) and when He closed the book, "He began to say

unto them, Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4: 18 ff). Not long after His rejection in Nazareth, when the multitudes followed Him into a desert place near Capernaum and would have stayed Him that He should not go from them, "He said unto them I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God (εὐαγγελίσασθαί με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent." To proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God was the great object of His mission to the world (Cf. Matt. 24:14; 26:13; Mark 1:15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; Luke 7: 22).

Though the content of the Gospel had been determined "from all ages" (Ephes. 3: 9) in the mind and heart of God, yet the form in which it was revealed to man was influenced greatly by the environment of Jesus, the great Revealer. Jesus brought the divine Gospel into contact with human thought and human need; and He adapted it to the mental and spiritual capacity of those who heard it. The form of His message was influenced, and some would even say entirely determined, by contemporary thought; and the mould, in which His words were cast, bore the impress also of the physical and social environment in which "the days of His flesh were spent." The prologue to the Fourth Gospel declares that "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"; (John I: 14); and, just as Jesus, the Eternal Word, accommodated Himself to the conditions of human life, so the Gospel of God, which He preached, was in its form adapted to the earthly environment, in which He moved and taught.

And, not only by adaptation to environment, but frequently by

opposition to environment, was the form of the Gospel of Jesus determined. It was His lot to live in the midst of unsparing criticism and bitter opposition; and the form of the Gospel bears many traces of conflict. Consequently, a knowledge of the environment against which Jesus had to contend, no less than of the environment to which He adapted Himself, is of great value in the interpretation of His Gospel.

The influence of environment on the form of the Gospel is worthy of study for at least three reasons.

1. The Exegetic value of this study.

It is easy to exaggerate the difficulties of the interpretation of the Gospel, and the obstacles in the way of its acceptance, which are due to the local circumstances, in which Jesus delivered His message. It is, indeed, one of the unique features of the Gospel, that it is so intelligible to men of all races and of every age, and to multitudes who have no deep or accurate knowledge of the physical, intellectual, and religious environment of Jesus. It is one of the great evidences of the divine character of the Christian Revelation, that it reaches the hearts of men, living under the most diverse conditions of time and place, and of intellectual and spiritual equipment. But it should ever be kept in mind, that the Gospel was proclaimed at a particular period of the world's history, in a particular locality, and to a people, dwelling in the midst of a peculiar environment. There is local colouring in all the books of the Bible, and, most of all, in

the teaching of Jesus; and a familiar acquaintance with the circumstances, that determine the local colouring is a great advantage, if not a real necessity, to all who seek to understand, in all its bearings, the truth revealed in the Gospel.

(a) Jesus was of Jewish race, according to the flesh, was brought up in a Jewish home in Galilee and was educated after the manner of the Jews of the time. He found Himself in the midst of an intellectual, religious, and social environment, whose influence is constantly reflected in the form of His teaching. It has even been said, - perhaps with some exaggeration, - that "there is no sentence in the Gospels which can be fairly understood, if it be regarded merely as the remark or question of a member of the human race, who might have belonged to any nationality." (Dr. John Kelman: *Hastings'* "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels" II.p.294). With a view to a full and accurate interpretation of the Gospel, it is necessary to consider, not only the place and time at which Jesus spoke, but also the long-established ideas, with which His Gospel came into contact. The preaching of the Gospel resulted in the clash of old and new; and, while the teaching of Jesus has wrought a profound change in the ideas and convictions of mankind, the form of His gospel, on the other hand, was profoundly influenced by the conceptions with which it had to meet, and at times to grapple. Jesus taught people, whose minds were already occupied by definite ideas; and it is important to study the intellectual and religious background, no less than the physical and social environment, of the Gospel.

(b) The form of the Gospel was influenced to a remarkable degree

by the circumstances of the moment. It was "occasional" teaching, in the sense that it took its form from the nature of each occasion as it arose. Though there is an inner harmony and unity in the teaching of Jesus, it was not His purpose to formulate a confession of faith or propound a system of theology. Jesus dealt with life itself; and, unlike the Rabbis, He always brought His teaching into close contact with actual experience.

The words of Jesus were His response to the needs or questions or criticisms of the people He met, and were adapted to the circumstances of a particular occasion. The hostile criticism of certain of the scribes evoked the important pronouncement, along with a manifest proof, that "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2.10). The expression of the outraged feelings of the "scribes of the Pharisees", on seeing Jesus eating with "publicans and sinners", called forth from Him the impressive answer: "They that are whole hath no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2.17). And Luke records, that it was in answer to that same criticism, that Jesus uttered the beautiful parables of the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Son (Luke 15). It only requires a perusal of the words of Jesus to show how frequently their form is determined by the circumstances in which they were spoken; and a knowledge of these circumstances sheds a flood of light upon the meaning of the Gospels. In reporting the sayings of Jesus, Luke usually adds a notice of the occasion on which they were uttered; and, by this means, he brings out their significance more clearly than Matthew does. This fact

in itself illustrates the exegetic value of an understanding of the environment, in which Jesus taught.

(c) One of the most prominent characteristics of the method of Jesus, as a teacher, is His use of illustrations and pictorial language. He spoke in similitudes, and metaphors and parables. He taught in figures of speech; and He drew His illustrations from the common life and ordinary surroundings in the midst of which He lived. It is said that Titian, the famous artist, painted a picture in his early boyhood, with colours obtained from the flowers, that grew near his home; and the colouring of the word-pictures of Jesus was taken from His own countryside. From a study of His imagery, it is possible to gain a vivid picture of the country of His time. Not only the physical features and geographical position of Palestine, but the flowers and trees and animals of the country, the domestic and social customs, the village scenes, and the prevailing industries are used by the rich and active imagination of Jesus, to convey the profound truths of His Gospel to the minds and hearts of His hearers. Most of the parables are derived from events and scenes familiar in the time of Christ; and, if we are to understand them aright, it is necessary that we should know something of the environment, which suggested to the mind of the divine Teacher the various moulds into which He poured the fine gold of His Gospel.

One of the canons laid down by Dr.T.R.Glover "for the study of any human character, whether of the past or of today," is this: "Give the man's words his own meaning. Make sure that every term he uses has the full value he intends it to carry, connotes all

he wishes it to cover, and has the full emotional power and suggestion that it has for himself." ("The Jesus of History" p.19). This rule, when applied to Jesus, brings out clearly the exegetic value of studying the environment that influenced the form of the Gospel.

2. The Apologetic Value of the Study of the Environment of Jesus.

(a) The study of the environment of Jesus not only illustrates and illuminates His teaching, but it also vindicates the truth of the Gospel narratives. By bringing to view their harmony with the circumstances in which Jesus lived, it furnishes proof that they contain a historical and authentic record.

Literary frauds can usually be detected, owing to the presence of errors and anachronisms. When Thomas Chatterton, "the marvellous boy", invented the "Rowley Poems" in 1769, and represented them to be the "transcript" of a Manuscript, three hundred years old, most people, at first, accepted them as genuine; but the harmless deception was soon discovered, because the poems were proved to have no resemblance to the language of the fifteenth century. Writers of fiction, who tell a story of bygone times, are very liable to fall into occasional error and anachronism; and by such lapses, they show that they belong to another age than that of which they write. Their speech 'bewrayeth' them.

An author, who writes of a land he does not know, is as likely to commit mistakes as he who writes of a bygone age. "It is impossible for any one to invent a tale whose scene lies in a foreign

land without betraying, in slight details, his ignorance of the scenery and circumstances amid which the event is described as taking place. Unless the writer studiously avoids details, and confines himself to names and generalities, he is certain to commit numerous errors". (W.M.Ramsay: "The Church in the Roman Empire" p.114-115).

The Gospels abound in detailed references to the manners, and customs, and the local laws and leaders of Palestine in the time of Jesus; and they employ terms and titles, associated with a particular place and period; yet they betray no ignorance of details. They move, with the ease and accuracy of intimate knowledge, through the intricacies of the political, social, and ecclesiastical conditions of Palestine in those days. If the Gospels were the slow mythical growth of later generations, - the product of unhistorical superstition, it is incredible that they would be free from error and anachronism, and that they would reflect so truly the surroundings, in which Jesus lived and taught. When tested by contemporary history and customs and scenes, the Gospels are found to be in perfect harmony with the environment of Jesus. Mythical figures are seldom clearly drawn. The outlines of the picture are dim and blurred, and, when subjected to minute scrutiny, their unreality becomes more and more apparent. But the more carefully we investigate the circumstances of the life and teaching of Jesus, the more real and convincing do the Gospel records become.

Ernest Renan declared that his personal acquaintance with the country of the Gospels imparted to the history of Jesus an

astonishing solidity. "The striking agreement of the texts with the places, the marvellous harmony of the Gospel ideal with the country which served it as a framework, were like a revelation to me. I had before my eyes a fifth Gospel, torn, but still legible; and henceforward, through the recitals of Matthew and Mark, in place of an abstract being, whose existence might have been doubted, I saw living and moving, an admirable human figure." ("Vie de Jesu": Introduction).

(b) The Christian Religion is based upon the historic personality of Jesus Christ. Christian faith is derived from the twofold source of historical knowledge and spiritual experience. The bearing on Christian faith and doctrine of a full and accurate knowledge of the Jesus of History has been recognized by the Church from the earliest times, and is illustrated by the qualification required in a successor to Judas Iscariot. He had to be one of "the men that have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that He was received up from us." (Acts I: 21.) The reluctance of the early Church to acknowledge the apostleship of Paul was due, in large measure, to his lack of this qualification.

It is true that faith in Jesus does not rest mainly on the right understanding of the outward events of His history on earth. It is based upon the immediate contact of the soul with Him; but the soul would never know Jesus, if He had not lived on the earth as the Revealer of the Gospel of God; and the faith that loses touch with the historic events of the life of Jesus becomes feeble

and futile, and tends to drift into agnosticism and pessimism. The Incarnation of the Son of God, in the wide sense of the whole earthly career of Jesus, is the foundation of Christianity; and the more vivid our knowledge of Jesus as a Figure in history, the broader and firmer becomes the basis of religious faith. While St. Paul taught that faith rests upon fellowship with the ascended, glorified Jesus, and wrote: "We henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more" (2 Cor. 5: 16), yet no one insisted more strongly than he, upon the historic truth of the life of Jesus, and the fundamental importance of the events of His life as the basis of faith. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15-17).

(c) The comparison of the Gospel of Jesus with earlier and contemporary writings shows the unique quality of His teachings. The contrast, which such a comparison presents, proves in a convincing way, the originality of the revelation brought by Jesus and its immeasurable superiority to the highest teaching of others. "They were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes:" (Mark 1.22). "Jesus went up into the temple and taught. The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7.15.). "Never man so spake" (John 7.46.).

3. The study of the environment of Jesus and of the influence which helped to determine the form of the Gospel is also an aid to Christian devotion. Familiarity with the scenes in which Jesus moved, makes Him more real to the devout mind: an acquaintance with the conditions in which He lived, and the bitter opposition which

He encountered enables us to realise the moral and spiritual isolation of His lot and the sublime courage with which He trod the rough path which led to the Cross (Cf. Mark 10: 32). A knowledge of the moral obliquity and spiritual bankruptcy of His age and of the marvellous effects of His gospel cannot but strengthen Christian conviction, and deepen gratitude and devotion towards Him, who has brought new life and hope to the sin-stricken and perishing world (Cf. Luke 19: 10). The study of the conditions under which Jesus proclaimed His gospel, along with the spiritual experience of the individual soul, is naturally conducive to the growth of faith. With increase of knowledge, comes the reverence that leads to worship and service, and finds its appropriate expression in the adoring cry of the Apostle Thomas: "My Lord and my God" (John 20: 28). Thus the Jesus of History is acknowledged and worshipped as the Divine and Eternal Christ.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIENTAL ENVIRONMENT.

Part I. Oriental Characteristics.

Jesus was an Oriental by race, and lived and taught in an Eastern environment; and, in order to understand His gospel aright, it is necessary to keep in mind the Eastern atmosphere which pervades it.

"The Orient" is a wide term applicable to any country from Constantinople or Cairo in the Near East to Japan in the Far East; but when we speak of the Oriental characteristics in the Gospel of Jesus, we mean the features in it, which mark it as native to Palestine. The standard, by which we estimate the Oriental element in the Gospel is the experience and testimony of travellers and missionaries and scholars, who have resided amid the Gospel scenes; and have gained an intimate knowledge of the people of Palestine, and of the manners and customs of that part of the East. In the Old Testament Scriptures also, we possess an incomparable record of life in the land, where Jesus lived and taught; and we can find therein a reliable standard, whereby to judge the Oriental element in the Gospel.

1. The Outdoor Life of the East.

Palestine is a land of sunshine, and consequently the people live almost entirely an outdoor life. Oriental life being spent in the open air is more exposed to public notice than life in Western and Northern lands. Private affairs become the concern

of everyone. It is difficult for an Oriental to be alone. Domestic duties are performed under the public gaze; banquets are generally public functions (Cf. Luke 7: 36 ff) and privacy is scarcely sought in observing acts of devotion (Cf. Dan. 6: 10-11; Matt. 6: 1-2 and 5). Joys and sorrows are shared with friends and neighbours to a greater extent than in Western lands; (Job 2: 11 ff. Luke 15: 6, 9; John 11: 19); and the intrusion of neighbours is so persistent, and so regardless of the wishes and convenience of the family concerned, that it is sometimes felt to be irksome. The annoyance of the man, afflicted by an officious neighbour is reflected in the saying, "Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee and hate thee" (Prov. 25: 17.). In early times, the gate of the city was the resort for the transaction of business and the administration of justice and the discussion of news (Cf. Gen. 23: 10; Jos. 20: 4; Ruth 4: 11; 2 Sam. 15: 2; 18: 24 etc.). At the present day, many transactions are still carried out exactly as in ancient times in the open space (**בִּחְוֵז**) at the gate of the city.

The open air life of the East had a potent influence in the history of Jesus. The temptations came to Him during His forty days' solitude in the wilderness (Mark 1: 12): the 'desert', the mountain and the Garden of Gethsemane were His favourite resorts for meditation and prayer: and it is not unlikely that He and His disciples, in their journeys throughout Palestine, frequently spent the night under the open sky. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the heaven have nests", He said, "but the Son of Man hath not

where to lay His head" (Matt.8: 20). He lived close to nature. "Every night", wrote St.Luke regarding the Passion Week, "He went out and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives." (Luke 21: 37).

Many of the words of Jesus were spoken in the open air. We find Him preaching on the mountain side (Matt.5: 1-2), on the sea-shore, (Mark 2: 13; 4: 1): in the desert, (Mark 6: 32 ff.): in the corn-fields, (Mark 2: 23); by the village well (John 4: 6 ff) in the streets of towns and villages (Matt.8: 5 ff), and in the open courts and porches of the Temple, (Mark 11: 27; John 10: 23).

This open-air character of the ministry of Jesus is constantly reflected in the form of His Gospel. Hills (Matt.5: 14) and flowery meadows (Matt.6: 28), seed-time (Matt.13: 3, 24) and harvest, (John 4: 35), sunshine and rain, (Matt.5: 45), the signs in the sky of changing weather, (Luke 12: 54 ff. Matt.16: 1-3), the birds of the air, the beasts of the field and of the wilderness and of the road; (Matt.6: 26; 10: 29; 8:20; 10:16; 12:12; 19:24; 23:24; Luke 13: 15; John 10: 12 etc); thistles and brambles, figs and grapes; (Matt.7: 16; Luke 6: 44), trees, good and bad, (Matt.7: 17-18) - all these, and many other objects and incidents of open-air life, were employed by Jesus as a frame-work and vehicle of His message. The frequency, with which He illustrated His Gospel by references to such industries as agriculture, shepherding, viticulture, and fishing shows that He was a keen observer of outdoor-life and of the scenes of nature. The exposed and public character of Eastern life gives special point to the warning of Jesus, that

hypocrisy cannot permanently hide the real man, and that the most carefully guarded secrets will become known. "Wherefore whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have heard spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12: 3). The lack of privacy in ceremonial ablutions and devotional exercises provided the occasion for His teaching on false and true ideas of purity, (Mark 7: 1-23), and on ostentation in religion. (Matt.6: 1, 5).

Many of the sayings of Jesus were literally "obiter dicta", - words spoken as He went His way, - and in connection with the varied incidents of out-door life and the open road. Multitudes, such as no building could accommodate, frequently thronged Him; and it was necessarily under the open sky that He taught and healed them.

Jesus proclaimed His Gospel, wherever there were people to hear Him; just as missionaries, at the present day, preach the Gospel in the "bazaars" and villages of India; and many of His utterances were occasioned by interruptions, friendly or unfriendly, coming from casual members of the crowd He was addressing at the time. (Cf. Luke 8: 19; 10: 25; 11: 15, 27, 53; 12: 13; 13: 1; etc.).

The atmosphere of the East is easily discerned in the passage in the Book of Proverbs, which describes Wisdom as a Preacher who crieth aloud in the streets, and uttereth her voice in the broad places near the city gates, in the chief place of concourse, where men gather, and pass in and out. (Proverbs 1:20-1).

So Jesus taught, wherever there were people to hear; and the open-air customs of the East helped to mould the form of His gospel.

2. The Emotional East.

Oriental peoples are by nature passionate and intense; and they are not accustomed to restrain their feelings. Whatever their emotion may be, their temperament inclines them to give outward expression to it.

If they are in sorrow and distress, they make no attempt to repress their tears and lamentations. Mourning appears in Scripture, not only in such natural manifestations as weeping and wailing, but also in beating of the breast, (Isaiah 32: 12), tearing the hair, (Ezra 9: 3), and rending the clothes, (Gen.37: 29; 2 Sam. 1: 11; Matt.26: 65 etc.), in wearing sackcloth, (Gen.37: 34; Psalm 69: 11; Matt.11: 21 etc.), in sprinkling dust and ashes upon the head, or sitting in ashes, (Job 2: 8; Rev.18: 19). These and ~~the~~ other visible manifestations of mourning, such as lacerating the body and causing baldness, (Jer.16: 6-8), are illustrations of the demonstrative and excitable temperament of Eastern races.

The manifestations of joy are just as effusive and unrestrained as those of sorrow. In Old Testament times, joy was expressed by shouting, singing, leaping, dancing, and playing on musical instruments (Cf. Psalm 132: 9; Isaiah 24: 8; 49: 13). For example, the escape of the Israelites at the Red Sea, (Exod.15: 20-21), the victories of David, (1 Sam.18: 6), and the restoration of the Ark of God to Jerusalem, (2 Sam.6: 14-15), were celebrated in this manner. Joyful events were also made the occasion of tangible

expressions of emotion, such as feasting and the distribution of gifts. (Neh.8: 10; Esther 9: 22).

The laying of the foundation-stone of the Second Temple called forth a remarkable demonstration of mingled joy and sorrow: "Many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shouts of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off." (Ezra 3: 12-13). The reconciliation of Joseph with his brethren, (Gen.45: 2, 14, 15), the friendship of David and Jonathan, (I Sam.20: 41), and David's passionate outburst of grief at the death of his son Absalom (2 Sam.18: 33) are striking examples of Oriental expression of feeling.

The narratives of the New Testament also contain many illustrations of this Eastern trait. The Samaritan, whom Jesus healed of leprosy, expressed his gratitude with all the exuberance of an Eastern temperament: "One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God: and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17: 15-16; Cf. Acts 3: 8).

As compared with the average Oriental, Jesus was remarkable for His composure and self-control. This is particularly notable in the closing events of His life. Amid the surging passions of His enemies, and the faithless fears of His friends, He remained calm

and steadfast. Even under insult and injury, He showed great restraint. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." (I Pet.2: 23) When He lamented, it was not for Himself. Thus, while ready to faint under the weight of the Cross, on the way to Calvary, He forbade the women of Jerusalem to shed tears for Him; "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." (Luke 23: 28). Throughout all the terrible scenes of His Passion, His demeanour showed that, though an Oriental, He was free from Oriental defects.

Jesus had no sympathy with insincere demonstrations of emotion. When He entered the house, where the daughter of Jairus lay dead, He stood gazing at the spectacle of those who were making a tumult, and weeping and wailing greatly. The doleful dirges of the flute-players and the noisy, insincere lamentations of the mourning women jarred upon His calm spirit: "Why make ye a tumult and weep?", He asked. (Mark 5: 39).

But there are many incidents in the life of Jesus, which exhibit an Oriental expression of feeling. To this we find many allusions in the Gospels: He manifested righteous indignation in driving the traders from the Temple; and the disciples were so impressed by the scene, that they regarded it as a fulfilment of the Psalmist's words, "The zeal of thine house shall eat me up." (Mark 11: 17; John 2: 17 cf. Psalm 69: 9). There was deep sorrow, mingled with burning indignation, in His denunciation of the Pharisees, (Matt.23: 23 ff). When He cleansed the leper He straitly

charged him, - that is, commanded him with strong feeling and impressive gesture, (*ἐμβριμησάμενος αὐτῷ*) to say nothing to any man. (Mark 1. 40 ff). The Epistle to the Hebrews records that in the days of his flesh, He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears". (Heb.5: 7),

As Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem and to the Cross, His strong feeling lent a glory to His appearance, and overawed His disciples. "They were amazed, and they that followed were afraid." (Mark 10: 32 Cf. Luke 10: 21). The Upper Room, Gethsemane and Calvary witnessed the expression of profound feeling. "With desire I have desired," or, as A.V. Margin puts it, "I have heartily desired (*ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα*) to eat the Passover with you before I suffer", He said (Luke 22: 15). He was troubled at the thought of the betrayal, (John 13: 21), and He uttered a cry of relief as the traitor withdrew from the Upper Room (John 13: 31). As the shadow of the great Agony fell upon Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said to His three most devoted followers: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here and watch with me." (Matt.26: 38). On the Cross, the cry of agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt.27: 46) was followed by the cries of triumph and of trust (John 19: 30; Luke 23: 46).

In the teaching of Jesus, no less than in His life, the emotional characteristics are frequently reflected. The Gospel vibrates with emotion. Jesus knew that eternal issues were involved in the acceptance or rejection of His message. The attitude of the people towards Him was for them a matter of life or death; and, in

His words there is always the note of appeal, at once tender and urgent. "Yet a little while is the light with you," He said, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." (John 12: 35). In language, possibly reminiscent of a passage in Ecclesiasticus, He utters His gracious invitation to the toilers and the heavy laden: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28). So absorbing was His passion for souls, and so freely did He express it, that His friends thought Him to be the victim of religious frenzy. (Mark 3: 21). He called upon all men to rise to a heroic level: "Now there went with Him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14: 25-27). "No heart is pure that is not passionate. No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic", writes Sir J.R. Seeley in "Eccē Homo" (p.8): and such passion and enthusiasm Jesus manifested, in the highest degree. In the beatitudes, He introduced the statement of the principles of His Kingdom with the interjection "Blessed" corresponding to the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁר , so frequently used in the Psalms and meaning, "Oh, the happiness!" It is an exclamation of joy and congratulation. (Matt. 5: 3 ff. Cf. Psalm 1: 1; Jer. 15: 10). His denunciations were cries of indignation; (Matt. 23:

23 ff.) while His warnings throbbed with sympathy and love. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke 22: 31-32). How deep is the sorrow, and how solemn the warning in His lamentation over impenitent Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!" (Matt. 23: 37-38). As He rode toward Jerusalem over the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, the City in all its gleaming splendour, came suddenly into view; and, at the thought of its approaching doom, a great wave of emotion swept over Him, and He wept aloud; (ἔκλαυσεν ἐπ' αὐτῆς) and He said, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes!" (Luke 19: 41 ff.).

The Gospel of God's love was proclaimed by Jesus in such teaching as that of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11 ff.) with its exuberant picture of affection. The father, in the abandon of his yearning love, ran to meet his returning son, while he was yet afar off, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and nothing was left undone by the household, with the exception of the elder son, to extend a whole-hearted welcome. Such imagery as this makes one realise that the East is temperamentally more capable than the West of finding words and ideas to show forth the Divine love, which passeth knowledge.

To none did Jesus show more tender affection than to

little children. "He took them up in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them"; (Mark 10: 16) and His love to them is expressed in the words which have been called the Children's Charter: "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark 10: 14). His affection for the "little ones" can be gauged upon His denunciation of the man who should offend one of them: "It is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18: 6). His heart was hot with jealous love for His own.

The Oriental spirit of exultant joy was also conspicuous in His proclamation of the Gospel. The Shepherd who has found his lost sheep, and the woman who has found the lost piece of silver, are so filled with delight that, to celebrate the occasion, they gather their friends and neighbours to a feast; and likewise, all Heaven is heard resounding with the joy of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth. (Luke 15: 3-10).

The passionate desire of Jesus to save souls is manifested also in His pictorial description of the fearful fate of the wicked. The imagery of "the outer darkness", and "the weeping and gnashing of teeth", (Matt. 8: 12), and of Gehenna and the unquenchable fire, (Matt. 5: 22; Mark 9: 43), to which the impenitent are condemned, gives an appalling picture of desolation, despair and baffled rage, of loathsome defilement and unending pain, and makes the heart shudder with the horror of it. The fate of the unfaithful servant is

pictured in lurid colours: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day, when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt.24: 48 ff.).

The use of such imagery is proof of the deep emotion of Jesus, as He contemplated the irretrievable ruin, that sin works in the impenitent soul. He expressed His agonised sense of the tragedy of the lost, in the language that would make the deepest impression upon His hearers, so that He might thus deter them from the course that leads to so terrible a doom.

Oriental demonstrativeness enters into all the relationships of life, and assumes many different forms.

(a) Salutations.

Eastern peoples attach great importance to formal courtesies; and the salutations which are comparatively brief in the West, are elaborate ceremonies in the East. Jesus enjoined His disciples to be careful in such matters, when passing from house to house in their ministry of the Gospel, (Matt.10: 12.). To have omitted such formalities would not only have been discourteous but would, of itself, have caused an unfriendly response to their message. Jesus, however, did not, in all respects, approve of the fashion of salutation, that prevailed amongst the people of His time. He

urged His hearers to observe the courtesies of life not only towards their friends and fellow countrymen, but to all men in the spirit of the Heavenly Father: "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt.5: 47-48) Jesus adversely criticised those, who for the sake of vain glory, loved salutations in the market-places, (Matt.23: 7: Luke 11: 43.), and He rejected salutations addressed to Himself, as mere terms of courtesy, and without a due sense of their meaning. "A certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? and Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? (Luke 18: 18 f; Mark 10: 17-18). Jesus would have the man think what his words meant, and not employ reverent salutations, without reference to the character of those to whom they were addressed. Oriental salutations are frequently tedious, and involve much loss of time; and, for this reason, Jesus instructed the Seventy to salute no man on the way. (Luke 10: 4). The King's business required haste; and the messengers of the King must not delay. This command of Jesus does not by any means, encourage churlishness on the part of His followers, (Cf.Matt.10: 12); but it forbids waste of precious time; and, says Dr.Thomson, "There is also such an amount of insincerity, flattery and falsehood in the terms of salutation prescribed by etiquette, that our Lord, who is truth itself, desired His representatives to dispense with them as much as possible." ("The Land and the Book" p.346).

(b) Oaths.

Another form of Oriental demonstrativeness is the frequent use of an oath in ordinary conversation.

In Scripture, we find that solemn oaths were frequently employed on the more important occasions in life, - especially in connection with Religious covenants, (Cf. Gen. 24: 3; 22:16; Isaiah 62: 8; Heb. 6: 13); but, in the days of Jesus, they were introduced into conversation, without any sense of their sacredness and binding force. Not only was the oath employed on unimportant occasions, but it was cast in commonplace or trivial forms without any moral or religious significance. This Oriental tendency Jesus condemned, when He said: "Swear not at all; neither by the heaven for it is the throne of God; nor by the Earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay, and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." (Matt. 5: 34-37 Cf. Matt. 23: 16 ff.) "Oh, how radical, profound, and far-reaching are the simplest laws of Christ, and how prodigious the revolution they contemplate and require! 'Swear not at all'. Why, the whole Arab race must quit talking altogether. They cannot say simply, Yea, yea; Nay nay." (Thomson: "The Land and the Book" p.411).

When Jesus said "Thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," (Matt. 5: 33), He appeared to permit a solemn and reverent vow in certain circumstances. When He Himself desired to lay

special emphasis on any of His sayings, He made use of the expression "Verily, verily," (ἀμὴν) which is not an oath, but serves the same purpose, without any mention of the name or attributes of God.

(c) Cursing:

The habit of cursing, which is so prevalent among Orientals, as to be almost characteristic of them, is also forbidden by Jesus. The imprecatory Psalms jar upon the spirit of the Christian; but it must be remembered, that the Psalmist regarded those whom he cursed not only as his own enemies, but as the enemies of God. That a solemn curse may be justified on certain occasions, even under the Christian dispensation, is implied in St. Paul's passionate condemnation of anyone, who would preach a false Gospel: "If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." (Gal. 1: 8-9). But, in general, the spirit of the Gospel is opposed to anything of this nature. "Bless them that curse you", said Jesus, "Pray for them that despitefully use you." (Luke 6: 28). He left no place for bitter thoughts and contemptuous words, when He said: "Everyone who is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." (Matt. 5: 22).

(d) Importunity:

The passionate and self-sacrificing intercession of Judah for his young brother Benjamin, (Gen. 44: 18-34) is a deeply moving example of Oriental entreaty; and many of the prayers contained in

the Psalms, and other Old Testament Books, express the emotion of yearning desire, with the deep earnestness that will not be denied.

Even to this day, the Oriental is the master of voluble speech, when he presents a petition. He will not be silenced by repeated refusals: he is importunate; and he persists in his request, in face of denials, until, as often happens, his petition is granted for the sake of peace.

It is with the prayer that will not accept refusal, that Isaiah urges the people to pray for the restoration of Jerusalem: "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and, give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isaiah 62: 6-7).

In the Parable of the Unrighteous Judge, Jesus makes use of such importunity, as an illustration of, and encouragement to persevering prayer. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry to him day and night." (Luke 18: 1 ff.). Encouragement to perseverance in prayer to God is also taught by the parable of the friend, who comes to a neighbour for the loan of three loaves in the middle of the night, and, because of his persistence, overcomes the householder's reluctance, and gains all he needs (Luke 11: 5 ff).

(e) Hyperbole:

Exaggeration is another illustration of the Oriental tendency, with which we are now dealing.

The people of the East habitually make sweeping assertions, which facts do not strictly justify. This is due to

their impetuous and emotional temperament, and also to their love of picturesque and striking forms of expression.

The Old Testament contains many illustrations of this prominent feature of Eastern speech. The Promise of God to Abram is expressed by the writer of Genesis in the form of hyperbole: "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." (Gen.13: 16). The Midiamites and Amalekites, who invaded Palestine in the time of Gideon, were "like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the sea shore for multitude." (Judges 7: 12). In the wisdom and the wealth and magnificence of King Solomon, the Chronicler found a congenial subject for description of this kind. When the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the King, Behold, the half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: thou exceedest the fame that I heard." (2 Chron.9: 3 ff.). "So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom." (ibid 22) "Silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the lowland for abundance." (ibid 20, 27).

An interesting instance of Eastern hyperbole, quite unlike anything in the usual style of the Gospels, occurs in the closing verses of the Fourth Gospel. "There are also many other things

which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." (John 21: 25).

Jesus sternly rebuked all kinds of untruthfulness and insincerity; but He frequently made use of hyperbole, in accordance with the demonstrative manner of the East, and with the purpose of arousing thought. In the startling utterance, "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," (Matt.5: 39), He lays down a Christian principle of conduct in an Oriental fashion. Another illustration of the same thing is found in His teaching on the subject of moral purity: "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell." (Matt.5: 29). Grotesque over-statement, touched with humour, is found in His denunciation of the distorted vision of the Pharisees: "Ye blind guides which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel"; (Matt.23: 24); and in His utterance regarding censorious judgment of others: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matt.7: 3). The disciples of Jesus were startled by the statement that "it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God:" (Matt.19: 24); and how strong and dramatic was His rebuke of Simon Peter's remonstrance, on hearing His prediction of His approaching sufferings: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art

a stumbling-block unto me." (Matt.16: 23). Equally startling is His condemnation of the man who would put a stumbling-block in the way of the little ones. (Matt.18: 6). The all prevailing power of prayer is set forth with similar impressiveness: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." (Matt.17: 20).

One of the most astounding hyperboles of Jesus is recorded in the passage, (Luke 14: 25-27), already quoted in another connection, in which He sets forth the priority of His claims to the dearest ties of kinship.

If interpreted with the strict, pedantic, and unimaginative literalness of a lawyer, studying a legal document, the hyperboles of Jesus would be misunderstood. Their interpretation must always be in harmony with His Spirit, and must always take account of the Oriental atmosphere in which He lived and spoke. No one, for example, can believe that Jesus desired that His followers, under any circumstances, should hate their nearest and dearest; such an idea is contradicted by all that we know of His character, and by His own teaching. (Cf. Mark 7: 8-13). But He did desire to make clear to all intending followers, that His claims upon them, come before all else; and that, in the clash of claims, even the dearest family ties, and the love of life itself must yield to the higher duty of faithfulness to Him.

Jesus used the language of hyperbole, in order to

impress the mind, and stimulate thought, and startle conscience; and He relied upon the good sense of His hearers, to arrive at His real meaning.

"The fact is that the poet's exaggeration is the only way in which many truths can be expressed at all;spiritual things have no adequate language, which corresponds to them; and the only way in which such truths can be communicated is by stating one side of them with such startling strength and vividness, that that phase of truth at least shall never be forgotten. Of this fact Christ took the most fearless and unquestioning advantage."

(Dr. John Kelman: ^{Hastings:} D.C.G. II, 376).

The calm restraint, which is rather characteristic of Northern and Western peoples, may be a form of strength, but it frequently denies to feeling its natural expression; and it is to the unaffected demonstrativeness of the Oriental, that the world owes the sublime manifestations of religious emotion which are contained in the Psalms, in the greatest passages of the Prophets, and in the most intimate of St. Paul's Epistles. The Gospel too is all the more appealing and consoling, because Jesus, the Revealer of the truth and love of God, gave expression to His emotions, with the unaffected simplicity of the East.

Christianity gives no encouragement to the wild excitement, associated with some of the pagan cults, popular in Greece and elsewhere in the time of Jesus; but, by calling for the reasonable expression of the emotional side of human personality, it is a safeguard against cold intellectualism and dead formality in religion.

The ordinances of Christian worship owe much of their beauty and impressiveness to the spirit of the East. Particularly in acts of Praise, and in the observance of the Lord's Supper, all Christendom is led, from time to time, to draw aside the veil of undue reserve, and to exhibit openly the devotion and gratitude of the soul. The Christian world owes much to the emotional East.

3. Pictorial Speech.

Amongst Oriental peoples, figurative language is used to a great extent, both in literature and in ordinary conversation; and a master of this form of speech readily gains the attention and admiration of an Eastern audience.

(a) Similitudes.

The tracing of resemblance between spiritual truths and the world of nature, in its widest sense, has a particularly strong attraction for the Oriental mind; and to this cause is due, in no small measure, the popularity of all figures of speech, which are based upon resemblance and comparison. Such words as Butler's "Analogy" and Henry Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" are products of a type of thought familiar and popular among Orientals. Similitudes based upon resemblances between the natural and the spiritual world, impart great charm to the Gospel of Jesus; and contributed largely to the popularity of His teaching.

Even to the simplest words, such as "light", "salt", "sheep-fold", "door", "bread", "water", "life", "sleep", "death", "paradise", He imparted a spiritual meaning; and thereby brought

to view the inner harmony, between the visible world and the realm of things unseen.

(b) Love of the Concrete.

The pictorial speech of Eastern peoples is due also to the Oriental preference for concrete expressions. Even when the subject under discussion is abstract, the thought is usually cast in a concrete form. "Thus when we say, 'Necessity has no law', Orientals say, 'Hunger is an infidel', that is, has no moral scruples." (Mackie: "Bible Manners and Customs" p.3.). Many of the matter-of-fact statements of the Evangelists appear to have a spiritual significance. For example, when John records the departure of Judas from the Upper Room, on his errand of treachery, he adds, "And it was night" (John 13: 30 Cf. John 1: 5; 8:12; 11: 10 etc). The three hours' darkness, while Jesus was on the Cross, the rending of the veil of the Temple, and the other signs and portents attending the Crucifixion, are recorded by the Synoptists in such a way as to suggest the momentous character of the Death of Jesus, viewed in a spiritual light. Origen went so far as to say that John often "preserves spiritual truth by means of actual invention, if one may so speak." (σωζομένου πολλάκις τοῦ ἀληθοῦς πνευματικῶ ἐν τῷ σωματικῷ, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, ψεύδει).

It may be remarked that Origen's suggestion of "invention" (ψεῦδος) in the Fourth Gospel is in harmony with his fanciful method of interpretation.

The Gospel of Jesus contains numerous examples of the

statement of general principles and abstract truths in the form of a concrete illustration.

The duties of a neighbour are taught by the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37): the dangers of covetousness, by the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12: 16 ff.). "I am the vine, ye are the branches": (John 15: 5), said Jesus, in setting forth the close spiritual union between Himself and His followers. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7: 16) He asks, in pointing out the necessary connection of conduct with character. He uses the figure of the narrow gate and the two ways to set forth the necessity of deliberate choice and strenuous effort, on the part of those who would enter into the kingdom, (Luke 13: 24). The mystery of the operation of the Spirit of God is illustrated by a word-picture of the wind, which is invisible, yet powerful. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (John 3: 8). There is a strong poetical strain in the temperament of the Oriental; and his poetic imagination imparts a vivid and concrete reality to his ideas and visions. Jesus possessed the poetic faculty in a very high degree; and one of the great charms of His Gospel is that He so often taught fundamental and eternal principles by concrete illustrations, such as only a poetic imagination could conceive.

4. The Parable.

Orientals have always had a great fondness for relating

and listening to stories. Many of the tales told have no high moral purpose, and may be no more than the gossip of the marketplace and the countryside: or they may be some fantastic creation of the lively Eastern imagination, like the stories familiar to us in the "Arabian Nights". Many such tales are told in the home circle, when the family has gathered together after the day's work, and in the camps of the wandering Bedouin of the desert; and the writer of the 90th Psalm refers to this Eastern characteristic, when he says, "We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told." (Psalm 90: 9).

The telling of stories has always been employed in the East, not merely for entertainment, but also for instruction. Many a story is told with the express purpose of pointing a moral, or conveying a spiritual truth; and the Parable is a favourite form of such teaching throughout all the East.

In the Old Testament, there are many similitudes, ranging from simple illustration by comparison to the rounded parable; (Cf. Psalm 1: 3; 4:7; 2 Sam. 12: 1-4; Isaiah 5: 1-6 etc.); and many parables are to be found in the uncanonical writings of the Jews. The parabolical element is also predominant in the homilies of the early writers of the Christian Church: (See Trench, "On the Parables" ch.4).

The word "parable" so used in Scripture is not easily defined. The root idea is comparison, by placing one thing before or beside another. (παράβολή, from παράβαλλειν τινί τι,

to compare one thing with another). Owing to the different shades of meaning of the Hebrew word **מִּשְׁלָה**, of which "parable" is one of the translations, the name of parable is given to many different forms of speech in the Old Testament. Balaam's prophetic utterances, (Num.23: 7, 18), Job's discourse on the ways of God, (Job 27: 1), Ezekiel's figurative narrative of the great eagle and the cedar branch, (Ezekiel 17: 2 ff.), the lamentation over Israel, predicted by Micah, (Mic.2: 4), the taunt-song against the proud and treacherous man, (Hab.2: 6), are all termed parables, and show the varied use of the term in the Old Testament.

Examples of the Old Testament Parable, in the narrower sense of a story told to impart instruction or convey a message are found in Nathan's rebuke of David, (2 Sam.12: 1-6), in the tale told by the Wise Woman of Tekoah, (2 Sam.14: 6 ff.), in the rebuke of Ahab by a certain man of the sons of the prophets, (1 Kings 20: 39 f.) in Isaiah's "song" touching the unfruitful vineyard, (Isaiah 5: 1-7), and his description of the labour and skill of the farmer, (Isaiah 28: 23-29). The story told by Jotham of the choice of a king by the trees, (Judges 9: 8-15), and the reply of Jehoash, King of Israel, to Amaziah, King of Judah, in the form of a story about the thistle and the cedar (2 Kings 14: 9), are fables rather than parables.

In the New Testament, the word "parable" is sometimes used in the sense of a proverbial saying. To the people of Nazareth, Jesus said, "Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable (*παραβολή*) "Physician, heal thyself": (Luke 4: 23); and "parable" is used also

in the sense of illustration or analogy. "Now from the fig tree, learn her parable." (Mark 13: 28). The discourse on the Good Shepherd (John 10: 1 ff) is also termed a "parable" (*παροιμία*) or "proverb", (R.V.Margin), but it is best described as an allegory.

The word "parable", as commonly understood, and as applied to the teaching of Jesus, has a definite meaning of its own. It is distinguished from (1) the fable, as being more in accordance with reality and by its lofty spiritual purpose; (2) the proverb, by its fully developed narrative, and by the invariable use of figurative language; and (3) the allegory, through keeping the symbols and the things symbolised quite separate. The parable is a story told with the purpose of conveying spiritual truth. "An earthly story with a heavenly meaning" is a popular definition, which aptly describes its nature and purpose.

Jesus constantly availed Himself of this favourite form of Oriental teaching; and in using it, He imparted to it a new beauty and perfection. About one third of His teaching, as handed down to us, is in the form of parables; and this fact, in itself, proves how deeply they had impressed the hearers. Jesus did not use the parabolic method exclusively; but, at one stage of His ministry it was apparently the predominant form: "Without a parable spake He nothing unto them." (Matt.13: 34).

The purpose of Jesus in adopting this vehicle for His Gospel, appears, on some occasions, to have been the veiling of the meaning of His words from the careless and unspiritual, (Matt.13: 13 ff.); but the general aim was, we believe, to arrest

the attention of the people, and to impress their memory. Parables have also the great advantage of being, in a sense, proofs of the truth they convey. To show that there is a close harmony between spiritual truths and familiar facts of the natural world, is a most persuasive form of argument to Eastern minds, and is not without its influence upon men of all races. The analogies between the natural and the spiritual are not only illustrations, but also arguments, based upon the conviction that the visible world is from God's hand, and is a witness to the truth He would have us to learn; and, in casting His teaching into the form of the parable, Jesus was not merely employing a popular figure of speech, but was summoning the familiar incidents of nature and human life, as witnesses to the abiding truth of His Gospel.

5. Symbolic Actions.

In the East, the acted parable is frequently used as a means of rendering a spoken message doubly impressive. Many acted parables are recorded in the Books of the Old Testament. For example, Jeremiah buried a waist-cloth, (Jer.13: 1-11) broke in pieces a potter's vessel, (Jer.19: 1-11) wore a yoke upon his neck, (Jer.27: 2) and redeemed a field, (Jer.32: 6-15). Many symbolic actions were performed by Ezekiel. He drew a representation of the city of Jerusalem on a slab of clay, and laid mimic siege to it; (Ezel.4: 1-3). He prepared bread from a mixture of various kinds of grain, and baked it with loathsome fuel, to symbolise the privations of the people during the siege and in the captivity,

(4: 9-17). And by shaving off his hair, and burning one third of it, and smiting a third with his sword, and scattering the remainder to the winds, he represented how some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem would die of famine and pestilence, and others would be slain, while the rest would be carried into captivity. (Exel.5: 1-2).

In the Book of Hosea, the unfaithfulness of the prophet's wife is set forth as a symbol of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. When Ahab and Jehoshaphat were planning their expedition against Ramoth - Gilead, "Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron and said, "Thus saith the Lord, with these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed." (2 Chron.18: 10).

Agreements, bargains, and covenants were frequently confirmed by some symbolic action. For example, Jacob and Laban set up a heap of stones as a witness to their covenant. (Gen.31: 44 ff. Cf.Josh.4: 7; 22: 34; 24: 26). If a manservant refused to go out free in the seventh year, and chose to abide in the service of his master, "Then his master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever." (Exod.21: 6). When Boaz agreed to do the duty of a kinsman to Ruth, the man who was nearer of kin than he, drew off his shoe, to show that he renounced his right.. "Now this was the custom in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, for to conform all things; a man drew off his shoe, and

gave it to his neighbour: and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. So the near kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thyself. And he drew off his shoe." (Ruth 4: 7-8).

The covenant between God and His people was sealed by the sprinkling of blood: "And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar: and he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (Exod.24: 6-8). The rite of circumcision was enjoined as an outward and visible token of the covenant between God, on the one hand, and Abraham and his descendants, on the other, (Gen.17: 10). The Scapegoat, that was sent away into the wilderness, laden with the sins of the people was a most impressive act of symbolism, wherein spiritual truths were visibly set forth, (Lev.16: 20 f.).

At some periods of the Church's history, the allegorical method of interpretation was carried too far; but this was due to excessive emphasis on a truth. One part of the "præparatio evangelica" was the typical manifestation of Christian doctrine by many of the ceremonies and events of the Old Testament dispensation. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews bases his argument on the view, that the Jewish ritual was of the nature of acted parable; and many incidents of Israel's history are represented by St. Paul and others, as typical of spiritual truths and experiences,

(Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 1-6; Gal. 4: 21-31; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Psalm 78: 1 ff). St. Paul also declares that the works of creation are symbolic of invisible things; (Rom. 1: 20) so that the whole universe may be regarded as sacramental.

In the New Testament, use of symbolic action is exemplified in the action of Agabus, when he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, in prediction of the bonds awaiting the Apostle at Jerusalem, (Acts 21: 11) and an impressive instance, of a similar nature is to be found in the record of Simon Peter's vision on the house-top at Joppa, (Acts 10: 9-16).

The use of symbol and object lesson occupies an important place in the Gospel. The miracles of Jesus all helped to reveal God's love and truth in a concrete form. St. John calls the miracles "signs" (σημεία) (John 2: 11). They were not mere exhibitions of the power of Jesus, but visible and tangible manifestations of His character and His Gospel. The miracles were acted parables. For example, the Feeding of the Five Thousand was a visible token of the truth which Jesus taught in His discourse on the Bread of Life, (John 6: 5 ff.), the opening of the eyes of the man born blind symbolised the gift of spiritual sight; (John 9: 1ff), the raising of Lazarus was an event which bodied forth the great truth that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, (John 11: 1 ff).

The Royal Entry into Jerusalem, (Mark 11: 1-10), the Cleansing of the Temple, (Mark 11: 15-19; John 2: 13-17), the Washing of the Disciples' Feet, (John 13: 1-20) and the setting of

the child by Jesus in the midst of the disciples, (Mark 9: 33), were all symbolic actions, in which He gave a dramatic representation of leading ideas in His Gospel. The Transfiguration also was an event fraught with great spiritual significance, (Matt.17: 1-8). Jesus stamped with His approval the typical interpretation of Old Testament ceremonies and incidents, when He made a reference to the vision of Jacob's ladder, (John 1: 51 Cf.; Gen.28: 12), and when He said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth, may in him have eternal life," (John 3: 14-15 Cf.; Num.21: 7 ff). In the discourse on the Bread of Life, Jesus showed that the gift of manna was typical of Himself as the living bread: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die," (John 6: 49-50).

The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which Jesus instituted, are ordinances, - "wherein by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers, ("Shorter Catechism", Question 92).

In the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, there is a reference to the doctrine of Christian Baptism, in the words: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," (John 3: 5). The use of water, in Baptism, symbolises the inward purification effected by the operations of the Holy Spirit. In instituting the Lord's Supper, "Jesus took

bread and blessed and brake it; and He gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body," (Matt.26: 26). The giving and receiving of the broken bread is a most vivid and touching indication, in symbolic form of the truth, that the Son of God, through His death, becomes the source of spiritual life, to the believer. "And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins, " (Matt.26: 27-28). Here Jesus links His teaching to the ancient covenant of blood, (Exod.24: 4-8), and interprets His Death as the sacrifice, which ratifies the New Covenant, and which gives assurance of blessing to all, who sincerely enter into the covenant.

In the use of "sensible signs" in the Sacraments which He instituted, Jesus perpetuated in the Christian Religion, the Eastern custom of confirming sacred covenants by symbolic actions.

It is the crude, materialistic interpretation, put upon many of the pictorial words and symbolic actions of Jesus, that has given rise to some of the greatest errors and bitterest controversies of the Christian Church. If theologians had always appreciated, in due measure, the Oriental element in the Gospel of Jesus, the confusion of material symbols with the spiritual truths which they signify, would not have taken place; and such an error as Transubstantiation could hardly have arisen. The failure to understand the atmosphere and environment of the Gospel is a tragedy of Biblical interpretation.

The Incarnation of the Son of God is the supreme manifestation of spiritual truth in visible form. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us No man hath seen God at any time; God only begotten, (ὁ μονογενὴς Θεός) which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," (John 1: 14, 18). "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," said Jesus. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father", (John 14: 6, 9).

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought."

(Tennyson: "In Memoriam" 36).

6. Proverbs.

It has already been pointed out that in the Scriptures, the proverb and the parable are not kept distinct, but for our present purpose, "proverb" is to be understood in the sense of an apothegm, - a short, pithy saying. Proverbs express the garnered wisdom of long and wide-spread human experience. They are marked by the brevity, which is the soul of wit. They belong essentially to popular speech. They are the language of everyday intercourse, - of the home and the street and the market-place; and they usually command the assent of everyone. They are self-evident statements of

truth, and contain the greatest amount of meaning, within the smallest possible compass.

The Eastern mind delights as much in a proverb, as in a parable. "The quotation of an appropriate proverb in a missionary address, always wins for the preacher attention and confidence with regard to what he infers from it."

(Mackie of Beyrout: "Bible Manners and Customs" p.3.).

The Book of Proverbs contains many pithy sayings, in which are enshrined the practical wisdom of the Hebrews; and its counsels for the conduct of life are of great ethical value.

The proverb was frequently employed by Jesus as a vehicle of His teaching. He possessed, in the highest degree, the faculty of choosing forms of speech at once concise, forceful and clear; and in His Gospel, there are many sayings which express great truths in a few memorable words. Many an utterance of His is literally a "multum in parvo."

The utterances of Jesus of this nature may be divided into two classes: (a) those in which He quotes proverbs already popular in His day; and (b) original sayings of His own, cast into proverbial form. To the former class, belongs the "parable", "Physician, heal thyself" (Luke 4: 23); and the saying, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." (Mark 6: 4). To the second class, belong many of Jesus' most original and arresting statements, such as the Beatitudes, and many other

sayings in the Sermon on the Mount and in His teaching generally. For two reasons the use of proverbial expressions contributes greatly to the attractiveness and power of the words of Jesus. (1) Proverbs are easily remembered; and wherever the Gospel has been preached, many of the terse and vivid sayings of Jesus have entered into the language of everyday life, as no other words have done. They have become "current coin". As we read the Gospels, or as we think of the words of Jesus, which we remember best, and which we have upon our lips most frequently, we realise how large a place such expressions occupy in His teaching. It is because of their proverbial form, that such utterances as the following, have gained a firm hold on the popular mind: "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also", (Matt.6: 21); "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," (Matt.6: 34); "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you," (Matt.7: 2); "Cast not your pearls before the swine," (Matt. 7: 6); "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," (Luke 12: 48); "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22: 21).

(2) The utterance of an apt proverb is, on some occasions, a most effective form of argument. It puts a matter so convincingly, that it renders all further discussion superfluous. In a controversy, an opponent's case may be

completely demolished, through the skilful application of a proverb to the matter under discussion. This is a popular form of reasoning in the East. "If an Arab or Persian orator waxes fervid on the theme of equality, and bombards his hearers with pompous platitudes about Nature's law, some gray-beard will ask, "Hath God made the five fingers of thy hand all equal?" and solventur risu tabulae" (Chambers's Encyclopaedia: s.v. "Proverbs"). This method was sometimes used with great effect by Jesus. When the Pharisees murmured against Him, because of His consorting with publicans and sinners, He showed the unreasonableness of their cavils and effectually defended His own conduct, by quoting the proverb: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." (Matt. 9: 12). In the controversy regarding the Sabbath, Jesus employed the same kind of argument. When the Pharisees were jealously watching Him that they might accuse Him, He said unto them: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace." (Mark 3: 4). The Pharisees were thus completely silenced. On the same subject, He laid down a general principle in the convincing form of a proverb, when He said: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2: 27-28).

The study of the proverbs of Jesus has much more than an academic interest; for the correct interpretation of

some of His most perplexing utterances turns upon His use of proverbs, which were familiar to the people of His time. For example, the words which He addressed to the Syrophenician woman sound very harsh, and strangely out of harmony with His compassionate nature. "It is not meet", He said, "to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." (Matt.15: 26). It is unnecessary to mention, in detail, the many suggestions which have been made in the interpretation of this hard saying; but much of the difficulty of the passage disappears, when it is recognised that, in speaking of casting the children's bread to the little dogs, Jesus was making use of a familiar proverb, and probably uttered it in a playful, kindly spirit. Erasmus quotes examples of similar ^{?B} Greek proverbs: "You starve yourself to feed dogs." (αὐτὸν οὐ τρέφων κύνας τρέφεις). (See David Smith: "The Days of His Flesh" p.250-1). The woman who was "a Greek, a Syrophenician by race" (Mark 7: 26), would not take amiss the form in which Jesus cast His answer to her appeal.

When Jesus said to His disciples: "Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest?" (John 4: 35), He is quoting a husbandman's proverb, and it is not necessary to see in the words a reference to the season of the year. In the eyes of Jesus, the approaching band of Samaritans were the first-fruits of a spiritual harvest; and He pointed out that in this case, the natural interval between sowing and



reaping had been greatly shortened. "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." (John 4: 35).

The excuse of the disciple, who desired to postpone his response to the call of Jesus, seems to be a reasonable one. He pleads that he must first perform a most sacred and binding duty: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father," (Matt.8: 21); and the answer of Jesus sounds harsh and unfeeling: "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead", (Matt.8: 22). But the true interpretation seems to be this: the man was half-hearted, and was quoting a popular proverb to express his desire for delay. It is not surprising that Jesus rejected his excuse, and rebuked his indifference; and further, it should be noted, that Jesus also used words which were proverbial, and which would not convey to the hearer the impression of harshness, which they convey to us.

These examples of the proverbial sayings of Jesus are sufficient to show, that He shared the Eastern predilection for this form of speech; and some of His puzzling utterances become more intelligible, when this is taken into account.

7. DARK SAYINGS.

The people of the East frequently employ forms of speech which partly reveal and partly conceal their thoughts.

The deliberate purpose is to mystify and puzzle the mind of the hearer, no less than to inform and enlighten him. This Oriental characteristic is seen in the employment of various forms of the "dark saying". (Cf. Num. 12: 8).

In several passages of Scripture, (e.g. Psalm 49: 4, 78: 2; Prov. 1: 6), the expressions "dark saying" (*חֲדָשׁוֹת*, *αἰνίγματα*), and "parable" (*שִׁפְטוֹת*, *παροιμία*, *παραβολή*) occur together as if they were practically synonymous; and in John 16: 25 and 29, *παροιμία* is translated as 'proverb' (A.V. and R.V.), and as 'dark saying' (American Version). It is evident, then, that the connotations of 'dark saying', 'parable', and 'proverb' overlap, having in common the element of profound or obscure thought. It is this quality of obscurity, found in some forms of Oriental speech and literature, to which we are now directing our attention.

Dark sayings occupy a large and important place in the Old Testament. The Wisdom Literature, (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon and several of the Psalms) contains many passages which fall under the category of the dark saying. Particularly in the speculative class of this literature, such as Job and Ecclesiastes, the Hebrew mind is seen grappling with the great moral problems of human life; and questions are raised which, as might be expected, do not all receive a satisfying answer. Discussion still leaves many problems in an atmosphere of mystery and perplexity, - due sometimes to the imperfect knowledge of the writer, and sometimes to the Oriental habit of merely suggesting a truth, and leaving the hearer to complete the search for it.

The Book of Daniel, and the Apocalyptic Literature in general, deal largely in dark sayings, and obscure figures of speech. The imagery of the Apocalypses is sometimes used like a cipher, with the design of hiding the meaning from the uninitiated. St. Paul specially mentions the understanding of mysteries, as a high spiritual endowment, (1 Cor. 13: 2).

It is of great interest to note, that St. Matthew definitely connects the teaching of Jesus with the use of the dark saying in ancient Hebrew times: "Without a parable spake he nothing unto them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden, (*ἡκ. κεκρυμμένα; Heb. סִיגְרִי*) from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13: 34-35; Psalm 78: 2).

In the teaching of Jesus, there is an element which is deliberately enigmatical; and this feature in His Gospel may be reasonably ascribed, in some measure, to the influence of Oriental environment. He Himself contrasts His enigmatical utterances with His open and direct teaching: "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, I shall tell you plainly of the Father." (John 16: 25 Cf. Mark 4: 11 ff. Matt. 13: 10-15).

Both in the Synoptic Gospels and in St. John, various enigmatical sayings of Jesus are recorded. His

Exegetical discourses contain many dark sayings, which to this day are unsolved enigmas.

The misunderstanding which was one source of the opposition Jesus encountered, was due, to some extent, to His use of enigmatical forms of speech. "Destroy this temple," He said, "and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2: 19). This saying was misunderstood, and at His trial it was adduced as evidence against Him, (Matt. 26: 61 Cf. Acts 6: 13-14). Frequently the failure of the Jews to understand Jesus, was due to their lack of spirituality, (John 8: 27); and He had good reason to remonstrate with them: "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word", (John 8: 43). They had no sympathy with His thought. They complained that Jesus kept them in suspense. "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou are the Christ, tell us plainly," (John 10: 24 Cf. Luke 22: 67). His refusal to accede to their request was due to their prejudice and unbelief; but it is also in keeping with His reluctance to declare His Messiahship explicitly. His teaching and His miracles provided abundant evidence, and He left the people to draw the logical conclusion.

When Jesus charged His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, (Mark 8: 14 ff.) when He referred to John the Baptist under the name of Elijah, (Matt. 17: 10 ff.) and when He declared how very difficult it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God,

whither goest thou?" Jesus did not give a direct answer: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards," (John 13: 36), and Simon Peter remained under the mistaken idea, that it was some dangerous enterprise in His earthly life that Jesus was about to enter upon. On a subsequent occasion, Jesus dealt more plainly with the same question: "Whither goest thou?" (John 16: 5).

In alluding to the new relationship which would be created between Him and His disciples, in consequence of His approaching death, Jesus said: "A little while, and ye behold me no more: and again a little while, and ye shall see me," (John 16: 16; Cf. 14: 19). The disciples were bewildered by the saying, as the people of Jerusalem were, on an earlier occasion, (John 7: 34); but Jesus proceeded to give to the disciples some enlightenment, as to the meaning of His words, so that they were at last able to say: "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." (John 16: 29).

The obscurity of some of the sayings of Jesus was due to the profound character of the truth He was revealing, (e.g. Matt. 11: 25-27). Others were difficult to understand, because they referred to events in the future, (Cf. Mark 9: 9-10). Some were obscure, because the time had not yet come for more complete revelation: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth," (John 16:

12-13). And frequently as we have already seen, the darkness lay not in the sayings, but in the minds of the hearers, (Cf. Mark 8: 17; John 8: 43). But even when these causes of perplexity are taken into account, it still remains true, that Jesus purposely cast some of His utterances into enigmatical forms, such as are popular among Oriental peoples.

The enigmatical and paradoxical sayings of Jesus stimulate thought, like the riddles which were popular amongst the ancient Hebrews, and they startle the conscience into new activity. In seeking for the meaning, people are forced to think out afresh the principles of life and conduct. The use of enigmatical speech by Jesus was thus made to serve His great purpose of revealing the Gospel of God. His ultimate aim was not to mystify and perplex, but to reveal and to guide. "I am the light of the world," He said; "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," (John 8: 12).

8. ORIENTAL METHODS OF THOUGHT.

The arrangement of thought, in an Oriental discourse, is different from that usually followed by Western races. The Western method is synthetic: the Oriental method is analytic. That is to say, in the West the speaker endeavours to present a conjunct view of all the aspects and elements of a particular truth, showing their connection with one another,

and presenting one complete picture to the mind. The Eastern thinker, on the other hand, selects one aspect of a truth, and emphasises it so strongly, that, for the moment, the mind is entirely preoccupied by a partial and one-sided presentation of the subject. "A Western speaker's discourse is a systematic structure, or like a chain, in which link is firmly knit to link; an Oriental's is like the sky at night, full of innumerable burning points shining forth from a dark background." (Stalker: "Life of Jesus Christ" p.65).

In dealing with the problems of being and of knowledge the thinkers of Greece sought to arrive at a closely reasoned philosophy; but the Hebrews dealt with the practical problems of life and duty, rather than with theoretical speculations, and they made little effort to co-relate their statements or to elaborate a system.

The 119th Psalm, the great Song of the Law, and the Book of Proverbs are outstanding examples of the Hebrew type of thought.

The absence of systematic reasoning is apparent in the teaching of Jesus. His aim, like that of the Hebrew prophets and wise men, was practical and religious; and He was not primarily concerned with finding solutions of intellectual problems, and building up a system of ethics and theology. There is an inner unity running through His teaching, just as there is in that exquisite chain of pearls,

which we call the 119th Psalm; His teaching is a unity, because it always expresses the truth of God; but Jesus does not seek to present His Gospel as a reasoned system. His teaching contains many unforgettable statements of religious and moral principle, each of which is terse and vivid, complete and perfect as a gem; and He leaves it to the hearer to think out the relation of each statement to others equally true.

Thought, expressed in this Oriental manner, is frequently one-sided and exaggerated; and consequently, there occur many paradoxes and apparent contradictions. But when such statements are considered in the light of experience, they are found to be no more inconsistent, than the obverse and the reverse of a coin, or the two foci of an ellipse.

9. ORIENTAL HOSPITALITY.

Hospitality is one of the most prominent and most beautiful virtues of the East. The person of the stranger is sacred; and from time immemorial, the unwritten laws of hospitality have been scrupulously observed. The proverbial hospitality of Eastern races is probably due, not so much to a greater generosity, ^{as} but to the conditions of life and travel amongst a primitive and nomadic people. Men travelling long distances through tracts of country devoid of food and water, are often in great straits, and owe the preservation of life to the hospitality extended to them by other nomads, whom they

meet in the desert. Thus hospitality, long ages ago, came to be recognised as a necessity in Eastern life; and, to this day, it lays binding obligations upon all.

Further, Oriental hospitality, as practised by the Hebrews, and probably by the neighbouring races, had behind it all the strength of a religious sanction. The regulations for the kindly treatment of the sojourner and the poor, were based upon the belief, that they were under the special care of God. "He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment, (Deut.10: 18), "Jehovah preserveth the strangers," (Psalm 146: 9); "The stranger and the widow and the fatherless, which are within thy gates shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee." (Deut.14: 29 Cf. Exod.22: 21; Lev.19: 33 etc.). The stranger was thus regarded as the guest of God.

In order to obtain the privileges of the guest, a stranger need only grasp the tent-pole, or one of the tent cords or enter the door of the house. Then, according to the inviolable law of hospitality, he can claim rest and food and protection; and he cannot be denied. He is received with honour, and is treated as if the tent or house were his; and he is waited upon by the head of the family. "My house is yours," is part of the welcome offered to a stranger even to this day; and, while this salutation may be merely a conventional greeting

in the towns, where Western influence has modified Eastern custom, yet among the nomads of the desert, and in remote villages, it is a true indication of the sanctity of the guest in the eyes of the sons of the desert.

The bonds of hospitality become stronger, and more sacred still, when the stranger joins with his host in the breaking of bread. Their joint partaking of food is a solemn sacrament. This is the significance also of Sacrificial Feasts, in which the offerer ate part of the offering, and thus sealed a covenant with God. (Cf. Exod. 18: 12; 12: 14; Lev. 8: 31; 21: 22).

With bread, salt is usually associated. Owing to its preserving qualities, salt became the emblem of fidelity and friendship in Eastern nations. Men, who have shared bread and salt, are knit together by a sacred covenant; and thus salt had an important place in the offerings whereby men were knit to God Himself. "Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." (Lev. 2: 13 Cf. Num. 18: 19; 2 Chron. 13: 5; Matt. 5: 13; Mark 9: 50). There is deep spiritual significance in the law which ordained, that the offerer must eat of the peace-offering, which was a feast of communion between God and man, (Lev. 7: 15); whereas he was not permitted to eat of the sin-offering,

which was an expression of repentance, and sorrow for sin.

No consideration whatever is permitted to over-ride the obligations of hospitality. A host will rather surrender his son or his daughter, than deliver his guest into hostile hands, (Cf.Gen.19: 5-8). And if an enemy has unwittingly been accepted as a guest, the covenant of hospitality protects him from every injury, even after his identity has become known. Thus it was, that the men of Gibeon saved themselves from destruction during Joshua's conquest of Canaan. They feigned themselves to be strangers from a far country; and without due consideration, Joshua and his men took of their provision, and made a covenant with them. And though the deceit of the Gibeonites was discovered three days later, yet the covenant of hospitality could not be broken, (Joshua 9: 3 ff.). On the other hand, the treachery of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, towards Sisera, who sought refuge in her tent, and drank of the milk she gave him was a revolting violation of the sacred laws of hospitality, (Judges 4: 17 ff.); and the praise/ accorded to her, shows the demoralised conditions of the nation at the time. The bitterest complaint of the writer of the 41st Psalm, is, that the sacred bonds of hospitality had been broken: "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread hath lift up his heel against me," (Psalm 41: 9 cf.John 13: 18).

In addition to the passages already referred to, the Old Testament contains many illustrations of Oriental

hospitality. Abraham entertained angels unawares, (Gen.18: 1 ff; Heb.13: 2 Cf. Jud.6: 18; 13: 15); and selfish, mercenary men, like Lot and Laban, did not fail to fulfil the obligations of hospitality, (Gen.19: 1; 24: 31; 29: 13). In recalling his days of prosperity, Job could declare: "The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the travellers" (Job 31: 32), and the Psalmist employed the hospitable treatment of a stranger, pursued by enemies, as a parable to show forth the goodness of God towards those who seek refuge in Him: "Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointed my head with oil: my cup runneth over," (Psalm 23: 5 Cf. Prov.18: 10). In the 22nd Psalm, there is mention of the eucharistic meal, the sacrifice of thanksgiving, in which there are embodied the two ideas of hospitality, and of spiritual communion: "Of thee cometh my praise in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord, that seek after him: let your heart live forever," (Psalm 22: 25-26). This Oriental virtue has a prominent place in the life, and in the Gospel of Jesus. During the years of His ministry, He had no home of His own: He had not where to lay His head, (Matt.8: 20; Luke 9: 58); and He depended continually upon the hospitality of friends and disciples. He appears to have made His home with Simon and Andrew in Capernaum, (Matt.8: 14; Mark 1: 29);

and, when in Judea, He frequently dwelt at Bethany, with His friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus, (John 11: 1-5); Mark 11: 11). He willingly accepted the hospitality of other householders also: (Luke 5: 29; 7: 36; 19: 5). He was indebted to the hospitality of a friend for the guest-chamber, where He celebrated the Passover with His disciples, (Mark 14: 14).

Jesus bade the Seventy depend upon the hospitality of those whom they visited; (Luke 10: 4 ff.) and He predicted a fate worse than that of Sodom upon any inhospitable city, (Luke 10: 10-12). On the other hand, Jesus rebuked James and John, when they desired to call down fire upon the Samaritan village which refused to receive Him (Luke 9: 52-56). In this case, the inhospitality was not due to personal ill-will to Jesus, but to hatred of Jerusalem, towards which Jesus and His disciples were going. "They did not receive him because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem," (Luke 9: 53). That Jesus appreciated hospitality, and was pained when its ordinary courtesies were denied Him, is evident from His remonstrance with Simon the Pharisee, (Luke 7: 44 ff.). He, however, discouraged a lavish and elaborate hospitality. Martha of Bethany was cumbered about much serving, - distracted with her many cares in the desire to provide for Jesus a worthy entertainment; but it was a mistaken kindness; and Jesus gently rebuked her, and assured her that only a simple provision was required. "Thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful," (Luke 10: 40 ff.).

Jesus did not wish His friends to fret and worry on His account. He did not care for luxuries; but preferred quietness and simplicity in the home.

The Eastern customs of hospitality form the background of several of the parables of Jesus. The parable of the Friend at Midnight, (Luke 11: 5-8), is based upon the plight of a host, who has no provision to set before his untimely visitor; and who in desperation lest he fail in the sacred duties of hospitality, hurries off to a neighbour, and by persistent importunity, secures, "three loaves", wherewith to feed his guest. The parable of the Great Feast, (Luke 14: 16-24) bears the mark of the free and lavish hospitality of the East; and the companion parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, (Matt. 22: 1-14), is also entirely Oriental in its scenery, in the summoning of those already invited, in the episode of the wedding garment, and in the summary judgment pronounced by the incensed potentate upon those who had not treated his invitation with due respect.

In the time of Jesus, Greeks and Romans of wealth dispensed hospitality with an ostentation and extravagance, which even Belshazzar's feast could not surpass; and, at the court of Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee under the Romans, and in whose person East and West met, splendid banquets were given. Although Jesus avoided Gentile cities, the events of Herod's courts at Sephoris, or Tiberias, would be known

to all, and may have suggested the imagery of some of the parables.

The parable of the Ten Virgins, (Matt.25: 1-13) takes for-granted the hospitality associated with a marriage in the East, and the teaching, conveyed in such vivid imagery, could not fail to make a deep impression on the hearers. The parable of the Good Samaritan, (Luke 10: 29-37), deals, in a new spirit, with the duty of hospitality to neighbours and strangers, and to those who are in misfortune, suffering, or any need; and it is still the inspiration of many Christian charities.

In the sublime description of the Last Judgment, (Matt.25: 31 ff.), the sacred laws of hospitality are the criterion by which lives are tested, and rewards and punishments are apportioned. "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me," (Matt.25: 35-36; Cf.42-43).

Jesus took the best qualities of Oriental hospitality, and insisted upon them more strongly than had ever been done before. He laid a new emphasis on simple acts of kindness. Even the cup of cold water would not lose its reward: (Matt. 10: 42; Mark 9: 41). He Himself manifested a constant consideration for the necessities of all around Him. When He had raised up the little daughter of Jairus to life, He commanded that something be given her to eat, (Luke 8: 55).

Rather than send away the multitude in hunger and weariness, He made provision for them in the wilderness. He faced the problem of feeding them, like a host visited unexpectedly by a troop of friends. "Whence are we to buy bread," He said, "that these may eat?" (John 6: 5). He taught His followers to view every kindly deed in relation to His own Person: "In as much as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me," (Matt.25: 40); and thus He showed that the kindness displayed in true hospitality is an expression of Christ-like feeling, and a proof of devotion to Him.

The solemn events in the Upper Room at Jerusalem on the night on which Jesus was betrayed, exhibit the essence of the Gospel; and, at the same time, exemplify the Eastern customs of hospitality. The Last Supper was a Sacrament, whereby all the partakers were knit together by the sacred covenant of hospitality; and the infamy of the treachery of Judas lay in His base repudiation of the obligations which that covenant had laid upon him, (Mark 14: 20. Cf.Psalm 41: 9).

Jesus has consecrated the Oriental covenant of hospitality by making it the basis of one of the Christian Sacraments. The sacramental significance, which the people of the East attach to the joint-partaking of bread, was a preparation for the profound spiritual teaching of the Lord's Supper, (Cf.John 6: 26 ff.; Rev.3: 20).

10. THE ORIENTAL GENIUS FOR RELIGION.

It is a remarkable fact, that the three greatest religions in the world, - Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, - had their origin in Palestine and the neighbouring land of Arabia; and it is significant that, when the national religions of Greece and Rome collapsed, it was to Oriental cults that men turned in search of a refuge from spiritual destitution and despair. Phrygian, Egyptian, and Persian forms of worship enjoyed great popularity, for a time, in the Graeco-Roman world; and the expectation that out of the East would come salvation contributed to the spread of Christianity.

Religion has always been the supreme interest and dominant influence in Oriental life; and, on this account, nothing arouses more bitter resentment and strife than any offence offered to religious susceptibilities. Religious riots have frequently taken place in the East, and not a few great wars have been due to the fanaticism of Oriental peoples. The resistance of the Jews to Antiochus Epiphanes was due to religious zeal; and the revolts against Roman governors like Pontius Pilate, culminating in the final struggle which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem, drew their inspiration from religion.

The Semitic peoples have been the religious leaders of the world. In temperament, they are naturally religious;

and, being free from the distraction of ~~the~~ industrial and scientific pursuits, which occupy a large place in Western life, they have had the greater opportunity for the development of the religious side of life.

The religious temperament of the Semitic races has been fostered by the physical features of their native lands. The ancient home of the Semites was Arabia; and the country has left a lasting mark upon the people: age-long contact with the silence and solitude and solemn vastness of the desert weakens the influence of things seen and sharpens the consciousness of things unseen. "It is the atmosphere in which seers, martyrs, and fanatics are bred. Conceive a race subjected to its influences for thousands of years! To such a race give a creed, and it will be an apostolic and a devoted race." (G.A.Smith: "Historical Geography of the Holy Land", p.29).

A unique revelation was given to the Israelites by Jehovah; and through it they advanced far beyond other peoples in their religious ideas. All the branches of the Semitic stock were subject to practically the same influences from outward nature. "What makes the difference on that same soil, and under those same heavens is the character of Israel's God. All the Syrian religions reflect the Syrian climate; Israel alone interprets it for moral ends, because Israel alone has a God who is absolute righteousness." (G.A.Smith "H.G.H.L." p.76)

While Greece was renowned for philosophy and the fine arts, and Rome was famous for law and government, and for military discipline and prowess, the fame of the Hebrews rests mainly upon their religion. God called them to be His messengers to all the nations of the earth; and, though they fell far short of the high destiny marked out for them by God, and the ideals of their great prophets, yet they continued to regard with pride their covenant relation with Jehovah the living God.

To the Hebrews, God is the greatest and most certain, of all realities. His existence is the foundation of all knowledge; and upon it the whole structure of belief and life rests. "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen.1: 1). The incidents of personal experience, trivial as well as important, are all interpreted by direct reference to God. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways," (Psalm 139: 1-2 etc.).

A similar interpretation is given to the phenomena of nature and the events of history. The Hebrews take no account of so-called second causes: there is an immediate intuition of the presence and activity of God. Jehovah makes the East wind to blow and causes the sea to go back, and to become dry land, (Exod.14: 21); it is He who hardens

Pharaoh's heart; (Exod.4: 21); who leads the people through the wilderness, (Exod.13: 18), and who fights their battles, (Exod.14: 14; 2 Chron.32: 8 etc.). Even calamity comes direct from the hand of Jehovah, (Job 1: 21; Isaiah 45: 7); and the formula, "thus saith Jehovah" is constantly used by the prophets in introducing their oracles. "Of him and through him and to him are all things." (Rom.11: 36).

The Hebrew's vivid and constant sense of God is manifest throughout the sacred Scriptures, and it is because the consciousness of God pervades the Bible, that it occupies its unique place in the spiritual life of the world.

But notwithstanding their religious instincts and privileges, the Hebrew people have not been proof against superstition, fatalism, formalism and materialism, and many passages of the Old Testament bear witness to the degradation to which they sank when they fell away from the worship of Jehovah, and shared in the abominations of the heathen round about them: (E.g.Exod.32: 4 ff.; Jud.2: 11 ff.; 1 Kings 11: 5; 2 Kings 16: 3; Psalm 106: 37-38; Jerem.7: 18; 44: 17 ff.). There were really two systems of religion in Israel, - one superstitious and ~~more~~ degraded, as practised by the mass of the people, and the other lofty and spiritual, as proclaimed by the great prophets; but whether cherishing lofty or degraded forms of belief and worship, the Hebrews never lost their keen interest in religion.

The religious preoccupation of the Jewish people in

the time of Jesus was a providential preparation for the Gospel. Religion was the most enthralling topic of conversation, both amongst the truly pious minority and the worldly majority. It was constantly under discussion, so that Jesus had no difficulty in securing an audience, when He spoke of the Kingdom of heaven, and other religious subjects. In the current conceptions and phraseology, He found the vehicle of His divine message; and it was in reference to burning questions of the day, that He uttered many of the profound truths of His Gospel, (Cf. Matt. 22: 23-46). The Jews were so passionately interested in religion, that from the beginning of Jesus' career as the Revealer of the Gospel of God, they watched Him, and listened to Him with captious ears. They followed Him from place to place; they questioned Him, and debated with Him; they observed His way of life, and, because of their religious scruples, they took offence at His association with publicans and sinners; and at last, on charges based on religion, as they understood it, they condemned Him as a blasphemer, and secured His death at the hands of the Gentiles. In no other land could He have found an environment, so thoroughly pervaded by a religious atmosphere, and the effect of that environment may be often traced in the form of the Gospel.

PART II. THE GOSPEL FREE FROM ORIENTAL LIMITATIONS.

Before this chapter is brought to a close, it is

fitting that something should be said to show that, while the Gospel of Jesus bears many marks of His Oriental environment, it rises superior to all the defects and limitations of the East.

One of the objections sometimes urged against Christianity, is that Jesus, during the days of His flesh, lived, and thought, and taught, as an Oriental. He dwelt in a tiny Eastern land nineteen hundred years ago amid a people of peculiar beliefs and customs, and under conditions very different from those of the modern Western world; and to some minds it appears unreasonable to turn to an Oriental Teacher of a far past age for guidance in the solution of problems that perplex the world today.

The East, it may be argued, is distant from the West not only geographically but also spiritually; and the ancient is remote from the present not merely in years but also in thought. Is there not reason to doubt, then, whether the Gospel of Jesus, proclaimed in an Eastern land and in the far-distant past, is the Gospel needed by the world today?

In addition to considerations such as these, account has to be taken of the fact that the nations of Western Europe are inclined to be somewhat supercilious in their attitude to Oriental races. There is a complacent assumption, that the West is superior to the East; and customs of life and habits of thought, emanating from the East, are scrutinised with

varying degrees of doubt or suspicion or cynicism. It is the attitude of Nathanael's question: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1: 46).

It may be contended with good reason, that, on the whole, the morality of Asia is distinctly inferior to that of Western Europe. In the West, the standard of public justice, of personal purity, of honesty, and truthfulness, is higher than in the East. Philanthropy and public spirit are more fully developed among Western peoples. In the East, the duty of love to man, as man, is scarcely recognised as a duty at all. The Asiatic does not feel himself under an obligation to love his neighbour as himself. He may care for members of his family, his caste, or his tribe; but for his neighbour, as such, he has little or no regard. "Of his neighbour he is little more regardful, than one dog is of another" (Townsend, "Asia and Europe"). The lack of sympathy with man, as man, is the source of the tyrannies, and massacres, which have disgraced Asiatic life in the past, and which occasionally disgrace it still.

Such considerations prejudice some minds against a religion, emanating from the East, but a real acquaintance with the mind of Jesus, and with the Gospel He taught, removes any just cause for objection.

(1) The character of Jesus presents a remarkable contrast to the ordinary Jew of His day. He was free from superstition

and racial bitterness; He did not hold aloof in spiritual pride, from the sinful and the outcast: He broke away from the tyranny of human tradition and unprofitable ceremonies; and He called men back to righteousness, and faith, and love. Amid a people, worldly and mercenary, He lived a life free from every trait of covetousness and of selfish ambition. Though His Apostles manifested a worldly spirit, He was Himself entirely free from it; and in all respects He moved on a higher level of character and conduct than any of His fellow-countrymen. "The common Jew of Tiberias is self-righteous, proud, ignorant, rude, quarrelsome, hypocritical, dishonest, selfish, avaricious, immoral; and such, in the main, were his ancestors eighteen centuries ago. We know this, not so much from the New Testament, as from Josephus, that special pleader and grand apologist for his nation." (Thomson: "The Land and the Book" p.406-407). Thus, in spite of the intervening centuries of Turkish misrule and consequent deterioration in the character of the people, it is not unjust to base our estimate of the neighbours of Jesus on the character of the Jewish peasant of Palestine today. And the marvel is, that Jesus was so different. "The more one knows of the dull, narrow, insensate nature of the Oriental peasant," writes Sir W.M.Ramsay, "the more must one wonder at the breadth and ardour of mind that is revealed in the Temptation." ("The Education of Christ" p.37).

As we contemplate the character of Jesus, in all its

manifold perfections, and its many-sided completeness, we cannot fail to be profoundly impressed with His superiority to His environment, and His freedom from all taint of Oriental corruption and degradation. As we listen to the words of His Gospel, so different from the prevalent ideas and ideals of His day, we can readily understand the awe-struck exclamation of the officers, whom the Pharisees sent to lay hands upon Him, but who were so spell-bound by His words, that they could not presume to lay their hands upon Him, (John 7: 46).

(2) The Gospel, which Jesus proclaimed, though cast in an Oriental mould, has affinities with the West, no less than with the East.

(a) "Though Asiatic in origin," says Meredith Townsend, "Christianity is the least Oriental of the creeds," ("Asia and Europe"). Alluding to the same fact, Dr. John Kelman writes: "In certain respects, we have in Jesus an Oriental too Western for Asiatics, so that, to a certain extent, they have to Occidentalize their conceptions, in order to become Christian." (Hastings, D.E.G., II p.294). It might naturally have been expected that Christianity, a religion sprung from Oriental soil, would spread first amongst the people of the East, and particularly amongst the races most closely akin to the Hebrews. But it travelled West, not East. The landing of St. Paul on European soil, was the beginning of the conquest of the West by Christianity. The

history of the spread of Christianity is proof that in the Gospel of Jesus there was no narrow Oriental spirit. It took root firmly in the West; and now Western nations, having experienced the benefits of the Gospel that came to them from the East, are carrying it back in gratitude to the Eastern lands in which it originated.

(b) One great cause of the amazement which the teaching of Jesus aroused, was the marked difference between His way of looking at things and the customary Oriental types of thought and speech. He took a sane view of everything. He continually appealed to commonsense, in a way that Eastern peoples frequently failed to do. He would not be held by tradition, or custom, or convention. He thought out problems with a fresh and independent mind. He based His teaching on facts, and experience, on clear reasoning and on God's will; and, in a few telling words, He solved problems of faith and conduct, and made the truth shine out so clearly before the minds of His hearers, that His words carried conviction. Even His opponents were silenced. This convincing method of Jesus is seen in His treatment of such knotty questions as the observance of the Sabbath. The scribes would quote authorities and "split hairs", and become involved in the pedantic and bewildering intricacies of casuistry; but Jesus asked the simple question: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save

a life, or to kill?" (Mark 3: 4). Such a question carried its own answer, and His opponents held their peace. That method of dealing with problems is not distinctively Oriental; but Jesus made it the Christian habit of thought. Dr.T.R. Glover speaks of "the sheer sense which Jesus can bring to bear on a situation." ("The Jesus of History" p.63). He gets down to facts and principles and everlasting truth.

(c) The free play of imagination which is so delightful a feature of the Gospel of Jesus, is an Eastern characteristic; but His restraint, in the use of imagination is in sharp contrast to the fantastic imagery of the East. His imagination is always employed in the service of truth.

(3) The doctrine of Renunciation illustrates the method of Jesus in fashioning anew the forms of truth that came to His hand. Renunciation, as a fundamental principle of life, is Oriental in type, rather than Western. It expresses the spirit of Hebraism, in contrast to the comparatively self-indulgent spirit of Hellenism; it springs from obedience to God and His law, in contrast to the morality based upon regard for self. In teaching that renunciation is an essential condition of the highest life, Jesus was proclaiming that His ideal is spiritual, as opposed to the selfish and material. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt.4: 4). Through all His life, and in all His teaching,

in His claims upon man, and in His self-sacrifice upon the Cross, Jesus made it plain, that renunciation is at the basis of true religion, and true life. "And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." (Luke 9: 23-24). The symbol of the Christian Religion, and of Christian life is the Cross.

But, in thus taking a Semitic doctrine and making it the basis of the universal religion, Jesus was not yielding Himself to any narrowing influence. While He accepted the doctrine, He gave it a much higher significance, by a more perfect revelation of God, as the God of love, no less than the God of infinite holiness. Thus He provided a new and powerful motive, for living a life of obedience and self-sacrifice, in the service of God. Not because it was Oriental in type, did Jesus accept and proclaim the doctrine of renunciation; but because it was true. The Hebrew ideal of obedience and self-sacrifice, of endurance and patience, though in itself incomplete, was in harmony with the absolute truth of God; and the death of Christ upon the Cross was no mere accident, but was the supreme and necessary expression of the essential truth of the Gospel, - namely, that life comes through self-sacrifice. "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer

these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24: 26):

"He saved others; himself he cannot save." (Mark 15: 31).

There is a false renunciation, no less than a true renunciation. The blank negations of the Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana, the asceticism of the Indian fakir and the self-imposed suffering of Simeon Stylites, and the other pillar saints of Syria, are caricatures of the teaching of Jesus. Such forms of renunciation are self-regarding and unspiritual, and are based upon a materialistic view of existence, and upon the doctrine that matter is essentially evil. The narrowness and dualism of the Essenes also differed greatly from the Gospel. As taught by Jesus, renunciation is not a gloomy doctrine, to be practised in a sad, dejected spirit, but is the inspiration of glad, thankful, eager and dauntless life, The Gospel is glad tidings. While Jesus calls men to leave all and follow Him, He brings them good cheer. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." (John 15: 11). Christian renunciation is also the source of manifold spiritual enrichment. "Everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life." (Matt. 19: 29). St. Paul gave up brilliant prospects of worldly success: he "suffered the loss of all things"; but he counted them but refuse, ($\sigma\kappa\upsilon\beta\alpha\lambda\alpha$) that he

might gain Christ, (Phil.3: 8).

Jesus does not commend the ascetic life for its own sake: aimless suffering, purposeless maiming of life, was not in accordance with His Spirit. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John 10: 10). He called men to self-denial, because thereby they become united to God and find higher life." "Via crucis, via lucis." "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth, and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." (John 12: 24). Renunciation based upon belief in the love of God was set forth by Jesus, as a glowing and ennobling ideal, to be a source of deeper joy and fuller life to mankind.

Modern philosophy furnishes an interesting commentary on the Gospel, in accepting the doctrine of renunciation as the fundamental principle of a universal ethic. It thus pays its tribute to the principle taught by Jesus, that life comes through sacrifice; and it confirms the conviction that the Christian Gospel, even when embodying and transforming Oriental ideas, is based upon universal principles of truth and life. The philosophic and the religious views of Christian renunciation are combined in the well-known hymn:

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
 I dare not ask to fly from Thee:
 I lay in dust life's glory dead,
 And from the ground ~~their~~ blossoms red *there*
 Life that shall endless be."

CHAPTER IV.

THE THREEFOLD ENVIRONMENT: GREEK, ROMAN, and JEWISH.

We are told that, when Jesus was crucified, Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek, (John 19: 20). These three languages point to three different influences, which went to the making of the environment of Jesus, and helped to mould the form of His gospel.

I. THE GREEK ENVIRONMENT.

[NOTE: Amongst the Jews, "Greek" was synonymous with 'Gentile' or 'heathen'; and, in this sense, "Jews and Greeks" comprised all mankind (Cf. 2 Macc. 4: 36; Rom. 1: 16 etc.) The Authorised Version of the New Testament shows some hesitation in the translation of Ἕλληνας, probably due to the translator's acquaintance with the Jewish usage. In John 12: 20, A.V. agrees with R.V. in giving "Greeks", but in John 7: 35, its translation of the word is "Gentiles", while it places "Greeks" in the Margin: and again in Mark 7: 26, the translation is "Greek" (Ἕλληνίς) and "Gentile" is in the Margin.

An exact definition of "Hellenism" is difficult; but Dr. Fairweather, ("Jesus and the Greeks" p. 4), quotes with approval the following definition by Prof. Mahaffy: "By

Hellenism I mean that so-called 'silver-age' of Greek art and literature when they have become cosmopolitan and not parochial; and by Hellenistic, not only what was Greek, but what desired and assumed to be Greek, from the highest and noblest imitation down to the poorest travesty." In the following pages, the terms 'Greek', 'Hellenism' and 'Hellenistic' are used in the sense of the above definition.]

Palestine is naturally isolated from all neighbouring lands: Shut in, on the West, by the sea, on the East and South, by the desert, and on the North, by the lofty mountain ranges of Lebanon, it is a land admirably adapted by physical conditions, to be the home of a peculiar people, distinguished by clearly marked characteristics from all the other nations of the earth. In the Providence of God, the physical isolation of Palestine played its part in saving the Hebrews from absorption, and, in some degree, from contamination by surrounding peoples.

But Palestine lay in the track of the world's warfare and travel and trade; and, notwithstanding its physical isolation, and the spiritual exclusiveness of its Israelite inhabitants, it was frequently brought into contact with surrounding nations. When Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) became master of the East, his great ambition was to Hellenise (ἑλληνίσσειν) all the races under his sway. He sought to break down national barriers and distinctions; and, in

pursuance of this policy, he established colonies of his Greek veterans in the lands which he had gained by conquest; and, at the same time, he encouraged emigration from one land to another. In and around Palestine, many Greek settlements were founded, and communities of Jews were formed in Alexandria and at other places on the Northern coast of Africa, in Antioch, and in all the important cities on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean, and even in Bithynia and Pontus. These Jewish emigrants were the founders of the Western or Hellenist Dispersion, as distinguished from the Eastern or Hebrew Dispersion in Mesopotamia; and, in the New Testament, they are referred to as the "dispersion among the Greeks", (*ἡ διασπορά τῶν Ἑλληνῶν*, John 7: 35) or as "Grecians" (*οἱ Ἑλληνισταί*, Acts 6: 1). The constant attendance of the Jews of the dispersion at the great festivals in Jerusalem, kept them in close touch with Judaism; and, through them, brought Judaism into touch with the outer world. The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, by the Jews of Alexandria, under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus, (284-247 B.C.) created a close and lasting bond between Judaism and the Gentile world.

Although Greek influence in Palestine sustained a severe check through the successful resistance, which Antiochus Epiphanes, who reigned over Syria from 176 to 164 B.C., encountered at the hands of the heroic Judas Maccabaeus

and his brave army, and although, by the time of Jesus, the sovereignty had passed from Greece to Rome, yet during Jesus' life-time the Greeks formed a great part of the population in and around Palestine. While Judaea, Galilee, and Peraea were predominantly Jewish, the whole Mediterranean sea-board was Greek, except the towns of Joppa and Jamnia. In the North stood the Greek town of Caesarea Philippi with its temple, dedicated to the Greek god Pan. Its original name was Panias, after the name of that Greek deity, and it is still preserved in the modern name, Banias. On the East of Jordan was the confederation of ten Greek cities, called Decapolis, which had been formed with the express purpose of preserving and fostering Hellenic civilisation and culture in the midst of the surrounding Semitic population. In Samaria (Sebaste) in the heart of the country and at Bethshan (Scythopolis) about ten miles south of the Lake of Galilee there were heathen temples and neither in Galilee nor in Peraea was the population entirely Jewish. Only in Judaea was there anything approximating to an unmixed Jewish population, (See Schürer: "History of the Jewish People" II 1.p.1-5). Even in Jerusalem Herod the Great had erected a Greek theatre; and it was in the Greek style that he rebuilt the Jewish temple.

Before, and after, the Maccabean struggle, there was a strong Hellenising party among the Jews themselves, whose chief representatives in the time of Jesus were the Sadducees.

There is abundant evidence to show that Grecian civilisation flourished in and around Palestine in the time of Jesus; and He must have been constantly in contact with Hellenistic influences. Yet He imposed upon Himself and His disciples the duty of addressing the Gospel primarily to the Jewish people, (Matt.10: 5-6; 15: 21 ff; Mark 7:24-30). Or it may be more correct to say that the brevity and urgency of His ministry necessitated such a limitation. It was not racial prejudice or lack of sympathy with the Gentile world that held Him back. The life and teaching of Jesus supply abundant evidence that He did not share the Jewish prejudice against the Gentiles. He spent most of His life in Galilee, with its half Gentile population: He taught and healed those who came to Him from Idumaea, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, (Mark 3: 8): He disregarded the longstanding feud with the Samaritans: (John 4: 5 ff; Luke 10: 30 ff.). He offended the Jewish prejudices by citing instances of Elijah's and Elisha's miracles for the benefit of foreigners (Luke 4: 25 ff); and He expressed sympathy with the heathen nations when He foretold that "They shall come from the East and West, and from the North and South, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," (Luke 13: 29).

But Jesus denied Himself the joy of ministering to the Gentiles, except when circumstances brought Him into direct contact with their urgent needs, as in the case of the

Syrophoenician woman, (Matt.15: 21 ff.) and the Gadarene demoniac, (Matt.8: 28 ff.). The Jews of His time regarded it as almost inconceivable that He should go to the Greeks. "Will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?" (John 7: 35). Following a different line of reasoning than that of the Jews, Jesus resolved not to include a mission to the Greeks in the plan of His ministry. But as He moved up and down the country, and particularly when He was passing through the Greek districts, He must have met Greeks very frequently; and their manners and customs, their ideals and modes of thought must have been well known to Him, (Cf.Matt. 4: 25; Mark 5: 20; 7: 31).

Though Aramaic was the language of the Jews of Palestine (Acts 1: 19; 22: 2; 26: 14), and was the language in which Jesus habitually spoke, (Cf.Mark 5: 41; 7: 34; 15: 34), yet it may be assumed that He knew Greek, and it is more than likely that He occasionally taught in Greek. We do not hear of His need of an interpreter in His intercourse with Greeks; and, as the language of the Septuagint and of the Gentile population of Palestine, it would naturally be familiar to Him. The writing of the title on the Cross in Greek is proof of the wide-spread knowledge of the tongue in Palestine; and the selection of Greek as the language of the New Testament, even though the earliest Gospel may have been written in Aramaic, forms a significant proof of the supremacy of the language in the religious life of the early Christians.

The Jews, however, cared little for the Greek language or literature. Josephus writes on this subject: "With Greek letters I was careful to acquire an adequate grammatical acquaintance; though my country's custom was an obstacle to my talking Greek accurately. For with us they do not approve of those who learn thoroughly the language of many races, because they esteem this accomplishment as one common, not only to the inferior class of free men, but to such servants as care to learn. They allow real wisdom to belong only to those who clearly understand the law and can interpret the meaning of the Holy Scripture." (Josephus: "Antiquities" XX: XI: 2).

Some of the rabbis went so far as to say, that no Israelite would obtain eternal life who read the books of the Gentiles. But it was not merely racial exclusiveness or ignorant bigotry, which kept Jesus and the Jews of His time uninfluenced by the fascinating qualities of Greek learning. The reason was that the literature of their own nation was spiritually on a far higher level, than all the wisdom of the Gentile world. "If most of the Jews of that time knew nothing about Homer and Aeschylus, all of them were familiar with the great poets and prophets of their own land," (W.M. Ramsay: "The Education of Christ" p.63);and, though the Jews had many defects, yet educationally and morally, they lived on a much higher level, than that of the pagan society round

about them. Thus it was that Jesus and, in general, the Jewish people in His time were proof against the influence of their heathen surroundings, and that the forms of thought and expression employed by Jesus, show few clear traces of Hellenistic influence.

It is with the thought and teaching of Jesus Himself that we are dealing here, and not with the work of the evangelists; but particularly in the Fourth Gospel, it is impossible to draw a distinct line between the words of Jesus and the author's narrative and interpretation. Seeing that the Prologue is admittedly the work of the writer of the Gospel, its distinctive features do not bear upon the question of the form in which Jesus cast His message; but in the Johannine discourses, which cannot reasonably be attributed solely to the Evangelist, mystical forms of thought and expression are to be found; and it is possible that in them we have traces of Hellenistic influence on the mind and words of Jesus. The more likely explanation, however, is that in these discourses we have a type of the teaching of Jesus which He employed in times of deep personal emotion and in dealing with such deep subjects as His relation to God the Father. This type of teaching was also better adapted than the simpler style of the Synoptic Gospels to the educated ecclesiastics of Jerusalem. If the deeper form of the mystical teaching of Jesus owed anything to outside influence, it was probably due to

philosophical passages in the Old Testament, (E.g. Prov. 8 and 9: Job 28: 12 ff.) rather than to the Greek philosophy or the writings of Philo, the Jewish gnostic of Alexandria, (B.C. 20 - A.D. 50).

It is sometimes contended that the Johannine conception of eternal life is parallel to the idea of "Deification", which occupies an important place in Hellenistic mystery religions; but the resemblances are more apparent than real, and the differences are fundamental. The Johannine theology has far closer affinity with the theology of Paul and of the Synoptic Gospels, than with the contemporary pagan cults.

Parallels to the teaching of Jesus can be discovered in the writings of the Stoics. Their insistence upon purity of heart and upon the necessity of setting the affections not on outward things, but on things within one's own power, is in harmony with the ethical and spiritual teaching of Jesus. Of the "Encheiridion" of Epictetus, Dean Farrar wrote: "No systematic treatise of morals so simply beautiful was ever composed, and to this day the best Christian may study it, not with interest only, but with real advantage." ("Seekers after God" p. 222).

The Stoic conception of happiness was that it consisted of "fulness" or "even flow" of life, by which it was meant that life that is of high quality, is happy. "Life is long, if it is full; but it is full when the soul has

completed its development and has shown all its latent powers. Even as a short man may be a perfect man: so in a small measure of time there may be a perfect life. Age is among things external to us. How long I shall live, is an accident; how long I shall be a good man, depends upon myself." (Seneca: "Epistles" 12). The Stoic estimate of life is thus based upon its ethical quality.

The Stoics also had some idea of the brotherhood of man. They taught that men are "the offspring of God" (Cf. Acts 17: 29). Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, both taught and practised this Stoic doctrine, - "the conception of an equal commonwealth, based on equality of right and equality of speech, and of imperial rule respecting, first and foremost, the liberty of the subject." ("Meditations" 1: 14).

The explanation of these Stoic parallels to the teaching of Jesus is, not that Jesus borrowed from the Stoics, but that He was dealing with the same ethical and religious problems and sometimes reached the same conclusions. The Stoics, according to their light were witnesses for God, and much of their teaching is worthy of admiration; but Stoicism was based upon a materialistic view of life: it taught that only the body exists: it demanded the extinction, and not merely the control, of feeling and desire: it denied that pleasure is a good and pain an evil: it robbed personality

of its interests and instincts and, its negations being unrelieved by a true idea of God, it led logically to pessimism and suicide. It is evident, therefore, that the Stoics had no Gospel for the world, and that in spirit they were far removed from Jesus. "As soon as we begin to analyze the apparent resemblances, we discover that Jesus and the Greek thinkers, although they sometimes arrive at the same idea, have travelled by different paths and are strangers to each other." (Scott: "The Ethical Teaching of Jesus" p.14). Dr. Fairweather, who has diligently searched the New Testament for every trace of Hellenistic influence, arrives at the conclusion: "The teaching of Jesus was certainly independent of the Greeks." ("Jesus and the Greeks" p.283).

The failure of Greek civilisation and religion constituted a negative preparation for the Gospel of Jesus; and the repulsive degradation into which pagan society had fallen affords an impressive proof that the efforts of man, unaided by divine revelation and grace, can neither solve life's problems nor bring salvation and peace to the soul; the festering corruption of unspeakable immorality which prevailed in the time of Jesus throughout the Graeco-Roman world, was an inarticulate cry for rescue, - a cry which later took the form of the appeal which Paul heard coming to him across the Aegean Sea: "Come over into Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16: 9). Both positively and negatively, the preparation of

the world for the coming of the Gospel was complete when Jesus came. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son." (Gal.4: 4).

Jesus brought to the world a revelation of Divine truth and grace adequate to meet the great religious needs of all men; but He did not proclaim His Gospel with special reference to the conditions of the pagan world. He taught the truth of God, - truth, universal and eternal, and applicable to every phase and circumstance and every problem of human life; and the environment which determined the form of His Gospel and provided the moulds into which it was cast, was not Greek thought and life, but rather the conceptions and the life of the Jewish people.

Yet, as Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, explicitly stated, the Gospel of Jesus was addressed to men of every race: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel", wrote the Apostle, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom.1: 16; Cf. Rom. 10: 12; 1 Cor.1: 22-24; Gal.3: 28; Col.3: 11). And in accordance with the universal appeal of the Gospel, the Greeks of the first Christian century found in it a message fit to satisfy their intellectual moral and spiritual requirements. "Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom," wrote St. Paul to the Greeks of Corinth, "we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block, and unto

Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor.1: 23-24).

By their philosophy and literature and by their political and social experiments, the Greeks have conferred great and lasting benefits on the world; but in some respects the spirit of their civilisation and religion was the anti-thesis of Christianity; and after the decay of the Greek "city-state" which was the sphere necessary for the success of the Greek system of ethics, Greek civilisation and religion speedily fell into decay; and a spirit of materialism and self-indulgence became prevalent throughout the Graeco-Roman world. Even in its best days the conception of the "city-state" resulted in contempt for individual personality and life and brought forth in abundance the evil fruits of injustice, cruelty and shameless vice; and, in the decadent Greek civilisation with which Jesus was brought into contact in the Hellenism of Palestine, these evils were greatly aggravated.

In the Gospel of Jesus there are only a few sayings which were occasioned by contact with Hellenism; and two of them will now be referred to -

(1) In close connection with the celebration of the Last Supper, there arose a contention among the disciples, which of them should be accounted the greatest. "And Jesus

said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors (*Εὐεργέται*). But ye shall not be so; but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." (Luke 22: 24ff. Cf. Matt. 20: 24-28; Mark 10: 41-45).

The title Benefactor, (*Εὐεργέτης*) was not only bestowed upon those who had done some real public service, but was occasionally applied to kings as a complimentary or official designation. In this sense, it was added to the names of some of the Greek kings of Syria and of Egypt. Thus Antiochus VII of Syria, (138-128 B.C.), Ptolemy III of Egypt, (247-222 B.C.), and Ptolemy VII (147-117 B.C.), were called "Benefactors."

This title, as borne by the Greek kings, had no relation to personal desert; and so glaring was the incongruity in the case of Ptolemy VII, that he was popularly known, not as "Benefactor", but as "Malefactor", (*Κακεργέτης*).

In the discussion of Jesus with His disciples on the true standard of greatness He had in mind the Greek title of "Benefactor"; and He enunciated a moral principle, which was directly contrary to the prevailing conceptions in the heathen world of His time. The principle that "might is right" was not counted immoral by rulers and conquerors, it was the spirit of the age; and in international relations it continues to a

large extent to be an accepted principle still.

The Gospel of Jesus presents a sharp contrast to such standards of life and conduct. In rebuking His disciples for their unseemly contentions, and in criticising the Gentile use of the title "Benefactor", Jesus taught that greatness is reached only through service, and that service is the only right use and sure proof of greatness; and He emphasized His words by the impressive object-lesson of the washing of the disciples' feet, (John 13: 1-20).

In this exposition of the Christian conception of greatness, and in a similar statement in answer to the question "Who is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" (Matt. 18: 1 f.). Jesus rejected the ideals cherished by pagan morality and practised in ancient and in modern times, and established a new standard of moral values. It was a revolutionary statement, which constituted a "judgment" of the world, (Cf. John 12: 31; 16: 8-9) and marked the dawn of a new era in the development of ethical ideals. When judged by a standard set up by Jesus, world-conquerors like Alexander and Napoleon are weighed in the balance and found wanting.

In justice to Greek philosophy, it should be noted that the greatest thinkers of Greece set up high ideals for rulers. In discussing the question of the appointment of rulers, Plato wrote that "they were to be lovers of their country, tried by the test of pleasures and pains, and neither

in hardships, nor in dangers, nor at any other critical moment were to lose their patriotism - he was to be rejected who failed, but he who always came forth pure like gold tried in the refiner's fire, was to be made a ruler." ("Republic" 6: 502-3). The relation between rulers and subjects in the ideal state is set forth in the following remarkable passage: "In our State what other name besides that of citizens do the people give the rulers? They are called saviours and helpers, he replied. And what do the rulers call the people? Their maintainers and foster-fathers. And what do they call them in other States? Slaves." ("Republic" 5: 463). Plato had a high ideal of the duty and character of rulers in the perfect State; but he had to admit that in actual life the rulers treated their subjects as "slaves"; and that was the actual condition of things, that Jesus condemned in His teaching.

Hellenic ideals and manners and customs had long been a menace to the Jews who were brought into contact with them; and to Jesus the Hellenic spirit, as expressed in the pagan conception of a "Benefactor", and as manifested in the unseemly contention of the disciples on a question of precedence, was nothing less than a challenge; and He met the challenge with an uncompromising opposition, and pitted the principles of His Gospel against the pagan ethics of Hellenism. He explicitly spoke of Himself as the embodiment of the truth He

taught; and He pointed to the contrast between Himself and the Gentile kings. They had lordship over their people; but Jesus said: "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth". (Luke 22: 27). In the kindred passage in Matthew, the contrast is put still more strongly: "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them," but "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt.20: 25 ff.).

(2) The contrast between the Greek and Christian ideals is also exhibited in connection with the approach of the Greeks to Jesus at the close of His ministry. These men were probably Greeks by race, who had embraced the Jewish religion; and when Jesus heard of their desire to see Him, He was deeply moved; for He saw in them the first-fruits of the sovereignty which He would exercise over the Gentile world, and which He would gain only through His self-sacrifice upon the Cross. He then proceeded to give a statement of the great principle of the Gospel, the law of life through death. "The hour is come," He said, "that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life, loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." (John 12: 23-25). This impressive statement was probably made in the hearing of the Greeks; and it breathes a spirit which

is the antithesis of Hellenism.

In the literature and philosophy of Greece there are many noble expressions of high ideals of self-sacrifice. The Alcestis and Iphigenia of Euripides and the Antigone of Sophocles personify the spirit of unselfishness and devotion. In the "Republic" Plato tells how the heroic Er was the self-sacrificing messenger who carried back to men the report of the other world; and in the Greek city-state, there was abundant scope for self-sacrifice on the part of the individual. But even the highest teaching of the literature and philosophy of Greece fell far short of the moral and spiritual standard of the Gospel of Jesus.

The Greeks aimed at self-realisation, not by self-sacrifice but by self-culture and self-enjoyment. As a people they were sensuous and joy-loving. They looked upon life from the intellectual and aesthetic rather than from the moral standpoint. The good was identified with the beautiful; and the one word *καλός* served the Greeks for expressing both ideas. Virtue was conceived as an aesthetic quality dependent upon balance and proportion in character, rather than upon personal holiness. "Virtue is a kind of moderation, inasmuch as it aims at the mean or moderate amount." (Aristotle: "Ethics" II: 6). Aristotle's famous description of the high-minded man includes "greatness in every virtue or excellence", but it lacks the qualities of kindness and self-forgetfulness.

The high-minded man claims much, and is watchful that he receives all he deserves; he breathes the spirit of complacent haughtiness and of contempt for humbler men. He is not one of the humble and contrite in heart; and his spirit is remote from that of the "Beatitudes". Jesus "emptied himself, (*ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν*) taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." (Phil.2: 5-8).

The contrast between the two ideals is very sharp, and there will always be conflict when they meet. To the Greeks the Gospel of the Cross was foolishness, (1 Cor.1: 23). To them the mere idea of dying for a barbarian, or a slave, or an undeserving man, was absurd.

It must be kept in mind that the Hellenism with which Jesus was brought into touch, and which challenged the statement of the self-sacrificing spirit of His Gospel, was a condition of life greatly inferior to the best literature and philosophy of Greece. There were noble conceptions in the Greek writing; but they were not practised in the homes of the people. The highest teaching of the wise men of the Gentile world entirely failed to bring purity of heart, and inward peace. "The world by wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor.1: 21). The Graeco-Roman world, in the time of Jesus, was reeking with loathsome and indescribable immorality. "The incident of the sick man at the

"Beautiful Gate" of the (Herodian) temple (Acts 3: 2) may symbolise for us the state of matters that obtained everywhere in Greece. Material splendour and moral degradation existed side by side. There was indeed no lack of lofty ideals set forth in their marvellous literature; but the question is not concerning the creations of the imagination - a sphere in which nothing transcended their powers - but concerning the actual life of the men and women who inhabited Greece. Greece had its Socrates, and Rome its Marcus Aurelius. But the general depravity of the age is undeniable. On this point the evidence is overwhelming, and all historians are agreed." (Fairweather: "Jesus and the Greeks" p.114-115).

The contact of Jesus with Greeks naturally brought vividly before His mind the antagonism of His Gospel to the spirit of Hellenic civilisation; and it brought into His consciousness an overwhelming sense of the failure of men to find salvation by their own unaided effort, and of the urgent need to rescue them by the truth of His Gospel, and by the fruit of His own self-sacrifice. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." (John 12: 31-32).

This was the last public utterance of Jesus made two days before the Crucifixion; and in it He declared, in the hearing of the Greeks, that a great spiritual revolution

was about to be initiated, through which the power of evil, then ruling the Gentile world, would be overthrown; and He predicted that on the Cross as on a throne, He would receive the homage of all mankind, - both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus' memorable statement of the Christian doctrine of life through sacrifice, and His impressive prediction of His final triumph through the Cross were called forth by the desire of the Greeks to see Him; and thus, on that great occasion, the form of the Gospel was influenced by the Greek environment.

2. THE ROMAN ENVIRONMENT.

In the year 63 B.C., the Roman general, Pompeius Magnus, captured the city of Jerusalem; and from that date, the land of Palestine came under the rule of Rome.

During the life-time of Jesus the form of government in Palestine was both complicated and unstable. Roman officials, the Herods, and the Jewish ecclesiastical dignitaries existed side by side, and their relations to one another changed with bewildering rapidity; but through all vicissitudes, Rome continued to be the supreme and controlling power.

It is remarkable that, excepting the note that the superscription on the Cross was written in the Roman tongue, (*Ῥωμαϊστὶ*), as well as in Hebrew and Greek, the Romans are only once mentioned by name in the Four Gospels. When Caiaphas, the High Priest instigated the murder of Jesus, he

argued that, unless his proposal were carried out, there might be a civil disturbance as a result of the raising of Lazarus, and that the Romans would then come and punish the Jewish leaders for their failure to maintain order. (John 11: 48). Though this is the only passage in which the Romans are named, their presence was a real power in the history of Jesus; and they influenced in several ways the form of the Gospel.

The influence of Rome in the life of Jesus was apparent from His earliest days. Humanly speaking, it was owing to the decree of Caesar Augustus, ordering a registration or census throughout the Empire, that the Birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem; and at the end of His ministry, He was again brought into closest contact with Roman authority. He was led before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for trial; and the cruel and unjust sentence of crucifixion was carried out by the hands of Roman soldiers. During the three days also that He remained under the power of death, Roman soldiers stood guard at the sepulchre. Thus the whole life of Jesus was spent under the sovereignty of Rome; and this historical circumstance becomes evident from time to time in the form in which Jesus cast His message.

(1) The Universal Rule of Rome.

Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus, born in 63 B.C., became first Emperor of Rome in 27 B.C., and assumed the title

of Augustus; and he reigned until his death in A.D.14. He was succeeded by his step-son Tiberius who occupied the throne of the Empire until A.D.37. Under these two rulers Jesus lived as a subject.

Caesar Augustus was not an admirable character, and he frequently used his power with pitiless cruelty; but he possessed a genius for government. He set himself to draw together the many races under his sway, and to make his vast Empire a real unity. He was aided in this policy by the wide diffusion of the Greek tongue which had resulted from the effort of Alexander the Great to Hellenise the world, and from the prevalence of the Graeco-Roman civilisation everywhere. With great sagacity he applied his genius for government to the breaking down of national barriers, and to the development of an imperial patriotism through all the sections of his vast dominion.

The policy of Augustus met with remarkable success. Unity of rule was sorely needed in order to rescue the world from war and anarchy; and the accession of Augustus to the throne of the Empire was welcomed by multitudes, as the beginning of a new and happier era. An inscription, discovered at Halicarnassus (Zephyria) in Asia Minor, hails Augustus as "Saviour of the whole human race whose providence fulfilled and surpassed the prayers of all." (See Augustus: "Environment of Early Christianity" p.204 *w.*). The Emperor's policy suited

the spirit of the time; and in a generation he succeeded in a great degree, in welding the Empire into an organic unity, with Rome as its heart and head.

To such a thoughtful observer as Jesus, the idea of the Roman Empire could not fail to be impressive and attractive in several respects. (a) It comprised almost the whole of the known world of the time. The decree of Caesar Augustus which had a romantic influence upon the circumstances of the Birth of Jesus was to the effect, that "all the world" should be enrolled, (Luke 2: 1); and this was no boastful form of speech: it was in accordance with the great extent of the Empire's territory, and the far-reaching power of its government.

(b) The "pax Romana" brought an end to tumults and war, and bestowed upon men a sense of security such as they had never known before. Pirates were swept from the seas; and brigandage on land was checked, and forced to lurk in the most inaccessible haunts. Law and order were everywhere enforced, and justice was impartially administered.

(c) Under a stable and well-ordered government agriculture and commerce flourished, and material prosperity rapidly increased. The people of the Empire, with the exception of the nationalist Jews in Palestine, became happy and contented.

(d) The founding of the Empire awakened a new spirit of hopefulness amongst men. The expectation of the advent of a

heaven-sent ruler, and of the dawn of a better time, stirred even the heathen world and found remarkable expression in Virgil's "Messianic Eclogue".

Jesus of Nazareth in remote Galilee would hear from soldiers and officials and travellers reports of the vast extent and great achievements of the Empire; and by His own observation within the bounds of Palestine, He could see how the power of Rome quelled tumults, prevented civil war, did justice to all and brought many other privileges by its beneficent sway. In the Roman Empire Jesus saw world-dominion at its best. Roman tribunals were more just than the Jewish Sanhedrin, and were a constant protection against wrong and violence. Jesus Himself was to find that Roman justice would acquit Him when His own nation unjustly demanded His crucifixion; and it was only because of the moral cowardice of its representative, Pontius Pilate, that Rome lost the priceless opportunity of shielding Jesus, the Son of God from a cruel and unjust death.

Jesus was so impressed by the universal and beneficent rule of Rome that, as He pondered over His own world-mission, the thought came to His mind, that world-dominion after the Roman pattern might be employed for the achievement of His great purposes for the good of all men. He was conscious of possessing supernatural power; and by the exercise of it, He could take to Himself the throne of ~~Augustus~~ ^{Tiberius},

and in accordance with the prevalent Jewish expectation, could crush all enemies by irresistible might, and establish the Messianic kingdom by worldly methods and weapons. It was the glamour of the Roman Empire, along with the Jewish conception of a world-wide Messianic kingdom that lent power to the temptation which beset Jesus at the outset of His ministry. "The devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt.4: 8-9).

Jesus was tempted to use His miraculous powers to found the Messianic Kingdom upon force; but He perceived that to do so, would involve an act of homage to the spirit of evil. Therefore He cast the temptation from Him, saying: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matt.4: 10). "He deliberately determines to adopt another course, to found his empire upon the consent, and not the fears of mankind, to trust himself with his royal claims and his terrible purity and superiority defenceless among mankind, and, however bitterly their envy may persecute him, to use his supernatural powers only in doing them good." (Seeley: "Ecce Homo" p.16).

Though Jesus thus rejected the world's conception of monarchy, and refused to mould His Gospel upon it, yet the influence of the universal power of Rome can be traced in many

of His words. Its world-wide rule gives additional significance to His prediction that "They shall come from the East and West, and from the North and South, and shall set down in the kingdom of God." (Luke 13: 29). Though He confined His own ministry mainly to the Jewish people, yet He proclaimed His Gospel as a message for all the world, (Cf. John 3: 16); and He foresaw the time, when far-off lands would hear and honour His words. "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her," (Matt. 26: 13). In His interpretation of the Parable of the Tares, He said: "The field is the world": (Matt. 13: 38) and, in the sublime picture of the Judgment it is said: "Before him shall be gathered all the nations." (Matt. 25: 32). In the Apocalyptic discourse in the Synoptic Gospels, there occurs the announcement that "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations," (Matt. 24: 14; Mark 13: 10).

The world-wide rule of Rome not only impressed the mind of Jesus Himself, but it served to extend the out-look of the people to whom He spoke. Palestine is a very small country, - smaller than Wales, but when it became part of the Empire which included practically all the civilised world, its inhabitants were trained to take wide views, and their minds were prepared for receiving the world-wide commission of Jesus.

The influence of Rome helped the disciples of Jesus and His other hearers to comprehend the teaching that they were the "salt of the earth", and "the light of the world"; (Matt.5: 13, 14), and to understand the warning: "Before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles." (Matt.10: 18).

The Fourth Gospel, having been written at a time when the Church had already entered upon its world-mission, records many sayings which show the comprehensive outlook of Jesus. His plan of salvation is for all men: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have eternal life," (John 3: 16). He was probably referring to the Gentiles when He said: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," (John 10: 16 Cf. John 12: 32; 17: 18 etc.).

After Jesus rose from the dead, He plainly declared that all limitations to the activities of His witnesses had then been completely removed: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations," (Matt.28: 19-20; Cf. Mark 16: 15; Luke 24: 46-48). Thus the world-wide Empire of Rome furnished the sphere for the world-wide Gospel; and made familiar, and easily intelligible, to the contemporaries of Jesus, the ideas and phraseology in which He commanded them to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation," (Mark 16: 15). "God prepared the nations for his teaching by causing the Roman Emperor to rule over all the world; there was no longer to be a plurality

of kingdoms, else would the nations have been strangers to one another, and so the Apostles would have found it harder to carry out the task laid on them by Jesus when he said, "Go and teach all nations." (Origen: C.Celsum ii.30.cited by Augus: "Environment of Early Christianity" p.204.w.).

(2) THE MILITARY OCCUPATION.

Soldiers were constantly stationed in Palestine during the life-time of Jesus, and He would frequently see them as He moved through the country. The genius of the Roman people, at its best, appeared in some of the qualities of the Roman soldier. Sense of duty, regard for discipline, respect for law, dauntless courage, self-sacrificing devotion to the fatherland, and a capacity for thorough painstaking work were characteristics that brought great renown to the Roman legions.

The centurion at Capernaum, having experience of the prompt obedience enforced by military discipline, expressed the belief that if Jesus issued commands to physical and spiritual forces, they would be obeyed at once even at a distance.

"When Jesus was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come,

and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it," (Luke 7: 6-8). Though there may have been crude ideas in the centurion's mind, Jesus marvelled at his boundless faith; and He said unto the multitude that followed Him; "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel", (Luke 7: 9).

This soldier, being stationed at Capernaum was probably an officer of Rome's vassal, Herod Antipas; and he would thus be in the service of the Emperor, only in a secondary sense. But he was a Gentile, and had the Roman soldier's reverence for military discipline; and he gained the lasting distinction of explaining the relation of Jesus to physical and spiritual powers, in military terms which Jesus approved, and which the miraculous healing of the "dear servant" showed to be no more than the truth.

The wonderful faith of this soldier also drew from Jesus a memorable prediction of the coming of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven, (Matt.8: 11).

Roman soldiers play a sinister part at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. In these tragic scenes, the brutality and callousness which are elements in the character of the coarse type of soldier, were brought to view. But the scourging, and the crowning with thorns, and the mockery, and the agony of crucifixion, which Jesus suffered at the hands of the soldiers, did not draw from Him any word of resentment. The

spirit of Jesus and of His Gospel shines forth with a holy light amid the shame and suffering of the Cross; and probably the Roman soldiers who did the ghastly work of crucifixion in obedience to their superior officers, were in the thoughts of Jesus as He prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 34).

3. ROMAN TAXATION.

Rome made its influence felt in Palestine, as in other parts of the Empire, by the imposition and collection of taxes. Judaea and Samaria were directly under tribute to Rome, and paid the taxes into the Imperial treasury; but it is held by some that in Galilee and Peraea Herod Antipas levied and controlled the taxation himself and paid tribute to Rome out of his revenue. Professor W.M.Ramsay, however, inclines to the view that Roman officials supervised the tax-gatherers in Herod's territory, as in the province of Judaea, (See Hastings D.B.ext.vol.p.396).

The "publicans" (*τελωναί*) of the Gospels are not to be identified with the "publicani" - the rich Roman financiers of equestrian rank who leased from the Roman government the right to collect the revenues of entire provinces. The term "publicans" found its way into the English Versions, through the Vulgate's erroneous translation of *τελωνησ* by "publicanus". The "publicans" of the New Testament are to be understood as collectors of the taxes.

The tax-gatherers or so-called "publicans" of the Gospels were very numerous, (Luke 5: 27-30; Matt.9: 10); and they were hated and despised for several reasons: (1) They constantly reminded the Jewish people of the hated yoke of Rome. (2) The Jews had a conscientious objection to pay any tax, except to the temple and the priests. (3) They were mostly, Jews; and in collecting revenue from their brethren for the treasury of the hated Gentile oppressor they were counted basely unfaithful to their country and their religion. (4) The tax-gatherers were beset by peculiar temptations to dishonesty; and apparently many of them enriched themselves by ill-gotten gains. As a class, the tax-gatherers were held by public opinion to be most dishonest and disreputable. In the popular estimate, they were associated not only with the hated Gentiles, (Matt.18: 17), but also with harlots, (Matt.21: 31-32), and with sinners in general, (Matt.9: 10-11; etc.).

The system of taxation in Palestine under the Roman dominion, formed the back-ground of many of the sayings of Jesus, and influenced the form in which He sometimes imparted His teaching. He called Matthew, the "publican", to be one of His apostles, (Matt.9: 9; 10: 3); and in Jericho, on one occasion, He abode at the house of Zacchaeus, a "chief publican" (Luke 19: 1 ff.). Jesus exercised a remarkable influence upon this class of men: "All the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him for to hear him" (Luke 15: 1); and it was in answer to the Pharisees' objection to His

association with these despised people, that He gave the three beautiful parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son, in which He pictured the joy of God and of the angels of heaven at the saving of the lost. A high honour was conferred upon this class by Jesus in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The penitent tax-gatherer who sincerely repented of his sins, is shown to be more acceptable to God than the self-righteous Pharisee who was unconscious of any short-coming, and thanked God for his virtues, and for his superiority to his despised fellow-worshipper.

By manifesting sympathy ^{words} to the tax-gatherers Jesus did not condone their faults or clear their character. Indeed He plainly taught that His followers must aim at a higher standard of conduct than that of the "publicans". "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matt.5: 46). But, in stretching out a helping hand to these men who were so universally hated and despised, He made perfectly clear, that His Gospel is for all men of every rank and class, that he despairs of none, even the least promising (Matt.21: 31), and that He really is, as His enemies tauntingly said of Him, - the "friend of publicans and sinners, " (Matt.11: 19).

The great principle, which Jesus formulated regarding the national and civic obligations of the people of God, was proclaimed in answer to the question. "Is it lawful to give

tribute to Caesar or not?" (Matt.22: 17). The tribute, here referred to, was the poll-tax as distinguished from the duties charged on merchandise. It was levied upon all the male population over fourteen years of age, and upon females over twelve, up to the age of sixty-five. For the payment of this tax, a silver denarius bearing the image and superscription of Caesar, had been specially struck. The tax was a visible token of the subjection of the Jews to Rome; and it was bitterly resented by the nationalist party.

At the time of the Babylonian exile, Jeremiah had admonished his fellow-countrymen in the words: "Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace;" (Jeremiah 29: 7); and in the days of the Roman occupation of Palestine "the Rabbinic teachers impressed on their brethren the absolute duty of paying the taxes imposed by the government." (Abraham's, "Studies in Pharisaism" 1st series: p.62). The contemporaries of Jeremiah regarded his counsels as unpatriotic; and, notwithstanding the advice of some of their wisest teachers, history proves that the Jews in Jesus' life-time did not readily acquiesce in the Roman sovereignty. There was constant unrest; and the extreme party of the Zealots were ready to use any means to break the hated foreign yoke. The discontent at last broke out into open revolt against Rome; and the

result was the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D.

The Her~~f~~odian party, however, supported the Roman taxation. Thus, when "certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians came to Jesus, and asked Him the question: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?" (Mark 12: 13 ff.), it seemed impossible for Him to give an answer, which would not compromise Him, either with the Jewish people, or the Roman government. If He should support the tax, the Pharisees would denounce Him to the people; and if He should oppose it, the Herodians would denounce Him to the Roman authorities; but He escaped both horns of the dilemma by giving the marvellous answer: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Mark 12: 17).

The principle which Jesus laid down in this answer, is that a people, who accept the benefits of a well-ordered state, are bound to fulfil their obligations to the state. Jesus inculcates the duty of obedience to civil authority; and nothing could have been more unjust than the charge brought against Him before Pilate that He was "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar" (Luke 23: 2).

At the same time, in the pronouncement regarding the Roman tribute, Jesus maintained that there is a sphere in which civil governments have no jurisdiction. Many centuries were to pass before religious liberty was to be

granted as one of the fundamental rights of man; but the principle on which it is based was enunciated by Jesus when He bade His questioners "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

4. FACILITIES FOR TRAVEL IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

The Romans made travelling throughout the Empire easy and safe. They established lines of communication from the Capital to the remotest province; and by their system of splendidly built roads and bridges, distant lands were brought into close touch with Rome. Until the locomotive engine was invented in the early part of the nineteenth century, travel was never swifter or safer than in the days of the Roman Empire.

The Gospel bears upon it the mark of the Roman fashion of travelling to far countries. In the Parable of the Talents, for example, Jesus tells of a man "going into another country" who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods; and who, after a long time returned and made a reckoning with them, (Matt.25: 14 ff.). The frame-work of this parable is no doubt a picture of real life in the time of Jesus.

Again, when Jesus enforced the need of watchfulness in the spiritual life, He imparted His teaching by an illustration from the life of travel. "It is as when a man sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch, therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at

midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13: 34-37). The "lord of the house", who has been abroad, represents Jesus, who is about to leave the scene of His earthly ministry, but who will return at a time not definitely fixed. The servants of the absent householder had to hold themselves in constant readiness; so also must the servants of Christ be ready for His appearing. (Cf. Matt. 25: 13; Luke 12: 43).

The facilities of travel which Rome established throughout the world, made it the fashion among the wealthy and leisured classes to travel to distant places; and the Parable of the Prodigal Son tells of the wilful young man, impatient of the customs and restraints of home and ungrateful for its provision and affection, who took his journey into a far country, and there "wasted his substance in riotous living," (Luke 15: 13). The social life of the time was grossly immoral; and many a young man who set out on the grand tour of the Roman Empire would meet with the moral disaster which is so graphically depicted in this parable of Jesus.

5. THE MISSION OF ARCHELAUS TO ROME.

When Herod the Great died in B.C.4, he left a will which divided the principal parts of his territory amongst his

three sons, Philip, Antipas, and Archelaus. Philip and Antipas obtained their portions without difficulty; but when Archelaus was about to depart for Rome to have his royal dignity confirmed, a revolt broke out in Jerusalem; and in quelling it, his soldiers put three thousand men to death. After the rebellion, Archelaus set out for Rome; but he was followed by a deputation representing the most influential Jewish families, who submitted to Augustus a protest against the accession of Archelaus to the throne of Judaea. The Emperor, however, granted the petition of Archelaus, except that he received the title of ethnarch instead of king. He ruled until 6 A.D., when he was deposed for misgovernment; and Judaea then became a part of the Roman province of Syria.

When Joseph and Mary and the infant Jesus returned from Egypt, whither they had fled to escape the fury of Herod the Great (Matt.2: 14), Joseph, on hearing that Archelaus was reigning over Judaea in the room of his father Herod, "was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth," (Matt.2: 22-23). We may take it as certain that, in the home at Nazareth, the story of the flight into Egypt and the return would be told to Jesus; and thus from His earliest years He would be familiar with the history and character of Archelaus.

In the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19: 11-27), a

situation is described which closely resembles the experience of Archelaus when he went to Rome. "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us." (Luke 19: 12, 14). The resemblance is obvious; and the most natural explanation is that Jesus made use of the history of Archelaus, - which would be well known to His hearers, as part of the framework of His parable.

6. ROMAN MATERIALISM.

The Roman people were materialistic in temperament. They had set their ambition upon the acquisition of power and wealth; and they took comparatively little interest in spiritual things. In the early Roman Empire reverence for the ancient Latin deities had largely ceased to exist, and religion had no influence in the lives of the people. The Romans showed an easy toleration towards the religious customs of conquered peoples; and the Pantheon became crowded with hundreds of gods, which Rome had adopted from subject cities and tribes; but toleration naturally led to indifference, and the multitudes of gods bewildered the worshipper and fostered unbelief.

The decay of religion was aggravated by the growth of material prosperity. In gaining the whole world, the Romans lost their soul. Luxury and ostentation were

prominent features in the social life of the Empire; and at Rome the idle masses clamoured for bread and amusements. It was to this characteristic of the Roman world, that Jesus referred, when He said: "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek," (Matt.6: 31-32).

Even in the religious observances of the pagan world, there was no true spirituality. As the passage just quoted suggests, the petitions of the Gentiles to their gods were mainly for material goods; and their ideas of prayer were mechanical and lacking in devotion. "In praying", said Jesus, "use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking," (Matt.6: 7).

The heathen had no conception of the love of God, as revealed by Jesus Christ; and, in urging His hearers to rise above the level of pagan covetousness and material desires, He bade them trust God as their Father who knew their needs and would supply them, (Matt.6: 8, 32). Thus the Gospel of God's loving Providence was set forth by Jesus in contrast to the materialism and irreligion of the Roman world.

7. JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

The Roman authorities in Judaea retained in their own hands the power of capital punishment; and

consequently, when the Jewish Sanhedrin had passed sentence of death upon Jesus, it was necessary for them to apply to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, to have the sentence carried out. "It is not lawful for us", they said, "to put any man to death," (John 18: 31).

In the course of being cross-examined by Pilate, Jesus took the opportunity of proclaiming His kingship and of stating some of the principles of His kingdom. In a few words He showed how different His kingdom is from kingdoms of this world, like the Roman Empire, which are based upon a foundation of force: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence," (John 18: 36). As Jesus said this Pilate intervened with the curt question: "Art thou a king then?" (John 18: 37). It was a dangerous claim to make within the Roman Empire; but Jesus accepted the title, which had come from Pilate's lips. "Thou sayest that I am a king." And then Jesus proceeded to proclaim before the Roman judge, that it was for the purpose of bearing witness unto the truth that He had come to the world.

Pilate was a stern and practical Roman, and had little or no interest in theoretical questions about truth. His race had no great love for the Greek sophists who had found their way to Rome, and who, as Cicero described them, were

"more desirous of contention than of the truth," (See Smith: "The Days of His Flesh" p.482). "What is truth? said jesting Pilate: and would not stay for an answer." So wrote Lord Bacon in his essay: "Of Truth". Whether it was altogether in jest that Pilate spoke is not certain; it may have been in impatience, or in cynical scepticism; but he was at least satisfied that, in the claims of Jesus, there was no menace to the Roman Empire. There was no suggestion of the use of force, or of hostility to established forms of government. The distinctive mark of His subjects was not a soldier's uniform or any other outward badge, but the love of truth in the heart.

Pilate had the Roman's sense of justice; and as he listened to Jesus, he quickly reached the conclusion that He was no perverter of the Jewish nation or agitator against Rome; and he gave his judgment without hesitation: "I find no crime in him," (John 18: 38).

It is very remarkable that though Jesus, through the force of circumstances, - as we might put it, - denied Himself the joy of proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles during the three years of His ministry, yet when the "twelve hours" of His day were almost run out, and His own people had rejected Him and were set upon His destruction, He found opportunities of declaring fundamental truths of His Gospel, first to the Greeks, (John 12: 20 ff.), and then to Pontius Pilate, the representative of the world-wide Roman Empire.

8. THE CROSS.

When the Jews led Jesus before Pilate, in order that he might carry out the sentence of death which they had already passed upon Him they said: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:" and the Evangelist adds that they said this, "That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying by what manner of death He should die." (John 18: 31-32). Jesus had long foreseen that He would be handed over by His fellow-countrymen to be slain by the Gentiles; (Matt.16: 21); and He knew that the Roman method of executing provincials was crucifixion. Had He been put to death by the Jews, He would have been stoned, (Cf. Acts 7: 57). Pontius Pilate was convinced that Jesus was innocent, and he had the legal power to save Him from the Cross, but he lacked the moral power; and thus lost one of the most precious opportunities that ever came within the reach of man.

The shadow of the Cross had fallen upon the path of Jesus long before He trod the Via Dolorosa, and was brought by Roman soldiers to Golgotha; and He clearly predicted the manner of His death and the power which His self-sacrificing death on the Cross would have to draw all men unto Him, (John 12: 32 f; Cf. John 3: 14-15). Further, the Cross had become so significant an object to Jesus long before His death, that it assumed a figurative meaning in His mind, and on three separate occasions He spoke symbolically of cross-bearing, as one of the essential conditions of discipleship, (Matt.10: 38;

16: 24; Luke 14: 27).

Owing to the teaching and the death of Jesus, the Cross occupies a central place in Christian theology. Christ crucified was the great subject of Apostolic preaching; and the Cross is the symbol of the whole Gospel of Jesus. All the language of the Cross, which occupies a position altogether unique in the faith and devotion of Christendom, is directly due to the Roman occupation of Palestine in the time of Jesus, and to the cruel and ignominious death the Romans inflicted upon Him. There is no more pathetic instance than this, of the influence of environment on the form of the Gospel.

3. THE JEWISH ENVIRONMENT.

There can be no doubt that the circumstances into which Jesus was born as a son of Israel, constitute the most important part of His varied environment. Many of these circumstances were referred to in the preceding chapter; and the remainder of this thesis will be devoted almost entirely to consideration of some of the chief influences which were brought to bear upon Jesus and His Gospel in consequence of His Jewish nationality.

(1) The Influence of the Old Testament on the Gospel.

The most important part of the education of a Jewish boy was instruction in the Scriptures; and from His childhood Jesus knew and loved them. The charming scene of the boy Jesus

in the midst of doctors in the Temple at Jerusalem is proof of the thoughtful interest which He took in religion from His early days.

In the time of Jesus the Jews had developed to an amazing degree the power of memorising religious teaching. The voluminous Rabbinical commentaries on the **L**aw which date from at least a century before Christ, were not committed to writing till the fifth century A.D.; and during all that time they were preserved in the memories of the Rabbis and their disciples. We can hardly imagine that Jesus burdened His mind with "the lore of Rabbinism, in which to find one just or holy thought we must wade through masses of puerile fancy and cabbalistic folly." (Farrar: "Life of Christ", Chapter VII). In fact the Jews, knowing that He had not been trained in Rabbinical scholarship said of Him expressly: "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" (John 7: 15). Jesus was not so ignorant of Rabbinism as the words of the Jews imply; and occasionally He met the Rabbis on their own ground, and quoted Scripture in the Rabbinical manner, (e.g. Mark 12: 26; Matt. 22: 43 f.); but this was not His usual mode of thought or speech. His mental and spiritual life was remote from Rabbinism.

While it is unlikely that Jesus sought to acquire Rabbinic learning, there is abundant evidence in the Gospel to show that He used His memory to good purpose in gaining a complete and thorough knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures.

He knew them off by heart; and He meditated upon them so constantly that they became a part of His personality. It has even been said of Him: "He was a true Old Testament saint," (A.B.Davidson: "The Theology of the O.T." p.520); and this is one aspect of His character, though He was also much more than this. The perfection of His Scriptural knowledge is proved by the ease with which He cited passages amazingly apposite on the spur of the moment, as when He repelled the evil suggestions of the tempter (Matt.4: 1-11), or as when He was asked the question, "which is the great commandment in the law?" and without hesitation gave His answer by bringing together passages from two different books of the Old Testament: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt.22: 37-39. Cf.Deut. 6: 4-5; Lev.19: 18).

The influence of the Old Testament on the form of the Gospel is manifold.

(a) There are many quotations of Scripture in the Teaching of Jesus. Out of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament fourteen were directly quoted by Jesus, - the Psalms, Isaiah, and Deuteronomy more frequently than any others. Unlike the Scribes who obscured the divine truth revealed in the Scriptures under a mass of worthless commentary, Jesus in His quotations made clear the meaning of the original utterance,

and at the same time gave to the words a deeper meaning than they had ever borne before. In dealing, for example, with the question of marriage and divorce, He went behind the regulations of the Law of Moses to the original purpose of the Creator; and He thus raised the whole discussion into a purer and more spiritual atmosphere. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," (Matt.19: 6). In the **S**ermon on the Mount Jesus quoted the laws against killing, against adultery, against false swearing, and also the law of retaliation; and in every case He gave a new interpretation of them, and based upon them lofty teaching of His own, (Matt.5: 21 ff.). And there are many other quotations of the same kind.

(b) The influence of the Old Testament is also seen in the frequent allusions made by Jesus to Old Testament history, in illustration of His teaching and in support of His arguments. There are references to Noah and to Lot, to David and to Solomon, to the Queen of Sheba, to Elijah and to Elisha, and to Jonah; also to Sodom, to Tyre and Sidon, and to the incidents of the burning bush and the brazen serpent. These and other allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures are an interesting feature in the Gospel of Jesus, and many of them are most suggestive.

(c) Even stronger testimony to the influence of the Old Testament on the Gospel is found in passages in which Jesus

made use of Old Testament expressions without apparently being conscious of doing so. Many speakers and writers at the present day use the phraseology of the English Bible without knowing it; and this proves more convincingly than the mere quotation of texts that the Bible has influenced the language and thought of the people. Some may be unaware that their language has a Biblical source, because they are not readers of the Bible. Biblical terms are used by them, only because they have entered into common speech; but there are other speakers and writers who are so deeply versed in the Bible, that its language frequently comes to their mind more readily than any other. It is their 'mother-tongue'. So it was with Jesus.

Many of the forms of thought and speech in which the mind of Jesus most naturally found expression were provided by the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, the Beatitudes which contain some of the most original and revolutionary teaching of Jesus, are to a large extent expressed in the language of the Old Testament. The poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungry and thirsting, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted are all familiar Old Testament conceptions; and the same may be said of the second portion of each Beatitude. Another familiar example of the weaving of Old Testament ideas and phraseology into the Gospel is seen in Jesus' use of the figure of the Shepherd and the

Sheep, (Matt.10: 6; 10: 16; 26: 31; Luke 15: 4 ff.; John 10: 1 ff.; 21: 16). He did not directly quote any of the Old Testament passages in which this conception is found, (e.g. Psalm 23; Psalm 80: 1; Isaiah*40: 11; Ezek.34: 11-16); but it is obvious that His choice of language was due largely to the influence of the Old Testament on His mind. Another example of the same kind is found in His reference to "living water". This is an Old Testament idea, which Jesus employed and developed in the Gospel, (John 7: 37-38; 4: 10; Cf. Isaiah 58: 11; Ezek.47: 1; Zech.14: 8; Exod.17: 6).

(d) The Old Testament foreshadowed the truths of which the Gospel of Jesus is the full revelation. Though Jesus was in many respects an original Teacher, He did not seek after originality. He deliberately set Himself in line with the revelation which God had given in the religion and history of Israel. He carried forward the Old Testament ideals of God and of righteousness to a higher stage of development, and in doing so He transformed them and gave a new revelation of His own. When His teaching on the inward and spiritual nature of the good life aroused fears that He was setting aside the Mosaic legislation, He said plainly: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I came not to destroy but to fulfil." (Matt.5: 17). He did not abrogate the Old Testament legislation, but He fulfilled it by

giving it a wider and deeper meaning, - that is, by making it more complete and more perfect. "Jesus fulfils the Old Testament system by rounding out into ideal completeness what is incomplete in that system. In this process of fulfilment all that is imperfect, provisional, temporary, or, for any reason, needless to the perfect religion, falls away of its own accord, and all that is essential and permanent is conserved and embodied in Christianity." (Stevens: "The Theology of the New Testament" p.19). Jesus also taught that His life and sufferings and resurrection were the fulfilment of prophecy. In the Upper Room as He partook of the Last Supper with His disciples, He said: "That the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me," (John 13: 18); and as He went out to the Garden of Gethsemane, He said: "I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment." (Luke 22: 37). After the resurrection He uttered the significant words: "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself..... Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations,

beginning from Jerusalem," (Luke 24: 26-27; 45-47 Cf. Luke 4: 21).

Just as Jesus pointed to the remarkable correspondence between the ideas of the Old Testament and the events of His own life, so also the form of His gospel was often determined by its close connection with the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Jesus referred to Jonah as a type of Himself, (Matt.12: 39-40; Luke 11: 29-30). The discourse on the Bread of Life was associated in the mind of Jesus with the manna, with which God fed the Israelites in the desert. The institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was the fulfilment of the teaching embodied in the Passover: the teaching regarding the vicarious suffering of the Son of man has close affinities ~~to~~^{with} the Suffering Servant of the Lord depicted by Isaiah; and the New Covenant was suggested by the Old, (Cf. Jer.31: 31 ff.; Exod.24: 7 ff.; Matt.26: 28).

There have been periods in the history of the Church when the allegorical method of interpreting the Old Testament was carried to an extreme; but it was based on a true instinct, and on the example of Jesus Himself. Many of the great truths of Christianity were adumbrated in the Old Testament; and the Gospel was influenced in its form by the predictions and longings, the laws and ritual, and the types and symbols that pointed to it and that were fulfilled by it.

"The new does not reject and discard the old; it preserves and embodies it, just so far as it has elements of permanent value for the world's religion. The fulfilment is therefore an organic process; the new comes out of the old by a natural and orderly process of development." (Stevens: "The Theology of the New Testament" p.23).

2. The Influence of Contemporary Judaism.

Judaism in the time of Jesus is represented mainly by the Pharisees. There were other sects and parties in the nation, but Pharisaism was "the most characteristic manifestation of Palestinian Judaism in the time of Christ," (H.M.Scott: Hastings' D.C.G. II p.351); and the contact of Jesus with the Pharisees goes far to account for the form of the Gospel.

The history of the Pharisees dates from the time of the Babylonian Captivity. The discipline of the people in Babylon intensified their zeal for Jehovah the one true God, and for the law of God; and in the year 444 B.C., Ezra and Nehemiah led the people into a new national covenant with God, wherein they bound themselves "to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes." (Matt.10: 29). This was virtually the introduction of a new constitution for the Jewish nation, - the constitution of the Law; but in spite of the stern measures

taken by Ezra and Nehemiah and the other reformers to cleanse the nation from all heathen influence and from all laxity towards the Law, two parties continued to exist among the people. Those who were sympathetic towards foreign influence and rather lax in religious observances, belonged to the priestly aristocracy, and as a party were called Zadokites after Zadok, the illustrious high priest of the time of David and Solomon. In the New Testament they appear under the name of the Sadducees. The stricter party who adhered loyally to the reforms of Ezra, and who were characterised by a scrupulous observance of the Law and by intense hatred of heathenism, were the most God-fearing and patriotic people in the nation; and it was their enthusiasm and devotion which inspired the successful resistance to the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes. They were the flower of the army of Judas Maccabaeus, and in his time they bore the name of the "godly" (אֱלֹהִים); as time went on, their strict separation from heathenism and from their less scrupulous fellow-countrymen became their distinctive characteristic in the public mind, and consequently they received the name of "Pharisees", (Heb. פְּרִישִׁיִּים, Gr. Φαρισαῖοι) meaning "the separated", - just as in similar circumstances the names "Puritan" and "Methodist" were given to well-known parties in England.

It should never be forgotten that though the Pharisees gradually gave way to formalism, insincerity and spiritual pride, yet in their best days their ardent patriotism

flung back the heathen power which aimed at the nation's extinction, and their devotion to religious principle saved the nation's soul. Even in New Testament times, when their glory had departed, their intense earnestness in matters of religion attracted into their sect earnest men like Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Saul of Tarsus; and there were elements in Pharisaism at its best which Jesus favoured. His stern denunciation of the Pharisees had reference to the corruptions which were generally characteristic of the sect in the time of His ministry. The Pharisees were not intentionally wicked men, but their goodness had gone astray, and they are a sad illustration of the proverb: "Corruptio optimi pessima."

There were only about six or seven thousand Pharisees in the time of Jesus; but they exercised an influence out of proportion to their comparatively small number, and they were accepted by the great majority of the people as the religious leaders of the nation.

The Scribes belonged chiefly to the sect of the Pharisees, and they are frequently named in conjunction with them in the New Testament. That there were scribes belonging to other sects is implied by the phrase "the scribes of the Pharisees," (Mark 2: 16; Cf. Luke 5: 30); there would naturally be professional students and expounders of the law attached to the rival sect of the Sadducees, as teachers/of their distinctive

doctrines, but in the New Testament the Scribes and the Pharisees represent the same sect. The Scribes with whom Jesus came into conflict were Pharisees who had become specialists in the study of the Scriptures, particularly the Pentateuch, and the voluminous commentaries upon it. This class came into existence in the Jewish nation during the Babylonian Exile, or shortly after the Return. They were men who were set apart for the special purpose of studying the Scriptures and instructing the people. They were originally deeply earnest and religious, after the type of Ezra, the scribe, who "had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (Ezra 7: 10). They were men of letters, and they did work of priceless value in gathering together the scattered fragments of the sacred Hebrew literature. As their name "scribe" (סֹפֵר, γραμματεὺς) suggests, one of their duties was the copying of the Law in order that each synagogue might have a copy; and thus the scribe or "writer" naturally developed into the "lawyer" (νομικός) or "doctor of the law" (νομοδιδάσκαλος).

The scribes were found in every Jewish community, and were recognised officials who delivered lectures to their pupils in special "houses of teaching", and who taught the Law to the common people in the synagogues. They had every opportunity of making known the religious principles of the Hebrew Scriptures; but in the time of Jesus, they were very

inferior to the original type of scribe, and having lost all interest in what was spiritual, they gave their attention to matters that were entirely superficial and unprofitable. They were held in great respect by the people and were addressed by the title 'Rabbi', - 'my master'; but as a class they were selfish and proud. Yet even among the scribes there were some, who were not far from the kingdom of God, (Mark 12: 28-34).

Upon the scribes devolved the duty of teaching how the Law was to be applied to every detail of life; and as there were innumerable matters on which the Law gave no precise pronouncement, a vast amount of interpretation and exposition was required. Thus there arose endless commentaries on the Law in which detailed rules were given for the regulation of conduct in every possible circumstance of human experience. The whole of life became hedged round by countless precepts, many of which were puerile and devoid of ordinary common sense; and under the accumulation of commentary the spiritual teaching of the Scriptures was stifled.

The three years' ministry of Jesus was marked by almost constant opposition on the part of the Pharisees and the scribes. They soon discovered that His teaching was contrary to theirs, and that it was subversive of their authority; and they conceived towards Him a passionate hatred, which blinded their minds and hardened their hearts, and which did not rest,

until it brought about His death. Thus the Gospel was proclaimed to a large extent in an atmosphere of criticism and conflict.

Much of the teaching of Jesus was defined by contrast with Pharisaic doctrine and practice. One of the chief subjects on which Jesus and the Pharisees differed, was the Law; and their antagonism appeared in many controversies.

(a) The Rule of Faith.

On one occasion the Pharisees and the scribes said to Jesus: "Why walk not they disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?" (Mark 7: 5). This question raised a very important issue: namely, the relative importance of the commandments of God and the great body of oral commentary upon it which went by the name of the "tradition of the elders". In which of these was the rule of faith to be found? It was said by the Pharisees and the scribes that "traditionalism had the same origin, both as to time and authority as the Law itself". (Edersheim: "Life and Times of Jesus" I. p.85). According to the scribes, "tradition was equally of Divine origin with Holy Scripture, and authoritatively explained its meaning; supplemented it; gave it application to cases not expressly provided for, perhaps not even foreseen in Biblical times; and generally ~~regarded~~ ^{guarded} its sanctity by extending and adding to its provisions, drawing 'a hedge' around its 'garden enclosed'...

Traditionalism placed the oral actually above the written Law," (ibid.I pp.97-98, 100).

Thus the Rabbis taught that the "tradition of the elders" was the rule of faith. In their view, it possessed a higher authority and superior sanctity than the original Scriptures; and any transgression of tradition involved greater guilt than sins against the revealed Law of Moses. "The Halacha or traditional law, as developed and settled by the labours of the scribes, was declared to be as legally binding as the written Torah. R.Eleasar of Modein said: He who interprets Scripture in opposition to tradition has no part in the world to come. Among the reasons for which the tempest of war bursts upon the country, are named among others, 'People who interpret Scripture in opposition to tradition'. The traditional interpretation and the traditional law are thus declared absolutely binding. And it is consequently but consistent, when deviation from these is declared even more culpable than deviation from the written Torah. It is more culpable to teach contrary to the precepts of the scribes, than contrary to the Torah itself." (Schürer: "History of the Jewish People" II, 2, p.12). It follows from all this that the disregard of tradition by Jesus was counted a serious crime by the leaders of Judaism.

When the Pharisees challenged Jesus for not teaching His disciples to walk according to the "traditions of the elders"

He turned at once to the principle which was involved. He began by aptly quoting the Scriptures, whose authority He was upholding. "He said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men," (Mark 7: 6-7). And He proceeded to develop His counter-attack by stating that when 'tradition' clashed with God's Law the Pharisees followed the former rather than the latter. "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition," (Mark 7: 8-9). Jesus illustrated this charge against His opponents by showing that the 'tradition' taught evasion of the sacred obligations of the fifth commandment • By declaring any possession to be "Corban", that is, 'dedicated' by vow to some special purpose, however selfish, a man could bind himself not to use it even for the benefit of a parent. Thus the "tradition of the elders" encouraged the disregard of filial piety, which the Law of God enjoins as a sacred and religious duty.

Though the Gospel transcended the teaching of the Law and the prophets, yet Jesus revered the Hebrew Scriptures as containing a revelation of God's will, and as possessing a divine authority; and He emphatically proclaimed that those who insisted upon the observance of the "traditions of the

elders", were making the word of God of none effect. "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up," (Matt.15: 13).

By His repudiation of traditionalism Jesus laid down as a fundamental principle that the word of God is the supreme rule of faith and life, and that no tradition however ancient and sacred can be allowed to usurp the authority of the divine Revelation.

Judaism in the time of Jesus was closely identified with Rabbinical traditionalism, and His disregard of the traditions of the elders was proof that a new Gospel had come. By His words no less than by His deeds He showed that the Rabbinical tradition had no value. It was one of the astonishing features of His teaching that "He taught as one having authority", and not as the scribes," (Mark 1: 22). The professional teachers of Judaism did not speak out of their own conviction or spiritual experience but quoted the sayings of some famous Rabbi, or recited a portion of the generally accepted tradition. Jesus spoke as one who had a personal knowledge of God; and He brought His hearers into direct contact with divine truth, and with God Himself. He taught not as the scribes, for He proclaimed His Gospel with an authority, not only independent of "tradition", but higher even than that of Moses and the prophets, (Cf. Matt.5: 21 ff.). The supreme rule of faith, therefore, is the word of Jesus Himself. "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If

any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself," (John 7: 16-17).

(b) The Seat of Morality and Religion.

The scrupulous observance of the forms and ceremonies of religion was the means whereby the people of Israel preserved their identity in the midst of nations greater and mightier than they. This was the bulwark that saved their nation and religion from extinction by the forces and influences of heathenism. So long as outward ceremony was the expression of inward devotion, it fostered a deep and steadfast piety; but when devotion decayed, religion became formal and unreal. This was the condition of Judaism in the time of Jesus. The strict observance of rites and ceremonies which in earlier generations had been the safeguard of Israel's race and religion, was insisted upon as zealously as ever; but it was no longer the expression of a devout and righteous heart. The husk remained, but the kernel was dead.

On the same occasion on which Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their elevation of tradition to a higher level than the commandment of God, "He called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man:" (Mark 7: 14-15), and at the request

of His disciples, He explained to them His "dark saying".

"And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: All these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7: 20-23).

These words contain one of the fundamental principles of the Gospel, namely, that the heart is the seat of religion and morality. This idea runs through all the teaching of Jesus and finds repeated expression. "Blessed are the pure in heart:" He said, "for they shall see God." (Matt.5: 8). "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh," (Luke 6: 45).

The doctrine of Jesus that religion and morality issue from the heart has a very important bearing both upon the ceremonial law and the moral law.

The law of cleanness and uncleanness furnished the scribes with a wide field for the exercise of their casuistry. "The Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders: and when they come from the marketplace, except they wash themselves, they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, washings of cups and pots, and brasen

vessels," (Mark 7: 3-4). In laying stress upon the inwardness of morality and religion, Jesus showed that the taking of food with hands not ceremonially cleansed, had no moral or spiritual significance. C.J. Montefiore, himself a Jew, makes the following comment upon this teaching: "Things cannot be religiously either clean or unclean: only persons. And persons cannot be defiled by things: they can only be defiled by themselves, by acting irreligiously This principle seems profoundly true. It destroys with a prophet's blow the terrible incubus from which all ancient religions suffered, that certain objects or physical states are in themselves taboo or religiously unclean..... A mass of ritual superstitions is made superfluous. The world is profoundly indebted to Jesus for His liberating and clarifying words. They are spoken in the very spirit of Amos and Hosea. The true province of religion needed to be defined. It was made the greater and the purer by being limited to the realms of spirit and personality. The dietary laws and the laws of clean and unclean have doubtless often led, as they led in the days of Jesus, to formalism, hypocrisy, self-righteousness. Outward 'cleanliness' can often mask inward corruption." ("The Synoptic Gospels" quoted by Bartlet on Mark, p.226). An interesting example of the superficiality of the Rabbinical law of cleanliness is found in the refusal of the Jews to enter the palace of Pilate on the occasion of the trial of Jesus. They scrupled to enter a Gentile dwelling, yet their hearts were full of the prejudice and hate that thirsted for the blood of

Jesus. "They themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover," (John 18: 28).

The law of the sabbath was also a fruitful field for the casuist. The scribes drew up a list of thirty-nine works that were forbidden on the sabbath, and each of these prohibitions included many sub-divisions, (See Schürer: "The Jewish People" II 2, p.96 ff.); and the result was that the conscience was oppressed with an intolerable burden of countless regulations regarding every detail of life.

The stress which Jesus threw upon the heart as the seat of morality and religion, not only stamped as worthless the countless puerile rules of Rabbinism, but it also implied that all ceremonial observances, though in themselves useful and praiseworthy, are of no moral and spiritual value, except in so far as they are a sincere expression of the inner life. Jesus defended His disciples against the criticism that they were neglecting to fast, by the argument that when the heart is glad fasting is unreal and out of place. "Can the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day," (Mark 2: 19-20). If the heart be really sad and downcast, fasting will be observed spontaneously without being enjoined.

The same principle was expressed by Jesus regarding worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. To the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar Jesus said: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father..... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth," (John 4: 21, 23-24).

It should be noted that Jesus did not minimise the value of sincere religious ceremonies. By His words and by His example He inculcated the duty of faithful observance of religious ordinances; but from His teaching that the heart is the seat of morality and religion, and that goodness is judged by inward rather than external tests, it follows logically that outward rites and ceremonies, in so far as they have no connection with man's character, are of no value and may be positively blameworthy. The mechanical performance of outward ceremonies cannot make a man pure, and the neglect of them cannot defile him. It is by the spirit of evil in the heart, with or without the expression of that spirit in evil deeds, - that a man is defiled; and it is the spirit of goodness within a man, and expressing itself spontaneously in good deeds, and sincere worship, that makes a good life.

The doctrine of the inwardness of morality and

religion has a most important bearing upon the moral law also. It implies that the commandments of God require not merely outward obedience but also the consecration of thought and desire. In illustration of this Jesus showed that the commandments against murder and adultery forbade also anger and hatred, and the lustful look, (Matt.5: 21 ff.). In speaking to the Pharisee, Nicodemus, Jesus dealt with the great subject of the inner life. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John 3: 3). So different was this doctrine from Rabbinism, that Nicodemus, though a teacher of Israel, could not understand it.

Jesus proclaimed the doctrine that the heart is the seat of morality and religion in contrast to the externalism and unreality of Pharisaism, and the Pharisees correctly interpreted it as being fundamentally opposed to their views. It implied that Jewish legalism was a superficial conception of religion, and in relation to prevailing ideas it was revolutionary teaching, like the Reformers' proclamation of justification by faith in contrast to the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. The best exposition of this great principle of the Gospel of Jesus and of its antagonism to Jewish legalism is the Epistle of the ~~Gospel~~ ^{Apostle} Paul to the Galatians.

The **L**aw as interpreted by the Pharisees had become an intolerable burden. It led to formalism in the insincere,

and, - as proved by the experience of Paul, - to despair in the earnest, (Rom.7: 21 ff.). The Apostle Peter, speaking at the Council of Jerusalem, described Jewish legalism as a yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15: 10); and in reference to that yoke Jesus said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light:" (Matt.11: 28-30). This is glad tidings indeed: it is sight to the blind and liberty to the captive.

The insistence of Jesus on the inwardness of morality and religion explains many of His controversies with the Pharisees. The discrepancy between their creed and their conduct was only possible in men whose conceptions of the good life were superficial; and Jesus' scathing denunciation of their formalism and hypocrisy is a practical application of the doctrine that actions, however religious outwardly, are of no value if the heart is corrupt. Their ostentation, their broad phylacteries, their evasions of sacred duties, their neglect of the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith," their lack of pity for suffering, their spiritual blindness, their corruption veiled by religious pretension, were all the evil fruits of their external ideas of morality and religion. The antagonism that separated the

scribes and Pharisees from Jesus was fundamental and all-pervading; and in many respects the Gospel was the criticism and condemnation of their superficial and defective conceptions of morality and religion.

(c) Good tidings for the poor.

When John the Baptist was in prison, he sent to Jesus the message, "Art thou he that cometh or look we for another?" In reply Jesus gave as one of the proofs of His Messiahship, that "the poor have good tidings preached to them," (Matt.11: 2-5).

In this respect the spirit and teaching of Jesus was the complete antithesis of Rabbinism. The scribes and Pharisees held that only those who observed the Rabbinic laws scrupulously were genuine Israelites and that all the rest were the common herd, the people of the land, (יְהוּדֵי הָאָרֶץ). The scribes and Pharisees regarded the common people as unclean and held them in contempt. The scribe was "the Divine aristocrat among the vulgar herd of rude and profane country people..... Each scribe outweighed all the common people," (Ederheim: "Life and Times of Jesus" I.pp.93-94). The scribes regarded the unlearned people as outside the pale of religion, and said of them: "This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed," (John 7: 48).

The Gospel is in sharpest contrast to this attitude of the scribes and Pharisees. The early home of Jesus had

been a humble one. He was a Son of the people; and this was a cause of Pharisaic prejudice against Him from the first. By word and deed He continually showed His sympathy towards the common people, and "the common people (*ὁ πῶλὸς ἄλλος*) heard Him gladly," (Mark 12: 37). The needs of the people never failed to arouse His pity and to call into exercise His beneficent powers. "He came forth and saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd," (Mark 6: 34). In order to heal a man with a withered hand on the sabbath day, He defied all the power and authority of Rabbinism (Matt.12: 9 ff.); and He did it also in order to heal a woman bent double with disease, (Luke 13: 10 ff). The fierce opposition which these actions aroused was probably due not only to His disregard of the Rabbinical interpretation of the sabbath law, but also to the great concern He manifested in the humblest of the poor and needy. "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep," He said, (Matt.12: 12). When Jesus was criticised for consorting with publicans and sinners, He said: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," (Mark 2: 17); and when He was the guest of Zacchaeus, the "chief publican" of Jericho, He said: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost," (Luke 19: 10). Even on the Cross Jesus had a word of hope and consolation for the penitent thief, (Luke 23: 43).

In the Beatitudes Jesus pronounced blessings on the poor and the meek, who were despised by those in authority; and probably He had simple, humble folk in mind, as well as little children, when He said: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea," (Matt. 18: 6).

Jesus' doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the infinite worth of the individual soul are central conceptions of the Gospel; and they were taught on several occasions, as the answer to the Pharisaic contempt for the common people and the outcasts. "Both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," (Luke 15: 2); but it is the glory of the Gospel that it proclaims the love of God to the lost. "Rejoice with me", says the man in the parable, "for I have found my sheep which was lost." And said Jesus: "Even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance," (Luke 15: 6-7).

In the sublime picture which Jesus gives of the Last Judgment, sentence is pronounced in accordance with the treatment which had been given to the sick and the unhappy and the unfortunate, - even the least of them. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did

it unto me," (Matt.25: 40; Cf.25: 45).

The Fourth Gospel vividly describes how the Pharisees tried to browbeat the man who had been born blind, and on whom Jesus bestowed sight on the sabbath day, and how at last they "cast him out" with the contemptuous words: "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" (John 9: 34); and it was for the consolation of this man, as well as for the instruction of the "blind" Pharisees (John 9: 40), that Jesus gave the precious teaching contained in the allegory of the Good Shepherd and the True Fold.

Thus the pitiless contempt which the recognised leaders of Judaism manifested towards the common people frequently called forth from Jesus the proclamation of good tidings to the poor.

(d) The Gospel for all the Nations.

One of the distinctive marks of the Israelites was their separation from the other nations of the earth. They were God's "peculiar treasure from among all peoples", (Exod. 19: 5; Cf. Deut. 14: 2). Through all their history they held firm the conviction that they had been specially called of God, and that they were knit to Him by a sacred covenant. The call of Abram by Jehovah was the birth of the nation; but the Israelites too often forgot the missionary obligation attached to that call (Gen. 12: 3); and they came to believe that they were the special favourites of God, and that they were sure of

His blessings, whatever their conduct might be.

Their knowledge of the true God and the lofty ideals of their religion so far justified the Israelites in thinking themselves better than other nations; and not without good reason, they looked upon the Gentiles ($\square ? \dot{\iota} \dot{\iota}$) who knew not Jehovah, as the representatives of false religions and immoral customs. During the Babylonian Exile, the Jews were inevitably brought into close contact with their Gentile conquerors, and the result was that their abhorrence of heathenism was greatly intensified, (Cf. Psalm 137: 8-9). On the return to Judaea, hatred of the foreigner led to the drastic reforms instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah; and the same spirit found passionate expression in the pages of the Book of Esther. Bitter antagonism to the Gentiles was still further developed by the sufferings of the Jews in their heroic struggle against Hellenist aggression and persecution, in the time of the Maccab~~ees~~^{ees}, (Cf. Psalm 74: 18, 22-23).

The Pharisees with whom Jesus was brought into contact, inherited the traditions of racial pride and of contempt for the heathen nations; and under the régime of Rabbinism, these qualities became more deeply rooted than ever in the character of the Jewish people. Because of their descent from Abraham, all Israelites were said to be the children of kings and to have an inalienable right to the blessings of God.

On the other hand every Gentile was regarded as unclean, even from the hour of his birth, and to be deserving of destruction. Judaism in the time of Jesus manifested towards the Gentiles the same spirit which in earlier generations prompted the extermination of the Midianites and the Amalekites and other heathen nations, (Cf. Num. 31: 7 ff.; I Sam. 15: 3). One of the Rabbis gave definite expression to this feeling in the statement: "The best among the Gentiles, kill; the best among serpents, crush its head."

As it was not possible to exterminate heathenism, every precaution was taken to prevent the contamination of the Jews by any contact with Gentiles. Legal restrictions were multiplied and were strictly enforced. "The more vigorously and perseveringly heathenism continued to penetrate into Palestine, the more energetically did legal Judaism feel called upon to oppose it." (Schürer: H.J.P. II, 1.p. 51.). It was decreed to be unlawful to give pleasure or help to the Gentiles in any form whatever.

According to Rabbinism the heathen were excluded from every religious privilege. It was believed that when the Messiah came, redeemed Israel would be gathered with Him to a great feast, but that the Gentiles would have no part in it. This was the situation which the Psalmist was said to have predicted when he wrote: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies," (Psalm 23: 5).

In this atmosphere of racial pride and prejudice,

Jesus proclaimed His Gospel of love and salvation for all the nations. He joined issue with the Pharisees both on their pride of ancestry and on their hatred of other nations. Like John the Baptist, He warned them that descent from Abraham did not make them his spiritual children if they did not do the works of Abraham. Jesus applied a moral test, and His judgment was that, owing to their bondage to sin, the Jews had lost the inheritance of sons and had become slaves, (John 8: 34) Their only hope of emancipation lay in their acceptance of the truth, which is the gift of the Son of God.

While warning the Jews that they had no indefeasible right to the spiritual blessings and privileges promised to Abraham, Jesus taught at the same time that the Gentiles were not debarred from them. He repudiated the prevailing prejudice. He ignored the long-standing feud with Samaria, and to an ignorant, half-heathen, Samaritan woman He proclaimed the great truth of His Messiahship, which He did not reveal to His own nation until later in His ministry. He put Himself in peril of His life by reminding His fellow-townsmen in Nazareth of benefits conferred upon Gentiles at the hands of Elijah and Elisha, (Luke 4: 25 ff.).

The healing of the centurion's servant at Capernaum illustrates both the racial exclusiveness of Judaism and the universality of the Gospel. The centurion was aware of the Jewish scruples against entering a Gentile house; and in his message to Jesus, he said: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou

shouldest come under my roof" (Matt.8: 8); but Jesus showed that He did not share the prevalent Jewish prejudices, by His ready consent to go to the centurion's house to heal the sick servant, (Matt.8: 7), and by His high commendation of the soldier's faith (Matt.8: 10). Then in contradiction of the supposed exclusion of the Gentiles from the Messianic banquet, He predicted "that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness" (Matt.8: 11-12). The title of the Gentiles to a share in the blessings of the Heavenly Kingdom is also implied by the calling of "all the nations" to the Judgment - seat of the Son of man," (Matt.25: 31 f.).

Jesus frequently manifested His friendly interest in people of Gentile race; and in contrast with the bitter prejudice and hatred of contemporary Judaism, He proclaimed by word and deed and by the whole spirit of His life, that His Gospel of truth and salvation is freely offered to all the nations. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," He said, (John 6: 37).

The failure of Judaism as exhibited in Rabbinism, was a negative preparation for the coming of the Gospel of Jesus. It carried the legal conception of religion relentlessly to its logical conclusion, and convincingly proved the defects of the Old Covenant, and the clamant need for the New.

The Gospel established a new relation between man and

God, not on the basis of merit, but on the basis of faith. It restored the relation of faith and friendship which had been the foundation of the original covenant with Abraham, and which had been broken by the intrusion of the Law, (Cf. Rom. 5: 20).

The Law is not without great value, and it is not abrogated by Christianity; for Jesus demands from His followers an obedience, more complete and more whole-hearted than that which was rendered by the scribes and Pharisees.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. 5: 19-20). The Law did, and still does, work of great value by making people realise their need of salvation from guilt and from judgment. "The Law hath been our tutor (*παιδαγωγός*) to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith," (Gal. 3: 24). Into that environment of spiritual need and distress Jesus brought His glad tidings of salvation. "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17).

No attempt has been made in these pages to deal with the charge made by some apologists of the Pharisees, that they are misrepresented in the New Testament. In spite of the contentions of such writers as Montefiore, Abrahams, Herford, and Wernle, the presentation of Pharisaic Judaism in

the Scriptures is convincing. No one knew Pharisaism better than Paul the Apostle, and his view corroborates that contained in the Gospels.

(e) The Rivals of the Pharisees.

The Sadducees were the priestly aristocracy of the nation, and whenever the high priests are referred to in the Gospels, it is this sect that is meant. They lived on easy terms with the Gentile nations, and had no scruples against sharing in heathen customs. The "leaven of the Sadducees" against which Jesus warned His disciples (Matt. 16: 6), was probably their secular and worldly spirit. They followed a consistent policy of courting the favour of the ruling power, and trimmed their sails to catch every breeze. Unlike the Pharisees they lacked patriotism; and although they professed adherence to the Pentateuch in opposition to Rabbinic traditionalism, they were really indifferent to religion.

Until comparatively late in the ministry of Jesus, the Sadducees did not deign to take any notice of Him. Probably the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus first roused them from their lethargy. The Sadducean hierarchy claimed the Temple as their special domain; and on hearing that Jesus had asserted His authority by driving out those who were making the house of God a den of thieves (Mark 11: 15 ff.), they joined with the scribes and elders in challenging His right to perform so daring an action. "They said unto him, By what

authority doest thou these things? Or who gave thee this authority to do these things?" (Mark 11: 28). Jesus did not answer the question directly. He turned the tables on His questioners by asking them another question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? answer me" (Mark 11: 30). By this question Jesus put them on the horns of a dilemma. "They reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But should we say, From men - they feared the people: for all verily held John to be a prophet" (Mark 11: 31-32). Jesus' question was not merely a dialectical device; it was also an answer. It represented His ministry as being the continuation of John's, and it implied that His action in cleansing the Temple was of the same character as the Baptist's call to repentance, and that it had been performed by the same Divine authority which was admitted to have inspired the mission of John.

It was in direct connection with this encounter with the combined forces of the two great Jewish sects that Jesus uttered three of His parables. In the Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21: 28-32) Jesus contrasted the attitude of the Jewish leaders to that of the publicans and harlots whom they despised. The Parable of the Vineyard and the Husbandmen (Matt. 21: 33-46) was directed against the official classes, and pointed to the authority of God behind all human juris-

-diction. In this great parable Jesus set forth before the Jewish leaders their privileges, their unfaithfulness, and the doom awaiting them; and He also declared His own dignity and authority as the Son of God and the Head of the redeemed Israel. "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner: This was from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt.21: 42-43). In the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt.22: 1-14; Cf.Luke 14: 15-24), Jesus again pictured the ill-treatment of God's messengers by Israel, and the consequent rejection and punishment of those who despised God's blessings; and in it He also predicted the gathering into the kingdom of God of the outcasts and the heathen. "And the king saith to his servants, Go ye unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests," (Matt.22: 8-10. Cf.Luke 14: 23-24).

The high priests and the scribes made a joint effort to entrap Jesus by putting to Him the question of the tribute money; but the plot completely failed, (Luke 20: 19 ff.). Then the Sadducees who differed from the Pharisees in holding

that there is no future life, made an independent attempt to undermine the influence of Jesus by discrediting the doctrine of immortality which was commonly believed by the people. They brought to Him an absurd problem: If a woman married seven brothers, whose wife would she be in the resurrection? In reply, Jesus reproved them for their ignorance of the Scriptures and of God's power, and stated that in the resurrection, the marriage relation will not continue. Then He proceeded to prove from Scripture, in a Rabbinic manner, that the dead are raised. "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," (Matt.22: 31-32).

After the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council to discuss the situation; and at the instigation of Caiaphas, the high priest, a resolution was adopted to put Jesus to death. Caiaphas was no prophet, and his proposal was made in a selfish and worldly spirit; but the Evangelist John interprets his words as an unconscious prediction of the sacrificial death of Jesus, (John 11: 47-53).

The Sadducees took a full share in the trial and condemnation of Jesus; and in answer to the question of the Sadducean high priest, Jesus made a great declaration of His Messiahship. "The high priest said unto him, I adjure thee

by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt.26: 63-64). On hearing this, the Sanhedrim without further discussion condemned Jesus to death.

In order to compass the death of Jesus, the two great rival parties of the Jews forgot their differences for the time, and united their forces in an unholy alliance. The worldly, self-indulgent priest, nobles and the formal self-righteous Pharisees were alike determined that He should die. It was no sectional opposition that Jesus had to encounter: evil in all its forms concentrated its enmity against Him; and in much of His teaching there can be detected the atmosphere of conflict.

Greek and Roman and Jew all stood in need of Jesus; but they did not recognise that in Him and in His Gospel they could find the fulfilment of their highest longings and deliverance from all their sin. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not," (John 1: 10-11).

Chapter V.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD. -----

The Kingdom of God is the great subject of the teaching of Jesus. "After that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe in the Gospel," (Mark 1: 14-15). Professor A.B. Bruce called the Kingdom of God "an exhaustive category", under which all other categories of Jesus' teaching may be ranged. It is the leading thought of the Christian religion, and is frequently set forth in Scripture as equivalent to the whole Gospel, (Cf. Acts 28: 31). It is the great theme of the Synoptic Gospels, and it has a place, though less prominent, in the Gospel of St. John.

I. The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament.

The phrase "Kingdom of God" or "Kingdom of Heaven" does not occur in the Old Testament, but the idea of the Reign of God pervades the whole history and religion of Israel, and this Old Testament conception was one of the most formative influences in the environment of the Gospel. "How was the perfect kingdom prepared for? Not by mere predictions of it and references to it as a thing to come, nor by setting up a thing which was a shadow of it; but by setting itself up in as

perfect a form as was possible to begin with, awakening within men both a sense of dissatisfaction with its imperfections then, and lofty ideals of what its true condition would be, and thus kindling in them an enthusiasm which made them not only long for the perfect kingdom, but struggle for its attainment," (A.B. Davidson: "The Theology of the O.T." p.2). The Kingdom of God under Old Testament conditions and limitations must be understood as an organic development, with occasional set-backs, which was gradually growing towards the more perfect truth of the revelation of Jesus. Consequently features of the Old Testament conception of the Reign of God naturally appear in the Gospel of Jesus.

The development of this conception kept pace with the history and institutions of Israel, and it would present itself to the mind of Jesus along many lines of thought.

1. A Visible Organisation.

The Kingdom of God may be said to have entered upon its actual existence when the call came to Abraham. It became a more fully developed organisation in the time of Moses. Laws and institutions were then given to the Israelites by Jehovah and the people became knit to Him in the bonds of a sacred covenant. The idea of the Kingdom, with God as its Head, is clearly expressed in the message sent by Him to Israel: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all

peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod.19: 5-6).

2. The Davidic Kingdom.

The kingdom of David was great in power and extent according to the standards of the time; and it created an ideal which never failed to appeal to the imagination of subsequent generations. His kingdom was inseparably associated with the remarkable promise made to him by God: "When thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever..... And thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever," (2 Sam.7: 12 ff.). Even in the darkest days of Israel's history, the hope never died that the glory of the Davidic kingdom would yet be restored, (Cf.Jerem.22: 4).

3. The Kingdom in the Prophets and the Psalms.

The prophets and the psalmists emphasised leading characteristics of the Reign of God, which are also essential elements in the Gospel of the Kingdom published by Jesus.

(a) They proclaimed the righteousness of God. "I will make judgment the line, and righteousness the plummet," (Isaiah 28: 17). Amos also taught that the relations of God to His people are altogether moral, and that the unique bond between them made doubly sure His chastisement of their

transgressions: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities," (Amos 3: 2).

The belief of Israel in the righteousness of God was at first shaken by the calamity of the Exile; but it was re-established more firmly than ever by familiarity with the contemptible idolatries of Babylon, and by the wonderful deliverance from captivity which was accomplished by God's intervention, (Psalm 126: 1 ff.).

(b) Stress was also laid upon the universality of the Reign of God. As the God of righteousness, Jehovah was seen to be superior to all other gods, and consequently the conviction grew that the time would come when His sway would be extended over all the nations. "Sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth. God reigneth over the nations: God sitteth upon his holy throne" (Psalm 47: 6-8). "God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth," (Psalm 74: 12). As early as the eighth century before Christ, the prophet Isaiah, - or, as some hold, the prophet Micah, - predicted that many peoples would call to one another to go up to the mountain of Jehovah, that they might learn His ways and walk in His paths, (Isaiah 2: 2-4); Micah 4: 1-3); and in the Book of Isaiah there is a remarkable anticipation of the day when Israel will be "the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the

midst of the earth," (Isaiah 19: 24). A sublime picture of the world-wide extent of God's Reign is also presented in the prophet's vision of the procession of many nations to the light of Jerusalem and to the Holy One of Israel, (Isaiah 60: 1 ff.; Cf. Psalm 87: 4; 2: 8; 67: 7; 98: 3 etc.). In such prophecies as these Jesus would find thoughts in harmony with the universal scope of His own beneficent mission.

(c) In the Psalms and in the writings of the prophets, emphasis was also laid upon the spiritual nature of the ideal relation between God and His people. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the idea of the New Covenant which was proclaimed by Jeremiah, (Jerem. 31: 31-33). The description of a community yielding spontaneous obedience to God by an inward spiritual instinct is an ideal picture, but it forms an important stage in the development of the conception of the Reign of God. Though Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant "is not among those recorded to have been quoted by our Lord, it breathes emphatically His spirit, and is a striking declaration of the great principles of spontaneous personal service on which in His ministry He so frequently insists," (S.R. Driver: "Ideals of the Prophets" p.44).

(d) The Righteous Remnant.

In disappointment at the unbelief and disobedience of the nation as a whole, Isaiah founded a brotherhood of the most religious of the people to whom he committed the custody

of the Law and of his own teaching. "Bind up the testimony," he said, "seal the law among my disciples," (Isaiah 8: 16). The formation of this inner circle within the nation marked an important stage in the growth of the spiritual conception of the Kingdom of God, and contained in it the idea which was afterwards developed into the Christian Church. "The formation of this little community was a new thing in the history of religion. Till then, no one had dreamed of a fellowship of faith dissociated from all national forms," (Robertson Smith: "Prophets of Israel" p.175).

(e) The Blessings of the Kingdom.

The prophets associated the coming of the Reign of God with both material and spiritual prosperity. All enemies would be overcome, sin and sorrow would be done away: the people of Israel would be all righteous, and the other nations of the earth would bring their glory into the Kingdom of God, and share its blessings. These glowing predictions were far from being realised in the form and at the time the prophets expected; but the disappointing contrast between their prophecies and the actual events of history led the more spiritually-minded of the people to set their hopes not on material prosperity but on the reign of righteousness and truth.

4. The Kingdom in the Book of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel exercised a great influence on the form of the Gospel. In this book, which is partly

prophetic and partly apocalyptic, the idea of the Reign of God has a large place; and more than any other book of the Old Testament it gave definite form to the conception. The sublime thought running through the book is the triumph of God's Kingdom over the kingdoms of the world. In the Vision of the colossal statue the "stone cut out without hands" smote the image so that it was broken in pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, (Daniel 2: 34-35). "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever," (Daniel 2: 44). Again, in the Vision of the Four Beasts the great world-empires, which embodied the spirit of brute force, - the winged lion of Babylon, the Persian bear, the leopard of Media, and the Greek ten - horned beast with the iron teeth, - all declined and fell. Their dominion was taken away and was superseded by the universal, everlasting and divinely founded Kingdom which was given unto "one like unto a son of man," (Daniel 7: 14).

Daniel's conception of the Kingdom of God gave a concrete and definite expression to the high hopes which had been cherished by all the prophets. He conceived the Kingdom as being supernatural in origin, universal in scope, everlasting in duration, and he represented it as being the consummation

of the world's history. Even the world-empires that defy God and oppress His people were shown to be under the sovereignty of the true God, and to be enacting a part in the great drama which is to issue in the universal establishment of His Kingdom. Daniel contemplated the events of the whole world in relation to God's great plans; and more systematically than any of the Hebrew prophets who preceded him, he wrought out a philosophy of universal history.

Jesus, pondering over His own great plan of carrying forward the Reign of God on the earth to a new stage of development and to a glorious victory over opposing forces, found in the Old Testament noble conceptions and glowing hopes which He saw fit to use as a mould and vehicle for the glad tidings of His Gospel.

II. The Messianic King.

No part of the environment of Jesus is of greater interest and importance than the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah. The predictions, the institutions and the ritual of the Old Testament and the history of the people of Israel all contributed to the fulfilment of God's gracious purpose of establishing His Kingdom upon the earth. "That gracious purpose was, so to speak, individualised, and the Kingdom actually established in the Messiah..... From this point of view the whole Old Testament becomes the perspective in which

the figure of the Messiah stands out..... It is in this sense that we would understand the two sayings of the Talmud: All the prophets prophesied only of the days of the Messiah, and, The world was created only for the Messiah." (Edersheim: "Life and Times of Jesus" I, pp.160-163).

This estimate of the religion and history of Israel is profoundly true. It sets forth the eternal and universal significance of Jesus, and it is in harmony with His teaching regarding His own Person and Vocation. While the figure of the Messiah does not always occupy a prominent place even in the Messianic expectations, and at intervals fades out of sight altogether, yet it remains true that the spiritual meaning and purpose of the national and religious history of Israel can be understood only when it is studied in relation to the Person and Gospel of Jesus.

The conception of the Messiah which is most prominent in the Old Testament, and which exercised the greatest influence upon the contemporaries of Jesus was that of the Warrior King of the family of David. In the Prophets and in the Book of Psalms the hope of deliverance and of victory for Israel is bound up with the royal House of David.

As Jesus brooded over His Divine Vocation many of the great passages of the Hebrew Scriptures would help to give definite form to the thought of His Messiahship which came into His mind. The "Book of Immanuel", which forms part of the prophecies of Isaiah, (Isaiah: 6 - 9: 7), the same prophet's

idyllic picture of the Davidic King and the glory of His Kingdom of righteousness and peace, (Isaiah 11: 1-10), Jeremiah's prediction of the "Shoot" from the root of David who would bring deliverance to His people, and whose rule would be distinguished by judgment and justice (Jerem.23: 5-8), Ezekiel's conception of the Shepherd-king, (Ezek.34: 23 ff.), and Zechariah's description of the Advent of the Messianic King, not as a warrior but as Prince of Peace, (Zech.9: 9-10), - these and other passages of the kind would often be in the mind of Jesus. The "King Psalms" (e.g.Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 110; 132) also give a most exalted description of the Messiah's character and rule; and though they may not all have been written with a deliberate Messianic purpose, they were prophetic of the Messiah, and the constant use of them familiarised Jesus and the people of His race with the Messianic hopes. As a factor in moulding the Messianic conceptions of the Jewish people and the environment of the Gospel of Jesus, the Messianic Psalms are of the greatest importance; and their significance in this connection is quite independent of the historical circumstances which were their original setting.

Daniel's vision of "one like unto a son of man" (Daniel 7: 13-14) may confidently be regarded as one of the formative influences in the mind and Gospel of Jesus; but perhaps the most important of all was Isaiah's picture of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, (Isaiah 52: 13-15; 53 etc.).

The expectation of the Messianic King persisted even when the Jewish people had no king of their own race, and long after the House of David had sunk into obscurity; and the perennial source of that expectation was the confident hope expressed by the ancient psalmists and prophets. In the Maccabean period, the Messianic hope grew faint, probably because the people were preoccupied by the struggle against Hellenic tyranny, and because for a time the brilliant victories of the Maccabees transferred attention from the future to the present. After a period of partial eclipse the hope of the Messianic King revived; and a remarkable picture of the Messiah is found in the "Psalms of Solomon". These writings probably date from the first century before Christ, and they are of great importance in the history of the Messianic Hope. In the seventeenth of the "Psalms of Solomon" occurs the passage: "A righteous king, and taught of God is he that reigneth over them; and there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king is the Lord Messiah. He shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply unto himself gold and silver for war, nor by ships shall he gather confidence for the day of battle..... He shall bless the people of the Lord with wisdom and gladness. He himself also is pure from sin."

This picture of the Messianic King indicates that in some Jewish circles a spiritual ideal was cherished at the time

of Jesus; and it was in such circles that there moved devout persons like the parents of John the Baptist, and the aged Simeon who greeted the infant Jesus in the Temple, and the Virgin Mary herself. Those who cherished the more spiritual forms of the Messianic hope appear to have been comparatively few in number and to have exercised no great influence in the national life of their time. But in this pious circle, Jesus found a congenial environment, and in all likelihood His consciousness of His Messiahship, and His plans for the achievement of His Messianic mission would be matured through the discussion of Messianic problems with the most devout of His contemporaries, (Cf. John 1: 39; Matt. 16: 13 ff.).

III. John the Baptist.

In the preaching of John the Baptist the Reign of God occupies a very important place. He lifted up his voice in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matt. 3: 2). Whether the expressions "the Kingdom", "the Kingdom of God", "the Kingdom of Heaven" were in popular use before his time is uncertain; but the enthusiasm which was aroused by the Baptist's message indicates that the idea already held a prominent place in the thoughts and hopes of the people.

John's great mission was to call the people back to the Word of God and the Will of God, and to an ethical and spiritual conception of His Kingdom. He deliberately assumed the guise of a prophet, and spoke in the manner of a prophet.

Referring to the Baptist the author of "Ecce Homo" wrote:

"It was an occurrence of the first magnitude, more important far than war or revolution, when a new prophet actually appeared.....He made his way back to the hidden fountains." ("Ecce Homo" chap.I.).

The Baptist's aim was to make the people understand more vividly the nearness and the holiness of God, and the necessity of repentance and of moral purification on the part of those who claimed to be God's people.

In his preaching of the Kingdom, and even in his insistence upon its being very near, John was expressing little more than the beliefs commonly current in his day, and fostered by the imagery of the popular Apocalyptic; but at the same time his message was prophetic, not apocalyptic, and was profoundly ethical. The inspiration of his teaching was drawn directly from the Hebrew prophets, and not from "the fantastic imaginings of the Book of Enoch," (Headlam: "Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ" p.164). The rite of baptism, to which John summoned the people, was symbolic of repentance and of cleansing from sin, and was prophetic of the baptism of greater efficacy which was to be bestowed by the Messiah Himself."He came into all the region round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (Luke 3: 3).

The importance of the ministry of John as a preparation for the Gospel, is attested by Jesus Himself. He frequently alluded to John in words of high commendation; and this

testimony is the best proof of the value of John's achievement in preparing the way for the preaching of the Gospel. Jesus regarded John as the Elijah, who in popular expectation was to return before the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth; and the estimate which Jesus formed of John as His own Forerunner was probably an important part of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus which expressed itself in His Gospel of the Kingdom and in His Messianic claims. Jesus definitely connected His own message with that of John. As John Knox took up the message of the martyred George Wishart, so, at the outset, Jesus took up the message of John the Baptist. "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel," (Mark 1: 14-15).

But while Jesus associated Himself with the prophetic teaching of John, it soon became evident that with Jesus a new era had begun. The Baptist belonged to the old order: Jesus established a new order. "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he", (Matt. 11: 11). The relation of Jesus to John is an interesting illustration of His method in turning to account the conditions of His environment, while at the same time, - untrammelled by the influences around Him, - He proclaimed His Gospel with

originality and power.

IV. Contemporary Conception of the Kingdom of God.

The form of the Gospel of Jesus was influenced profoundly by the belief current in His time among the masses of the people. It was because the conception of the Kingdom was a popular and familiar one that He cast His divine message into this form. He found the mind of the people under the spell of the great hope of a good time coming; and the name in common use for the good time and all its benefits, was the Kingdom of God. The spirit of expectation had been intensified by the preaching of the Baptist; and all were waiting eagerly with a vague but fervent hope for great events, just as many entertained great expectations on the eve of the French Revolution.

In the Gospels there is clear evidence of an expectant attitude on the part of the people, The Song of Zacharias (Luke 1: 68 ff.), the "Nunc Dimittis" of Simeon, who was looking for the consolation of Israel (Luke 2: 25 ff.), the company of "all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2: 38), the Baptist's proclamation of the speedy advent of the Kingdom (Matt. 3: 2), the repeated Eureka's of the first disciples of Jesus (John 1: 41, 45), the ready acceptance of Jesus by Nathanael as the Son of God, the King of Israel (John 1: 49), the words of the woman of Samaria:

"I know that Messiah cometh" (John 4: 25), the question of the multitude: "When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?" (John 7: 31), Martha's conviction that Jesus, her Friend, is "the Christ the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world" (John 11: 27), the question of the Pharisees as to when the Kingdom of God is to come, (Luke 17: 20), the wistful utterance of a fellow-guest of Jesus at a Pharisee's banquet: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14: 15), the ambitious request of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. 20: 21), the Jewish expectation, explicitly recorded, that "The kingdom of God was immediately to appear" (Luke 19: 11), the enthusiastic acclamation of those who accompanied Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David" (Mark 11: 10), the description of Joseph of Arimathea as one "who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15: 43), the prayer of the penitent thief: "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom" (Luke 23: 42), the disappointed hope of the two disciples who were joined by the Risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus, - "We were hoping that it was he which should redeem Israel" (Luke 24: 21); and the question of the disciples in their last interview with Jesus before the Ascension: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1: 6), - are all evidence of the high expectations which widely pre-

-vailed in Palestine during the ministry of Jesus.

The Kingdom of God had been the theme of Psalmists and of Prophets. The Providence of God in the history of the Jewish people had been preparing through all the past ages for the coming of the Kingdom. It was from the Prophets and the Psalmists that the people of Jesus' life-time had learned to look forward to a better time, and to fix their hopes upon God's Kingdom. The form of government under which the nation of Israel had at one time lived was a theocracy; and the people confidently looked forward to the renewal in an enhanced form of the glories of the best period in their past history. "We see, then, that Jesus in choosing for His great subject the Kingdom of God, was placing His teaching in line, not only with the expectations of His hearers, but with the whole course of history and prophecy recorded in the Old Testament. In other words, He was making use of, and turning to account, the long preparation which God, as we believe, had made for that Kingdom and for His coming. He was entering into His own" (Dr. James Robertson: "Our Lord's Teaching" p.19).

The popular expectations in the time of Jesus took many forms. The majority of the people had crude and worldly ideas of the coming Kingdom, and looked forward to the overthrow of the Roman suzerainty, the restoration of Jewish independence, and the establishment of a wide Empire, after the manner of the kingdom of David and Solomon. In this form

the hope had little or no ethical and religious significance. It was only a political ambition; and it was such a dream as this that led Judas of Gamala and his Galileans into revolt, and caused many similar insurrections.

Occasionally the ambition of temporal sovereignty was combined with lofty ideals of holiness and righteousness. In the "Psalms of Solomon," XVII, there is an earnest and brilliant expression of this type of the national hope: "But as for us, we will hope in God our Saviour, for the might of our God endureth to everlasting with mercy. And the kingdom of our God is unto everlasting over the heathen in judgment. Thou, O Lord, didst choose David to be king over Israel, and didst swear unto him touching his seed for ever, that his kingdom should not fail before thee.....He shall gather together a holy people whom he shall rule in righteousness and shall judge the tribes of the people, that hath been sanctified by the Lord his God. And he shall not suffer iniquity to lodge in their midst; and none that knoweth wickedness shall dwell with them. He shall purge Jerusalem and make it holy, even as it was in the days of old. The Lord, he is our king from henceforth and even for evermore." (quoted by Headlam: "Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ" pp.246-247).

On the other hand, the history of the Hasmonaean dynasty had been such a disappointment to the best minds of the nation, that it was recognised by those who truly feared

God, that the redemption of Israel and the establishment of the divine Sovereignty could not be bound up with the restoration of a dominion of that kind. Consequently in the minds of many the hope of the Kingdom of God took the form of apocalyptic visions.

V. The Attitude of Jesus to the various Conceptions of the Kingdom.

The attitude of Jesus to the various conceptions of the Kingdom of God has a negative aspect and a positive aspect; and it may be illustrated by reference to four incidents of His life in Palestine.

1. The Temptation.

From the beginning of His public career Jesus resolutely thrust from Him the idea of founding a world-empire. This is the natural interpretation of His triumph over the temptation to grasp the sovereignty of the world by unworthy means. "The devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matt.4: 8-10). In accordance with the principles on which Jesus resisted this temptation, His teaching is consistently opposed to a material and political conception of the Kingdom of God. His use of the alternative title,

Kingdom of Heaven, may have had as its motive the elevation of the thoughts and ambitions of His hearers above the level of worldly conquest and material pleasure into the sphere of spiritual realities.

In the time of Jesus, Palestine was seething with political unrest; and on the least provocation, a revolt against the Roman Government would have taken place, (Cf. John 11: 48 ff.). Wild insurrections were breaking out from time to time. Before, and during, and after the life of Jesus, revolts against Rome took place in Galilee. The nation at that period was like an intermittent volcano, sometimes quiescent, but holding within it slumbering fires, which might at any moment break out into open eruption. In the time of Jesus, there had arisen the fraternity of desperate patriots, called the Zealots, who had sworn undying enmity against their foreign rulers and who were watching for an opportunity to kindle the fires of rebellion. The object of their ambition was the power and splendour of the Davidic kingdom on a world scale; and they had no scruple as to the means that should be employed.

In resisting the temptation to world-dominion, Jesus finally rejected all such ideals and ambitions as these; and though He showed His wide sympathies by calling a Zealot into the company of the Apostles, His Gospel was the antithesis of the Zealot policy. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," He said, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the

meeke: for they shall inherit the earth." "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God."

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," (Matt.5: 3 ff.).

In these Beatitudes Jesus taught principles designedly contrary to the prevailing conceptions and ambitions.

2. The mistaken purpose of the multitude.

After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand in the wilderness, the people "were about to come and take him by force, to make him king," but He "withdrew again into the mountain himself alone," (John 6: 15). He resolutely resisted the mistaken purpose of the multitude; and when He saw that the disciples were in danger of being carried away by the enthusiasm of the crowd, He straightway "constrained" (ἤν α ἴ γ κ α σ ε ν) them "to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude away" (Mark 6: 45).

3. In the Synagogue at Nazareth.

St.Luke places at the beginning of the ministry the visit of Jesus to the synagogue at Nazareth; and although the Lukan arrangement may not be chronologically correct, it is justified on the ground that the pronouncement at Nazareth was a programme of the life-work of Jesus. The whole Gospel is in harmony with the words which Jesus then read from the prophecies of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4: 18-19; Isaiah 61: 1-2).

The manifesto which Jesus thus proclaimed at Nazareth shows that His conception of the Kingdom of God was fundamentally spiritual. The words of the prophet primarily promised the restoration of the Jews from the Exile of Babylon, and one of the conditions of the restoration was God's pardon of the people's sin. In the Return from the Exile, the glowing visions of the prophet did not find complete fulfilment; but Jesus said: "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." He claimed to be the Servant of God who had come in fulfilment of the Messianic prediction to bring spiritual liberty and light and healing to mankind. Jesus spiritualised and idealised the prediction and hope of the prophet, and He lifted the ambitions of those who heard Him to a new spiritual level. "All bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth," (Luke 4: 22). How different this Gospel was from the popular conceptions:- no summons to revolt, and yet the proclamation of a spiritual revolution. He took the prevalent religious ideas as the framework of His message, but in using them, He dematerialised them.

4. The Royal Entry into Jerusalem.

The dramatic episode of the Royal Progress of Jesus into Jerusalem a few days before the Crucifixion, is in itself proof that He claimed to be the Messianic King. He deliberately made Himself the centre of an acted parable, and put Himself in the position of fulfilling literally the prediction of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass," (Zech.9: 9); and He accepted as His due the plaudits of the multitude: "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest," (Mark 11: 9-10). This striking scene was an impressive announcement by Jesus of His Messianic claims. It was also a dramatic representation of some of the truths and principles of the Kingdom He was inaugurating, and it can be fully understood only in connection with the Crucifixion which followed it within a few days. Jesus was coming to the City of the great King, not on a war-horse, but riding on the colt of an ass, after the manner of Eastern kings in times of peace, and bearing with Him blessings far superior to the highest dreams and ambitions of His nation. But Jerusalem had chosen worldly ideals; and, though the crowds thronging the City for the feast of the Passover were carried away by a transient enthusiasm, and

hailed Him as the Messiah, yet the leaders of Judaism were resolute and bitter in their hostility, and were maturing their plot for His destruction. As Jesus looked from the Mount of Olives upon Jerusalem, He wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." (Luke 19: 41-44). Jerusalem rejected the Heavenly Kingdom, the reign of God, and in its ambition to regain a worldly kingdom, lost all. Unlike Jesus, the leaders of Judaism grasped at earthly glory, and for the sake of it fell down and worshipped the devil, (Matt.4: 8-9).

These four incidents in the life of Jesus are of great significance in the interpretation of His Gospel of the Kingdom. They show positively and negatively, how He acted towards His environment, and how He continued in spite of the bitterest opposition to proclaim the Kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy and love, in face of the crude, materialistic, and worldly conceptions of His age. These typical incidents also reveal very clearly how Jesus identified the Messianic Kingdom of God with His own Person.

VI. The Gospel of the Kingdom.

1. The use Jesus made of the conception.

At least three successive stages can be traced in the relation of Jesus to the conception of the Kingdom of God.

(1) Adoption.

The idea of the Kingdom in the religion and history of Israel, and in contemporary thought and ambition, formed an important part of the environment of Jesus; and He decided to employ it and its familiar nomenclature as the leading vehicle of His message. "The name employed by Jesus for the new thing is old. It indicates an attitude less antagonistic to the earlier rudimentary forms of religion than that of Paul, and of the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It expresses affinity rather than antagonism, introducing a new world with the least possible shock to old associations. It was a felicitous suggestive name for the blessing of the New Testament, used with full consciousness of its significance, expressive of eternal truth, and to be reverted to throughout the Christian ages for instruction and inspiration." (A.B. Bruce: "The Kingdom of God" p.45.).

(2) Discrimination and Adaptation.

The four typical incidents of the life of Jesus which have just been considered, show how He selected some

of the elements of His environment as suitable to His purpose, and rejected others. He exercised an acute and resolute discrimination.

Then, having chosen His materials, He adapted them to the new message which He proclaimed through them. His doctrine of the Kingdom contained an element altogether new. It was a Gospel, - good news. It was the revelation of truth which had been kept secret through all preceding ages. To His disciples Jesus said: "Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11). The mystery was the counsel of God, formerly unknown, - especially His plan of redemptive love.

Thus Jesus adapted the old ideas and nomenclature of the Kingdom, so that they became the vehicle of a new Gospel, which filled those who accepted it with joy, ~~and such~~ as other men did not have. They rejoiced in the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed, even though the popular ambitions associated with the Kingdom of God were not fulfilled. Though Rome still ruled, and taxes had to be paid to Caesar, sinners were entering the Kingdom at the call of the Gospel, and were finding in it greater blessings than had been conceived in the popular Messianic expectations.

(3) Application.

Having adopted the conception of the Kingdom and having selected and modified the elements in it which fitted His purpose, Jesus brought it into touch with the circum-

-stances around Him. Having taken into His hands, as it were, this plastic conception, He moulded it like potter's clay into various forms corresponding to the aspect of truth which each particular situation or hearer required. Thus environment both furnished the conception and exercised a constant influence on the form, in which Jesus employed it in His teaching.

2. Various Aspects of the Kingdom.

Jesus gave no formal definition of the Kingdom of God. He assumed that His hearers were familiar with the idea and phraseology, and that there was no need of an explanation. The fundamental idea in the Gospel of the Kingdom is the Reign of God in the heart of man. The Greek word, βασιλεία, may mean not merely a local sphere of dominion, but also supremacy or kingship. Interpreted in this sense the Kingdom of God means allegiance to God and obedience to His Law, and its coming is possible independently of political circumstances. Jesus' conception of the Reign of God is akin to the more abstract sense of βασιλεία. St. Paul described it when he wrote: "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. 14: 17), and the same idea is suggested in the prayer which Jesus taught His disciples: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth" (Matt. 6: 10). The Kingdom of God comes through the

doing of His will amongst men.

Jesus brought the idea of the Reign of God into contact with the life of the world and of the individual; and it necessarily assumed different forms according to the circumstances to which it was applied. The following examples show how different aspects of the Kingdom were emphasised by Jesus.

(a) The spiritual nature of the Kingdom was taught in special reference to the Pharisees' expectation of a political kingdom. "He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17: 20-21 Cf. John 3: 3, 5).

(b) The ethical and spiritual qualities required for membership of the Kingdom were described on the occasion of the disciples' rebuke of those who were bringing little children to Jesus. "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein," (Mark 10: 14-15). Again, when the disciples asked, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus "called to Him a little child, and set him in the midst of them and said, Verily I say unto you,

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matt.18: 1-4).

(c) The summum bonum.

In contrast to Gentile worldliness, Jesus bade His followers strive towards the Kingdom of God as the chief aim of life. "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matt.6: 33.).

(d) The gradual growth of the Kingdom.

As an encouragement of those who might become impatient at the delay in the coming of the Kingdom, Jesus taught that it can come only through a long historical process, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4: 28 Cf. Matt.13: 1 ff.; 13: 31-32, and 33),

(e) The universality of the Kingdom.

In opposition to Jewish prejudice, Jesus taught a universal Gospel which represented the Kingdom of God as attainable by all ranks and classes and races. "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt.21: 31); and He warned the unbelieving Jews that though they were by race the sons of the Kingdom, they were forfeiting their rights by their lack of faith. "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness," (Matt.8: 11-12 Cf. Matt.21: 43).

(f) The gift of God.

Sordid anxiety is the background of the truth that it is the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father to bestow the Kingdom upon His people as a gift, (Luke 12: 32).

(g) Riches and the Kingdom.

The inordinate love of riches suggested the warning that those who are rich in this world's wealth are not a privileged class in God's Kingdom and that a rich man has more than ordinary difficulty in entering the Kingdom of God, (Mark 10: 23). Examples of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely; and they show that the Gospel of the Kingdom owes many of its features to the influence of the circumstances in which Jesus lived and taught.

The method which Jesus followed in applying a great truth to the varying conditions of His environment, naturally resulted in apparent inconsistency. The Kingdom is described as already present: "Enter ye in by the narrow gate" (Matt. 7: 13-14), "the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17: 21), and sometimes it is projected into the future: "Till they see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9: 1). It is an object of striving: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force" (Matt. 11: 12), and it is also a possession to be inherited: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25: 34).

The common denominator which unifies the various meanings and aspects of the Kingdom in the usage of Jesus, is the spiritual idea of the Reign of God in the life of man. It is a spiritual commonwealth in which men love God as His true children, grow like Him in character, and share in the blessings He gives. It is not necessary to force all the aspects of the Kingdom into a consistent scheme; for they are as various as the character and circumstances of the children of men, to whom the Gospel was proclaimed; and in the imagery of the Kingdom there is a symbolic or poetic element, which is indifferent to logical consistency.

3. Jesus the King.

Jesus proclaimed that He was the Messiah of Jewish expectation; and in adopting the conception of the Kingdom of God as the great category of His teaching He placed Himself in line with the Messianic hope which looked forward to the restoration of the Davidic kingdom.

In outward appearance Jesus had little resemblance to an earthly king. He came from a humble home: He possessed little of the world's goods: He did not marshall an army, but sought the establishment of His rule in the hearts of the children of men. Pilate was quick to discern that Jesus was no rival of his master at Rome, the Emperor Tiberius. "Thou, art thou the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, placing

an emphasis of surprise or contempt upon the pronoun. "My kingdom is not of this world," answered Jesus; "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," (John 18: 36).

Yet Jesus was a **king**, and clearly claimed to be so. He was a greater king than Solomon - greater not only in wisdom but in every quality of royalty. The history of the ministry of Jesus and the record of His Gospel show that He lived and taught with a kingly dignity and authority, albeit His idea of royalty was contrary to popular conceptions. He called men to follow Him and to become members of His Kingdom: He instituted new laws of higher authority than the code of Moses; He asserted His right to judge and to forgive; and when He issued His commands to the mysterious powers of sickness and disease, and to the mighty forces of outward nature, He was instantly obeyed.

Thus Jesus fashioned many of His acts and words on the pattern of royalty; but it was a royalty which declined many of the powers and prerogatives of an earthly king, and yet, at the same time, claimed authority higher than David ever possessed. "Christ in describing Himself as a king, and at the same time as king of the Kingdom of God - in other words, as a king representing the Majesty of the invisible King of a theocracy - claimed the character first of Founder, next of Legislator, thirdly, in a certain high and peculiar sense, of Judge, of a new divine society."

("Ecce Homo" p.40). He proclaimed Himself to be the Messianic "King of Israel", and He exercised the functions of "the Son of God" (John 1: 49).

CHAPTER VI.

APOCALYPTIC.

I. The Rise of the Apocalyptic Literature.

The great prophets from Amos to Ezekiel and Deutero -
- Isaiah conceived the Sovereignty of God as being both present
and future. Jehovah was already King, but His Kingdom in its
perfection was described as lying in the future. The existence
in the world of heathen powers, hostile to God's purposes and
to His people, fostered the belief that the ideal state would
be established at some future time, when king and people would
do God's will (Ezekiel 37:24), and the evil forces that opposed
and defied God would be punished and overthrown. The Day of
the Lord was coming, when heathen nations would be called to
account, and the ungodly in Israel and Judah would also be
chastised (Amos ch.1 and 2; Amos 5 : 20; Joel 2 : 1 - 2).

The cruel tyranny of Babylon sharpened the idea of
antagonism between the Sovereignty of God and the forces of
heathenism. Two kingdoms were seen in opposition,- Israel,
the Kingdom of God, on the one hand, and the hostile heathen
powers on the other.

The great patriotic struggle of the Jewish nation
against the violent persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-
164 B.C.) developed to a much greater degree the thought of

aggressive powers of evil, with which the Kingdom of God was necessarily brought into conflict, and under the pressure of affliction, the conception of the Kingdom of God as already present, gave place more emphatically to the thought of it as still future.

The distresses and struggles of the Maccabean period had a profound and lasting effect upon Jewish thought and religion. The Jewish Apocalyptic Literature was born of the affliction of this time; and through all its development, it continued to bear the marks of its origin. Clinging to the conviction of the righteousness of God and the ultimate victory of goodness, the Apocalyptists projected into the future the triumph of God's Kingdom which was despaired of under the Hellenist tyranny.

The great struggle of the Jews against the Seleucid Empire was not merely a national crisis, but still more a spiritual crisis. The Jews were faced with the alternative of the sword or of denying their faith and becoming heathen. In choosing to fight and suffer and die, rather than accept heathenism, the Jewish race rose to a higher level of devotion to the true God and the true religion than they had ever before displayed. In the Maccabean struggle they were consciously fighting for the honour of God and for the right of His Sovereignty in the world. However trying and mysterious were the distresses through which they were called to pass, the persecuted people of God clung tenaciously to the

conviction and hope that God would yet arise, - it might be soon, - for the vindication of His cause and the deliverance of His people. "Here you have the other side of the picture of the Jewish world-religion, the other side of the struggle of ideas between Jewish Religion and Greek Civilisation, and this is the expectation of the Kingdom of God and the belief that its Coming is imminent. The Kingdom of God - that is the central idea. It is the New Age, the new state of things that will come about when the great agony has ended by God's victorious intervention on behalf of His saints, when He comes or sends His Representative to come, to set the world right". (F.C.Burkitt : "Jewish and Christian Apocalypses" p.7).

The Book of Daniel is the earliest and most important of the Jewish Apocalyptic writings, and in it there appear new developments in the conception of the Kingdom of God. It marks the beginning of a new phase in religious speculation. This remarkable book was probably composed during the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes in the period between the early post - exilic and the early post-Biblical Jewish Literature. It represents the transition from the prophetic to the Apocalyptic writing, and exhibits points of agreement with both these types of literature. In common with the prophets, Daniel wrote with a vivid sense of contemporary events, and delivered a message designed to strengthen the courage and endurance and faith of the men of his own time. His book throbs with intense patriotism and fervid religious

devotion; and it is because of the necessities of his own time that he gives utterance to the steadfast convictions and heroic loyalties of his own heart, and by this means appeals to the patriotism and piety of his fellow-countrymen. He clearly describes the assault of Antiochus Epiphanes, "the little horn", upon the Jewish religion, (Dan. 7:8, 21, 24-25; 8: 23; 11: 28 ff.), and he depicts the wonderful deliverance from desperate circumstances, which God achieves and will yet achieve for His believing and faithful people. (Dan. 3:26; 4: 37; 6:23; 7:26-27; 8:25; 12:3, 13).

On the other hand, the Book of Daniel belongs to Apocalyptic Literature. It deals with dreams and symbols and calculations and monsters: the author despairs of the world around; and he looks for deliverance, not through the gradual triumph of good over evil in the existing world-order, but through a sudden and miraculous intervention of God in human history, whereby the kingdoms of this world will be cast down by an overwhelming cataclysm, and the Kingdom of God will be universally and finally established.

Daniel's conception of the Kingdom of God and of such other conceptions as the "Son of Man" (7:13), the Judgment (7:9 ff.), the Resurrection (12:1-3), exercised a profound influence upon subsequent Apocalyptic Literature. Later writers filled in the outlines which Daniel had drawn, and worked out in detail the truths he had adumbrated.

With the exception of Daniel in the Old Testament and the Revelation of St. John in the New Testament, almost all the Jewish Apocalyptic Literature is outside the canon of Scripture. Germs of Apocalyptic thought exist in the prophets. Most of them speak of "a day of the Lord" (Cf. Isaiah 13:6; Joel 2:1 ff.; Zeph. 1:14; Isaiah 65:17); but in the prophetic writings, the purposes of God are wrought out through human agents, while in Apocalyptic, God accomplishes His will by His own immediate action.

Apocalyptic took the place of Prophecy, and it came into existence when the age of the prophets had passed away. A psalmist of the Maccabean period uttered the lament: "There is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long". (Psalm 74:9); and Apocalyptic was the answer to the yearning of many hearts for guidance and comfort in a time of sore affliction.

The Apocalyptist was a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams, who professed to record revelations which had been granted to him by God's Spirit regarding the hidden things of the future both in this life and in the life to come. (Cf. Rev. 1:1-2). Though greatly inferior to the prophets the Apocalyptists represented the most spiritually-minded section of the Jewish people in the two pre-Christian centuries. They set their hopes on the promises of God and the coming of the Messiah, rather than upon the observance of the Law, as interpreted by the Tradition of the Elders. It was to

this class in the nation that such New Testament saints as the parents of John the Baptist and the Baptist himself and the Apostles belonged. The Apocalyptists were the upholders of a spiritual religion in line with the teaching of the prophets, in opposition to the legalism and formalism of the Scribes, and the wordliness and moral laxity of the ^ASaducees, and while many of their ideas are crude and mistaken and far short of Christianity, yet they rendered a service to religion in keeping alive the truth that salvation is to be found not in man himself, but in God.

The dates assigned to the Apocalyptic writings are to a large extent conjectural; but it is not a matter of first importance to decide when they were written. Even though many of them reached their written form after the time of Jesus, the ideas they contain were current in His time, and may be regarded as an important part in His environment.

The Book of Enoch (170 B.C. - 64 B.C.), the Sibylline Oracles (140 B.C. and later), the Psalms of Solomon (63-48 B.C.), the Assumption of Moses (early in first century A.D.), the Apocalypse of Baruch (50-90 A.D.), the Fourth Book of Ezra (latter part of first century A.D.), the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (130 B.C. - 300 A.D.) are the most important relics of the Jewish Apocalyptic Literature which have survived to this day. They had a strong hold of the popular mind and the influence of the ideas in these books can be traced in some of the forms into which Jesus cast His message.

As a type of composition Jewish Apocalyptic is practically unique in the literature of the world. It is important to keep in mind some of its characteristics in order to understand its relation to the Hebrew prophets on the one hand, and to the teaching of Jesus on the other.

(1) PSEUDONYMITY.

The writings were published under some illustrious name of an earlier period, probably with the purpose of securing a hearing. Unlike the Prophet the Apocalyptist kept his own personality entirely concealed, and by his pseudonymity he placed himself on a lower level than the Prophet. He was conscious that the age of the Prophets had passed away: there was no open vision and he could not claim to speak with the authority of a messenger who had come in the name of the Lord. He made use of the prophetic hopes and promises and set them forth in a new guise. "Apocalyptic as we know it through the surviving books, bears the same relation to prophecy as Rabbinism bears to the Mosaic Law. In both cases we have to do with interpretation and corollary". (Scott: "The Kingdom and the Messiah", p.11). Being aware of his lack of originality and authority, the Apocalyptist sent forth his writings under the glamour of a borrowed name.

(2) ESCHATOLOGICAL.

The subject matter of the Apocalyptic Literature consists of the problems of eschatology. It looks beyond things present to things to come, - to a new heaven and a new

earth; and it seeks to solve the difficulties of the present by hope in the future.

(3) SYMBOLISM.

Apocalyptic Literature makes great use of symbolism; and many of its symbols are derived from the Old Testament. Particularly whatever is abnormal, awesome, and mysterious in the Hebrew Scriptures was adopted by Apocalyptic and used symbolically. Catastrophic events like the destruction of Sodom and the fall of Babylon (Gen.19:24, Isaiah 13 and 14), the theophanies by which some of the prophets were called to their life-work (Isaiah 6; Ezek.1), the predictions regarding Gog and Magog (Ezek.38 and 39), the visions in Joel and Zechariah, and the dreams, monsters, and calculations in Daniel supplied much of the imagery of the Apocalypses; and the writers gave free play to their own imagination in piecing together these Old Testament figures in an endless variety of combinations.

(4) PESSIMISM and OPTIMISM.

While resolutely clinging to the conviction of ultimate triumph the Apocalyptists were consistently pessimistic regarding the present world. The predictions of the prophets had not been fulfilled, and there was no hope left in the existing order of things. Deliverance could come only through a sudden intervention of God in the world's affairs - a catastrophic "day of the Lord" which was expected to come almost at once.

Apocalyptic has been called the literature of despair; but while it despairs of the present and, the immediate

future, it does not despair of the end. It expresses an unswerving faith in God, in His sovereignty, and in His remembrance of His people. The despair of the present world which drives some men to cynicism and to unbelief brings the man of true religion closer than ever to God. So it was with Job, who expressed the triumphant faith: "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him" (Job 13:15). The Apocalyptic Literature similarly expresses the faith that clings to God through darkness and the hope which as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, enters into that which is within the veil. (Heb. 6:19). The faith of Jewish Apocalyptic was inherited by Christianity, and it found its highest expression in the triumphant optimism of the Book of Revelation.

(5) THE NEW AGE.

In the theology of the Apocalyptic Literature the conception of the Kingdom of God has a surprisingly small place. With the exception of a few isolated references to the Kingdom, the idea is merged in the conception of a new age. The course of the world's history is cut into two distinct periods, - one of the periods is drawing to a close, and the new age in which old things shall have passed away and all things become new, is shortly to dawn upon the despairing world. The new age is to be ushered in by a dreadful cataclysm after the manner of the Flood, the destruction of Sodom, the plagues of Egypt or the doom of Sennacherib's army. The

final, scene will take place at Jerusalem which will be fiercely assailed by the powers of heathenⁿism, and for whose deliverance God will suddenly and miraculously manifest Himself.

(6) THE LIMITATIONS OF THE APOCALYPSES.

The Apocalypses as a whole do not furnish attractive or profitable reading. They are of little value as literature or as contributions to thought. "If one goes to the Apocalyptic Literature for edification one does not get it. No, the value of the Apocalypses is of quite a different order. They are the most characteristic survival of what I will venture to call, with all its narrowness and its incoherence the heroic age of Jewish history, the age when the nation attempted to realise in action the part of the peculiar people of God... We study the Apocalypses to learn how our spiritual ancestors hoped against hope that God would make all right in the end". (F.C.Burkitt: "Jewish and Christian Apocalypses" p.p. 15-16).

II THE ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL.

There can be no doubt that the conceptions and symbolism contained in the Jewish Apocalypses were familiar to some circles of the contemporaries of Jesus and to Jesus Himself. The Epistle of Jude assumes that in quoting from the Book of Enoch ~~it~~ is referring to a work familiar to ~~his~~ readers. Jesus lived the life of His people and understood their thoughts with an intimate and personal knowledge; and it is of great importance to consider in what measure, He was influenced

by His Apocalyptic environment.

1. Apocalyptic as the one dominant influence in the Gospel.

It is held by some eminent scholars that Jesus was entirely dominated by Apocalyptic, and that the Gospel can be correctly understood only from this standpoint. Accordingly the Kingdom of God has to be conceived as belonging entirely to the New Age. The Kingdom has not yet begun to exist, and it will only come when the present order of things is brought to an end at the glorious appearing of the Messianic King.

One of the leading exponents of the apocalyptic interpretation of the Gospel is Albert Schweitzer. He goes so far as to say : "Historically regarded, the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul are simply the culminating manifestations of Jewish apocalyptic thought" ("The Quest of the Historical Jesus" p.366), "The Baptist and Jesus are not, therefore, borne upon the current of a general eschatological movement They themselves set the times in motion by acting, by creating eschatological facts". (ibid. p. 368). According to this view Jesus sought to bring all ordinary history to a close. His purpose is "to set in motion the eschatological development of history, to let loose the final woes, the confusion and strife, from which shall issue the Parousia, and so to introduce the supra-mundane phase of the eschatological drama" (ibid. p. 369). Schweitzer represents Jesus and His immediate followers as being "in an enthusiastic state of intense eschatological expectation" (ibid. p. 384); and all the events of the life of Jesus and all the sayings of His Gospel are explained from that standpoint.

Jesus is thus represented as having lacked any real grasp of the facts of the historical situation in which He lived, and as having spent His life under the delusion that the world, as then constituted, was to come to an end in a very short time. The imminence of the end was the idea which dominated His thoughts and actions; and this mistaken belief has to be constantly kept in mind if His Gospel is to be correctly understood. Eschatology, with the renunciation of the World which follows from it, is the only key to the meaning of the life and teaching of Jesus. This is the principle which governs the eschatological interpretation of the Gospel.

2. INTERIM ETHIC.

The thorough-going insistence upon the Apocalyptic interpretation of the Gospel raises the difficult question of the relation between Apocalyptic and Ethic in the teaching of Jesus. Those who interpret the life and teaching of Jesus entirely by reference to Apocalyptic, maintain that His Ethic was dominated by the expectation that the world would very shortly come to an end and give place to a new order of things, in which the conditions of life would be entirely different. His ethical teaching was thus intended only for the interim period that would elapse before the inauguration of the Kingdom of God; and consequently it had only a temporary validity.

In support of this view it is argued that Jesus took up the attitude of complete negation towards this world. His teaching "calls upon men to give up all their possessions,

to abandon their wealth, to cut themselves loose from the ties of family; it excludes the rich from the kingdom - at least, that seems to be the plain meaning - and it calls on men to follow one who has not where to lay his head. It is the extremist negation of all possible kinds of what we call social values. It is a call to men to set themselves free of everything that ties them down and binds them to society as it is". (Kirsopp Lake: "The Stewardship of Faith" p. 30-31).

It is contended that such teaching as this was given by Jesus because He believed that the social order of His time was doomed, and that salvation could be found only by cutting all the ties that bind men to this perishing world.

The conclusion to which this reasoning leads is that the Ethic of Jesus was proclaimed to meet the unique emergency due to the imminent end of the existing order of things. When a ship is sinking ordinary rules of conduct give place to emergency legislation and similarly, it is argued, Jesus taught an interim Ethic, - fitted only for a situation that was unusual and that would soon pass away.

(a) THE FAMILY.

According to this view, a literal interpretation is put upon the hard saying, that unless a man hate "his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26 Cf. Matt. 10:37). It is likewise maintained that Jesus taught the expediency of celibacy in certain circumstances, because of the imminence of the New Age in which

there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage (Matt. 22:30).

The grouping of individuals into families will no longer obtain in the changed conditions of the New Age.

(b) POSSESSIONS.

The test applied to the rich ruler to sell all his possessions and give to the poor (Mark 10:21), is taken as the universal prohibition of private property. The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16 ff.) is interpreted in the same way. In the great crisis which is imminent, possessions are not worth a thought. The wise plan is to keep oneself quite free from all such worldly entanglements. But this is only emergency legislation, provided for an exceptional situation.

(c) NATIONAL and CIVIC OBLIGATIONS.

The non-committal answer of Jesus to the question about the tribute money (Mark 12:17), is similarly interpreted. The Kingdom of God was so near at hand that existing institutions would soon cease to be; and the wise man ought to be patient and endure for a little longer rather than rebel against an irksome tyranny that would very soon pass away. The Zealots were watching for an opportunity of revolt; and the eschatologists understood Jesus to have urged them to wait patiently, on the ground that they would gain all they sought without fighting. "In your patience ye shall win your souls". (Luke 21:19). It is implied by this interpretation that if Jesus had been aware that history was not nearly at an end,

His political attitude would have been different. "He refrained from intermeddling with issues which would presently be laid to rest by God Himself through the inauguration of His Kingdom". (Scott: "Ethical Teaching of Jesus" p. 79).

(d) NON-RESISTANCE.

Jesus superseded the "lex talionis", by the prohibition of all vindictiveness and revenge on the part of those who suffer wrong; and He applied this principle to acts of violence, legal proceedings, compulsory service, and to borrowing and robbery (Matt. 5:38-42; Luke 6:29-30); and He demanded not only passive endurance but also positive love towards those who have done the wrong. (Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-28). In interpreting these great sayings it has to be remembered that Jesus is laying down general principles, not enjoining particular rules; but the eschatologists regard it as emergency, or even panic, legislation. "It is no mere reformer of Jewish morals that speaks here, no legislator for centuries yet unborn, but the herald and apostle of the imminent dissolution of the world and of the Kingdom of God already at the door! Hence a man can prepare himself for that day in no more worthy or more earnest way than by the surrender of all the present life is based upon - earthly repute, business capacity, personal property; all these are but obstacles and fetters. Whoso renounces willingly, whoso suffers gladly - he is truly free, and ready for the great day that is at hand. We can appreciate and vindicate the words only if we

interpret them by the mood appropriate to the twelfth hour".
(Johannes Weiss in Hastings' D.C.G.I p. 547).

3. THE ETHIC OF JESUS AS A "PREPARATION" FOR THE KINGDOM.

Some scholars, who hold that Apocalyptic is the dominant influence in the Gospel of Jesus, shrink from the logical conclusion of this theory. They cannot bring themselves to believe that the ethical teaching of Jesus was intended only for a special emergency and that it lacks permanent validity. In order to reconcile the apocalyptic theory of the Gospel with the sublime Ethic of Jesus, they explain that the source of His ethical teaching was His foresight of the new relationship which would exist between man and God under the conditions of the New Age. "Jesus conceived of the Kingdom as the new age, in which the sovereignty of God would be fully realised. It was so near at hand that its powers and influences could be felt already; but the actual consummation was still to come, and was the object of hope and waiting. The work of Jesus, therefore, was in the first instance one of preparation" (Scott: "The Kingdom and the Messiah" p. 117)".

"It was the apocalyptic hope that supplied the basis and framework for His spiritual teaching. He was able to conceive of an ideal morality because He was filled with the vision of an ideal world - a Kingdom of God, in which God's will would prevail". (Ibid p.124). But at the same time it is maintained that "to regard the Ethic of Jesus as no more than an interim morality is to misconstrue its whole intention God's people can seek even now to live by it The aim of Jesus

therefore was not to prescribe rules for a mere interval of waiting, but to declare the moral law as it would hold good for the Kingdom. He taught men how they might strive already after the new righteousness, and thus bring themselves into inward harmony with the Kingdom, although it had not yet come". (ibid p.p. 126-127). In this way an effort is made to reconcile the apocalyptic interpretation of the Gospel with the permanent Ethic of Jesus.

III. CRITICISM of the APOCALYPTIC or ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL.

The influence of Apocalyptic on the form of the Gospel is now generally recognised; but in the extreme eschatological interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus, the Apocalyptic element has been greatly exaggerated.

1. FACT and FANCY.

Albert Schweitzer's theory is in great measure pure fancy. He constantly ignores or misrepresents the facts of the life of Jesus; he gives an entirely fictitious description of Jesus' character, and he treats the New Testament as reliable only in so far as it suits his preconceived ideas. "The determination to prove, in the face of obvious evidence, that the New Testament is wrong is considered by many persons a sign of unbiased research". (Headlam: "Life and Teaching of Jesus" p. 76, note)." These incisive words, written in another connection, are by no means too strong to be applied to the theory of Schweitzer.

2. TRUTH and FALSENESS of the INTERIM ETHIC THEORY.

(a) There is a sense in which Christian Ethic must be regarded as designed for a state of things which is only temporary.

Jesus reminded His hearers of the transitoriness of life and urged them to make the best of present opportunities.

Thus the Ethical teaching of Jesus is necessarily given for guidance in a condition of things which is not permanent. The circumstances to which it is at present applied will pass away, but the eternal principles of right and wrong in Jesus' teaching will last for ever. Even the injunction to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man has a permanent validity independent of the imminence of His coming and the uncertainty of the time of His appearing. The soldier does not wait until the eve of war to make ready for action; he is in a state of discipline all the time.

(b) The Interim Ethic Theory of the thorough-going eschatologist is very different from the recognition of the fact that Jesus laid down His principles of conduct in relation to a transitory world. The eschatologists contend that Jesus thought the "day of the Lord" was so near that the present life appeared of no value, and that it was not worth while to institute laws of conduct applicable to it.

The theory that the Ethic of Jesus is interim, robs it of its meaning and authority as a guide of life. If it is merely temporary and provisional, and applicable only to the end of the present dispensation, many will conclude that there

is no obligation to obey Christ's laws of conduct or to respond to His call for self-denial and service; and the selfish and the worldly will be quick to avail themselves of this way of escape from the demands of Christian morality. "The deep moral and religious principles underlying the commands about the laying up of treasure (Matt. 6:19 f), the deceitfulness of riches (Matt. 13:22) are frittered away by the idea that they are based upon an excited view of the imminence of the last day His deepest teaching about love of enemies, service as the true ground of personal distinction and the basis of divine rewards, the nature of lust, superiority to the joys of mere wealth, are not intelligible if read in relation to an unimaginable state of life following the great catastrophe, and far surpasses the purview of a mere emergency legislation". (Mackenzie; Hastings' E.R.E. VII, p.528.)

The ethical teaching of Jesus is relevant to life as it now is, and it assumes that present conditions will continue. It deals with family ties (Mark 7:10 f; 10: 7-8, 13-16), with the possession of property (Matt. 5 : 42; 6 : 1-4; Luke 14:12 ff.; 16: 1-13), with the administration of civil law (Matt. 5:25); and while Jesus forbade resentment and retaliation, He did not say that evil should go unpunished. On the contrary, He made the punishment of evil-doers a part of the framework of several of His parables, and He Himself exercised violence when He drove out the traffickers from the Temple.

The teaching of Jesus is not an Interim Ethic; it lays down principles of universal and eternal validity. It is independent of the transient conditions of place and of time because it deals with the abiding relation of the human soul to God. It is ^{the} law of the Kingdom of God, which has already come into being, and which will never pass away.

3. CRITICISM of the THEORY that the ETHIC of JESUS is a "PREPARATION" for the COMING of the KINGDOM.

The description of the Ethic of Jesus as merely the preparation for the Kingdom that is still in the future, is not satisfactory. While seeking to find a means of reconciling Apocalyptic with Ethic, it lays too great stress on the former to the subordination of the latter.

The Ethic of Jesus is far more than a preparation for the Kingdom of God: the connection between the two is organic and vital. When Jesus said: "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33), He implied that Christian morality flows from the spirit of which the Kingdom of God is the embodiment. The acceptance of the Ethic constitutes membership of the Kingdom here and now and makes the Kingdom not merely an imaginary state, which has to be prepared for, but a present reality.

Thus the view that Christian morality is the preparation for the Kingdom is defective, because it fails to do justice to the intimate relation between the Kingdom and the moral life.

4. THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM IN RELATION TO APOCALYPTIC.

Those who accept the apocalyptic method of interpretation have to give some explanation of the passages which imply a present existence of the Kingdom. Many of the parables have such a meaning, for example, the parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Leaven, the Mustard Seed; and there are other sayings besides, which can bear no other interpretation. (Cf. Luke 17:21; Matt. 12:28; 21:31).

The eschatologists endeavour to explain away the present existence of the Kingdom by two methods.

(a) They assert that the parables and other passages which imply that the Kingdom has already come, do not represent the genuine teaching of Jesus, but exhibit the reflection of a later generation. Such a contention is based merely upon conjecture and upon the desire to force facts to fit a pre-conceived hypothesis.

(b) It is argued that such a saying as "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you" (Luke 17:21), does not really affirm that the Kingdom has already begun, but merely expresses in a dramatic and vivid way that the Kingdom is near. "Jesus throws His mind into the future - apprehends it as so near and certain that He can speak of it as present" (Scott: "The Kingdom and the Messiah" p. 109). A much more reasonable interpretation is that while the Kingdom of God in one aspect is still future, in another aspect it is already here. The petition "thy kingdom come", which Jesus taught His disciples to offer up

continually, is consistent with both these ideas. It has come, but not yet in its fulness; and constant prayer and strenuous effort are required to hasten its complete consummation. The Kingdom of grace has to become the Kingdom of glory.

5. THE THEORY OF THE APOCALYPSES AND THE THEORY OF JESUS.

Far from being dominated by apocalyptic thought, the Gospel of Jesus differs fundamentally from the theology of the Apocalyptists.

(a) The apocalyptic doctrine of God was deistic. He was represented as far removed from life and its needs; but Jesus revealed to men the nearness and the love of God, and taught the sublime doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. He showed that God exercises a kind and intimate Providence over the smallest concerns of the individual life. (cf. Matt. 6:25-34; 10:29-31).

(b) Jesus did not share the apocalyptic pessimism regarding the present world. He taught that the world is God's, not Satan's, and that God is already reigning in it. Though Jesus recognised that good and evil are mingled in the world (Cf. Matt. 13:24 ff.; 13:47 ff.), yet He was confident that good would ultimately triumph (Matt. 13:31-33); and He could already say "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

(c) The Reign of God is to be established by the development of faith and repentance and obedience in the life of man, and not merely by the manifestation of miraculous signs: "Jesus began to say, This generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah" (Luke 11:29); and that sign was the call to repentance.

There are many other differences between the Gospel and the teaching of the Apocalypses, but those which have been mentioned, are sufficient to prove that Apocalyptic was far from being the dominant influence in the teaching of Jesus.

6. THE INDEPENDENCE OF JESUS.

In gauging the soundness of the Apocalyptic interpretation of the Gospel, it is well to bear in mind the independent attitude of Jesus towards all His environment. In this connection His handling of the Mosaic Law is instructive. He did not hold Himself bound to surrender His Gospel to the ancient forms of the Jewish legalism. On the contrary He proclaimed a Gospel whose living spirit broke through the limitations of the Mosaic Code; and while removing what was temporary and imperfect, He reaffirmed the great principle of love to God and to man. He emphasised the spirit, while He ignored the letter. He spoke as a new Prophet and claimed a unique authority for His revelation of God's will.

The attitude of Jesus to the Hebrew Scriptures was one of independence, no less than of reverence. He did not allow Himself to be dominated by the Old Testament, and still less by the "traditions of the elders"; and it is quite inconsistent with the independent and authoritative methods of Jesus, to imagine that He surrendered unconditionally to the influence of the extra-canonical Apocalyptic Literature.

7. THE FAVOURITE READING OF JESUS.

The favourite reading of Jesus, - if we may so speak,-

was not Apocalyptic, but the most deeply spiritual portions of the Old Testament, - such as the Psalms, Isaiah, and Deuteronomy. These books were most frequently quoted by Him; and in them Apocalyptic has little or no place. It was to Deuteronomy, the spiritual exposition of the Law, that He turned for weapons to beat back the assaults of the temple; and it is most significant that in so doing He resorted to a non-apocalyptic book for an expression of the principles which He had deliberately chosen for His life and teaching.

That Jesus was not oblivious of the apocalyptic element in the Old Testament, is shown by His interest in the Book of Daniel. The Evangelists record ten quotations from Daniel as compared with twenty each from Deuteronomy and from Isaiah, and twenty-two from the Psalms. The influence of Daniel can be traced in Jesus' use of the great conception of the Kingdom of God; but the general attitude of Jesus to the Old Testament points to the conclusion that while He was alive to the interest and importance of apocalyptic thought, He was far from being entirely dominated by it.

8. THE SPIRITUAL POVERTY OF THE JEWISH APOCALYPSES.

In seeking for the influences that moulded the ~~form~~ of the thought and teaching of Jesus, one has difficulty in believing that He found in the Jewish Apocalyptic Literature much that appealed to His mind. Many of the Apocalyptic conceptions are remote from His thought and His spirit. The most famous of the Apocalypses, - and that which was probably

in greatest vogue in the time of Jesus, is the Book of Enoch . Professor Burkitt, who gives full value to the merits of such literature, has described it as "an odd and in some ways a not very attractive conglomeration..... He also says, "I think those of you who have tried to read 'Enoch' will agree that the first impression it leaves is that of words with very little sense. 'Enoch' seems to be dominated by the very spirit of chaos, if there be such a thing." ("Jewish and Christian Apocalypses" pp. 17, 21).

Some of the most spiritually-minded scholars find it impossible to believe that such literature exercised any great influence on the Gospel of Jesus. Dr. Alexander Whyte described the 'Book of Enoch' as "an inflated and fantastic book", (Bible Characters" I p. 52); and Dr. James Robertson said of it: "This is a book which we cannot think of as either a source or a mould of our Lord's teaching" ("Our Lord's Teaching" p.37 note).

It may be taken as certain that Jesus was well aware of the existence of such books as that bearing the pseudonym of Enoch: He probably read some of them; but it is not in that type of literature, that one would expect to find the dominant influence that moulded the form of the Gospel.

IV. THE APOCALYPTIC ELEMENT IN THE GOSPEL.

The apocalyptic element in the Gospel is not large, but it is of great importance. Jesus took over the apocalyptic ideas of His time and used them as one of the moulds into which He cast His Gospel. Just as He "fulfilled" the Law

and transformed and transcended it by His "fulfilment", so he made use of apocalyptic forms, and gave to them a new spiritual value. Some of the most solemn and impressive passages in His teaching are cast into this form.(E.g. Matt. 24 and 25; Mark 13; Luke 17:22-37; 19:11-27; 21; John 5:28-29 etc).

While Jesus made use of the imagery of Apocalyptic as a form of the Gospel, His thought was in many respects opposed to Apocalyptic, and consequently the Apocalyptic element in His teaching presents several perplexing problems.

1. Did Jesus expect the speedy End of the World?

There is a note of urgency in the Gospel which indicates that in Jesus' view the time was short. In His charge to the Twelve and to the Seventy, He bade them travel with a light equipment, as those engaged in business requiring haste.. (Cf. Mark 6:7 ff.; Matt. 10:5 ff.; Luke 9:1ff; 10:1). And there is for example the remarkable saying : "Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1), - a saying reported also by Matthew with the variation, - "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28).

There are ingenious theories, which represent these words as never having been uttered by Jesus, but as having been incorporated by the Evangelists from a Jewish Apocalypse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; but there is no substantial reason for doubting that they were spoken by Jesus.

Jesus did expect, and did teach that a great crisis was near at hand, and that it behooved the people to make ready to meet it.

It is no less true that Jesus taught that the consummation of the Kingdom of God was remote. He declared that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). In His parables He indicates delay: the leaven needs time to spread, (Matt. 13:33); "The evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth" (Matt. 24:48); "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." (Matt. 25:5). A long period of waiting is also implied by the prediction: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Such words as these prove that Jesus was under no misapprehension as to the remoteness of the consummation of God's Kingdom on the earth. There was to be delay and development and prolonged opportunity before the time of the end.

There is an apparent contradiction between Jesus' warning that the end is near, and His prediction that it is still remote. Various solutions of this problem have been suggested. Some say that Jesus shared the mistaken idea, entertained by pre-Christian Judaism and by the early Christians, (Cf. 1 Thessalonians), that the end was near. Others think that He did not always hold the same opinion regarding the time of the end. He Himself said: "Of that day or of that hour knoweth no one,

not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father". (Mark 13:32). "From the fact of His nescience it follows that His impression as regards the time of the Parousia may not have been a constant quantity. It may have oscillated somewhat in view of new developments in the providential order, and the extreme limits of oscillation on either side may possibly be reflected in those passages respectively which speak of the Parousia as if it were to be long deferred, and those other passages which seem to imply that He considered it as nigh at hand". (Fairweather : "The Background of the Gospels" p. 296).

Another view is that the solution of the difficulty is to be found in recognising that Jesus spiritualised the popular eschatological terms.

The suggestion of mistake on the part of Jesus may confidently be rejected. If there were proof of mistake, it would be necessary to admit it, even though it might appear derogatory to the mind of Jesus; but though He declared His ignorance of the time of the end, it does not follow that He was mistaken with regard to it. His consistent rejection of wrong ideas prevalent in His day makes it most improbable that He was under any illusion in the matter. He may have modified His opinion in view of changing events; but this suggestion is not sufficient to meet the whole problem. More helpful is the view that Jesus spiritualised the terms He used; but the explanation which goes furthest to solve the problem is that His sayings do not all refer to the same event. At one time He

has in mind the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and at another, the final establishment of God's Kingdom, when "the Son of man shall come in His glory". (Matt. 25:31).

The destruction of Jerusalem was drawing near. Forces were already at work in the nation, which were to bring about Jerusalem's downfall; and it was not merely a political crisis, but a spiritual crisis as well. Jesus saw the far-reaching significance of the worldly spirit that refused to accept Him as the Messiah, and that was hastening the doom of Jerusalem; and He had abundant reason for urgency in warning the people to be ready for the approaching catastrophe. Within a generation His predictions were fulfilled; and it is a matter of history that His warnings enabled the Christians in Jerusalem to escape before the city was invested by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Jewish Apocalyptic believed the New Age to be very near and Jesus employed the apocalyptic phraseology as lending itself readily to the prediction of the sufferings and destruction of Jerusalem. Then, the destruction of Jerusalem was typical of the final Judgment and of the consummation of God's purposes on the earth, so that the prophecy of the downfall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is also applicable in a wider sense to the greater cataclysm at the end of the world. In both these events the sovereign and victorious power of Jesus and the triumph of the Kingdom of God would be manifested. Just because these two comings of Jesus were present to His mind, His words regarding them were mingled so inseparably and

enigmatically that in the Gospel narratives it is not always clear which event is mainly and primarily referred to.

2. DID JESUS EXPECT THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS TO BE INAUGURATED BY A CRISIS AND CATASTROPHE AND A MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION OF GOD IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY?

Jesus recognised that there was an active element of goodness in the present world, and that the forces for good were gradually working towards the fulfilment of God's great plans. Such parables as the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven (Matt. 13:31-33), and the Corn Growing Secretly (Mark 4: 26-29) teach that the Kingdom of God will come by a gradual process of growth. The refusal of Jesus to gain popularity by the performance of some prodigy (Matt. 4: 6-7), and His endeavour to keep His miracles secret (Mark 1:44) show that He was generally opposed to the use of supernatural powers in the establishment of His spiritual Kingdom.

On the other hand, there are definite announcements in the Gospel that the Kingdom is to come at the last, suddenly and miraculously. "But immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29-30 ff.; Cf. Mark 13:24-27; Luke 17:26 ff.).

It may be argued that Jesus' prediction of a sudden and miraculous coming of the Kingdom at the end of the world is a mere accommodation to current apocalyptic ideas; but the Parousia cannot be explained away as a mere process or development. "There is a wide difference between misunderstandings or mistaken combinations of His words and the independent creation by His disciples of a doctrine to which He did not refer. Moreover, His whole conception of the Kingdom of God implies the idea of its consummation, of which He might naturally speak as a special, final self-manifestation, or parousia". (Stevens : "Theology of the New Testament" pp. 160-161).

The principle of ethical and spiritual development which is inherent in the Gospel of Jesus is not inconsistent with the special intervention of God in history at those outstanding crises, which Scripture designates the "days of the Lord". (Cf. Zeph. 1:7 ff; Joel 1:15, 2:1 ff). The Resurrection of Jesus, the Day of Pentecost, and such epoch-making events as the destruction of Jerusalem, the fall of Rome, and the Reformation of religion in the sixteenth century were momentous and abnormal interventions of God in human history; and the sudden and miraculous coming of the Son of Man in His Kingdom at the end of the world is in harmony with man's experience of the ways of God in the past.

The reasonable conclusion, therefore, is that in predicting a sudden and miraculous consummation of the Kingdom of God at the time of the end, Jesus was not accommodating His

teaching, in a merely formal way, to the apocalyptic ideas of the time, but was using these ideas to proclaim a fundamental doctrine of His Gospel.

3. DID JESUS EXPECT THAT THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM
WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAY
OF HEAVENLY POWER AND GLORY?

The spiritual character of the Gospel naturally leads to a spiritual interpretation of the imagery descriptive of the great day, when the Son of Man will come in His glory. It was thus that the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost interpreted the dread portents in earth and sky, which had been predicted by the prophet Joel. (Joel 2:28-31; Acts 2:16 ff.).

The language which Jesus used in predicting the triumph of His Kingdom is pictorial and need not be interpreted in a strictly literal and prosaic fashion. He made use of the apocalyptic imagery, familiar to His contemporaries, in order to convey the deep spiritual truth of the final triumph of the Kingdom of God.

At the same time it has to be remembered, that the revelation of God's majesty and grace in the past has sometimes been accompanied by outward and visible manifestations. Apart from the theophanies in the Old Testament, it is recorded that at the Birth and Baptism and Transfiguration and Crucifixion and Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus there were unusual and awe-inspiring phenomena; and while these were subordinate to the spiritual significance of the events with

which they were associated, they were outward and visible proof that Heaven and Earth were moved at the great crises in the history of Jesus.

In referring to the picture of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) the late Dr. Denney wrote: "It is rash to discount too cheaply what we think, rightly enough in principle, are but forms of conveying this truth and forms unequal to the reality". (Hastings' D.C.G. II p. 396). The same may be said of the pictorial description of the great Day of the Son of Man, when He will come in His power and glory and complete the triumph of His Kingdom.

Jesus chose apocalyptic forms of expression for some of the truths of His Gospel because they were the most fitting vehicle available for some aspects of His message. In employing apocalyptic as a form in which to cast His truth, He need not be held as being in sympathy with all the apocalyptic thought of His time. He agreed with it in its Godward outlook, but differed from it in many other ways. The apocalyptic mould was not great enough for the rich content of the Gospel. Apocalyptic taught men to wait for a miracle at the end of time to set all things right, and Jesus came to restore the faith in God's ever-present Providence, which Apocalyptic tended to destroy.

Jesus used the Jewish Apocalyptic as He used all the other elements in His environment. He took from it the conceptions that served His purpose, and allowed the rest to fall out of sight. The Apocalypticist's hope in God and his con-

-viction of the final triumph of good were fitting vehicles for the Gospel of Jesus, which bids men face both the present and the hereafter in the spirit of hope and not of despair, of victory and not of defeat. The revelation of God's unfailing and triumphant love which Jesus gave in apocalyptic language has been the inspiration of patient and heroic endurance in every time of trial and it is still the constant source of unconquerable hope. "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

(Rom. 8:38-39).

CHAPTER VII.

THE SON OF MAN.

Some scholars venture to assert that Jesus never designated Himself the Son of Man, and that the title was interpolated in the Gospel narratives by His followers for dogmatic purposes. In order to give any semblance of truth to such a theory it is necessary to take unwarrantable liberties with the four Gospels. According to the Gospel narratives this is the designation which Jesus habitually applied to Himself. It occurs eighty-one times in the four Gospels, - sixty-nine times in the Three, and twelve times in St. John. The use of it by Stephen at his martyrdom is the only other occurrence of the title in the New Testament, (Acts 7: 56). In the Gospels it is never applied to Jesus by others; and in the Epistles it is entirely absent.

This distinctive title of Jesus is of great significance in Christian doctrine; and it is important to consider what part His environment may have had in suggesting the name and in determining its connotation.

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE TITLE.

1. The Son of Man in the Old Testament.

A typical example of the use of the name in the

Old Testament occurs in the eighth Psalm: "What is man, (עֲוֵלָה) that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, (בֶּן־אָדָם) that thou visitest him?" (Psalms 8: 4).

עֲוֵלָה comes from the root ע.ו.ל "to be fragile", and designates man from the standpoint of his weakness, frailty, and mortality; and בֶּן־אָדָם , its synonym, must be understood in a similar sense. The latter name is in itself suggestive of man's origin from the ground (בֶּן־אָדָם), and hence, of his humbleness in God's great universe. Human weakness in need of divine help is the thought in the Psalmist's mind, when he says: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself," (Psalm 80: 17). Feebleness is also implied in the Psalmist's warning: "Put not your trust in princes, Nor in the Son of man, in whom there is no help," (Psalm 146: 3). In order to rebuke what he regarded as the arrogance of Job, Bildad contrasted the Majesty of God with the littleness and earthly nature of man: "Behold, even the moon hath no brightness, And the stars are not pure in his sight: How much less man, that is a worm! And the son of man, which is a worm!" (Job 25: 5-6). The great inferiority of man to God is also the idea in the passage: "God is not a man, that he should lie; Neither the son of man, that he should repent," (Num. 23: 19).

Elsewhere in the Old Testament "Son of Man" usually means simply "man" as a member of the human race. In this sense it is used more than ninety times in the Book of Ezekiel: "He said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee," (Ezek.2: 1). These references show that in the Old Testament, "Son of Man" usually characterises man in his aspect of frail and humble humanity.

There is yet to be considered, however, the passage in Daniel, which is regarded by many as the main source of the title. In the Vision of the Four Beasts, Daniel saw the downfall of four earthly kingdoms and then he added: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," (Dan.7: 13-14). The "Son of Man" is here a human figure of Heavenly origin, in opposition to the four beasts which symbolise the brute force of the four worldly kingdoms; and though in one sense he may be no more than the representative of "the people of the saints of the Most High," (Dan.7: 27), yet it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he is also

a real, individual personality. "This can be only the Messianic king, who stands at the head of the saints of the Most High," (Riehm: "Messianic Prophecy" p.193, note 3). The same view is held by Dr.G.H.Box: "The figure is both a symbol and a person," (Box: "Matthew" p.27).

2. The "Son of Man" in the Book of Enoch.

In the extra-canonical Apocalyptic Literature the title "Son of Man" has a more distinctly Messianic connotation. The most remarkable examples of this are found in the Book of Enoch: "And there I saw One who had a head of days, and His head was white like wool, and with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me: This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen shall raise up the kings and the mighty from their seats and the strong from their thrones, and shall loosen the reins of the strong, and break the teeth of the sinners,"

(Enoch 46: 1-4). In this passage and others like it (Cf. Enoch 69: 26-27; 69: 29), the title "Son of Man" is employed with greater definiteness than in Daniel. In the latter the term is "a son of man" but in "Enoch", it is "the Son of Man"; and the superhuman attributes attached to the name are more fully developed. He sits on God's throne: "And the Elect One shall in those days sit on My throne" (En. 51: 3): He has universal dominion: "The kings and the mighty and all who possess the earth shall bless and glorify and extol him who rules over all" (En. 62: 6); and all judgment is committed unto him: "And there was great joy amongst them, and they blessed and glorified and extolled, because the name of that Son of Man had been revealed unto them. And he sat on the throne of his glory, and the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man" (En. 69: 26-27).

There are still some doubts as to whether the Book of Enoch dates from pre-Christian times, but its conceptions were, more or less, the atmosphere of Apocalyptic circles in the time of Jesus; and though He had little affinity with such books as Enoch, He was no doubt familiar with their ideas.

3. The Son of Man as a Nickname.

Another conjecture is that the title was applied to Jesus by the Jewish multitude in disappointment at the lowliness of His circumstances. The people were expecting

a victorious king, encompassed with worldly splendour; and when John the Baptist pointed to Jesus, a peasant from despised Nazareth, and said: "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is become before me" (John 1: 30), "they would exclaim in derisive incredulity, "This the Messiah! This is no Son of God; He is a son of man." Jesus would overhear their murmurings, and He caught up the contemptuous epithet wherewith they branded Him. A son of man! one of the common people, the בְּנֵי אָדָם , whom the rulers despised (John 7: 49). Yes, He was even such, and He would wear the epithet all the days of His ministry and be known as 'the Son of Man' "; (David Smith: "Expository Times" XVIII, p.554).

This conjecture is that the "Son of Man" originated as a nickname applied to Jesus by the people, just as He was styled the Friend of tax-gatherers and sinners by the Pharisees; but it is too fanciful to be convincing.

4. An expression of His own consciousness.

It has also been maintained that the title arose entirely from Jesus' consciousness of Himself, apart from any external influence. "It came out of His own heart" (Robertson: "Our Lord's Teaching" p.37). There can be no doubt that the significance of the title was due to the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus, more than to anything

else; but the title itself had been formed before His time, and had an important place in Scripture, and in harmony with His method in adopting many other conceptions, it seems reasonable to conclude that the use of the title in the Old Testament, and possibly in a minor degree its use in Apocalyptic had some influence in suggesting it to Jesus as His own designation.

II. ADOPTION OF THE TITLE BY JESUS.

Jesus required an appellation to express His relation to God and to man, to past expectations, to present human needs, and to the future consummation of the Kingdom of God. He found it in the Hebrew term $\text{מָלְכֵנוּ} \text{ מָלְכֵנוּ}$ (Aramaic, $\text{ܡܠܟܝܢܐ} \text{ ܡܠܟܝܢܐ}$) which was consecrated by Scriptural use and was suggestive of the Messiah, and at the same time sufficiently elastic to admit of expansion to include new and original ideas.

As Jesus took over the Jewish Law and "fulfilled" it, so He found in the Old Testament conception of the "Son of Man" a form in which to cast His teaching about Himself. In adopting this name as His own distinctive title, Jesus expressed the genuineness of His humanity. He made plain that He had truly humbled Himself to the rank of men and that He shared in human weakness and frailty.

While He thus associated Himself with all mankind,

He also signified His uniqueness by claiming to be not only "a son of man" but, "the Son of Man". He is the ideal representative man in whom God's high destiny for mankind is realised. He is the second Adam, the Head of a new and redeemed humanity, not of the Jews only but also of the Greeks.

The name is expressive of the high dignity no less than of the humility of Jesus as the ideal man; for God had endowed man with sovereignty over the rest of creation: "Thou hast made him but little lower than God and crownest him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8: 5-6 Cf. 1 Cor.15: 27; Ephes.1: 22).

It is a distinctive method of Jesus that He frequently cast His Gospel into forms, which partly reveal and partly conceal the truth. His Parables have a meaning even for the indifferent and the superficial; but they yield their richest treasures to those who ponder over them with an earnest and spiritual mind. Many of His great sayings are cast into an enigmatical form which at first puzzle the mind, but which have the advantage of stimulating thought.

The title "Son of Man" may justly be regarded as the most notable of the "dark sayings" of Jesus; and one of the leading reasons for its adoption by Jesus probably was that it partly revealed and partly concealed His Messianic claims. Though it had associations with the Messiah, — that

was not its ordinary significance. In the Old Testament it usually means "man" as an individual of mankind or "man" in his weakness and mortality; so that notwithstanding the use in Daniel and in some of the Apocalyptic Literature, its adoption by Jesus did not necessarily involve a Messianic claim. In the mind of Jesus Himself it did involve such a claim; but it was not so, with the undiscerning multitude. The popular title for the Messiah was not "Son of Man" but "Son of David", (Cf. Matt. 22: 41 ff.) The people were expecting a worldly king, with all the material splendour of a Herod or a Roman Emperor; and thus Jesus could entitle Himself "Son of Man" from the outset of His ministry, and yet those whose minds were preoccupied by worldly ideals and who might be roused into political excitement by a clear proclamation of Messiahship, did not understand the implications of the name, as the self-designation of Jesus. He desired to move amongst men incognito; and their ideas of the Messianic King were so worldly and so mistaken, that He required no disguise. Even His Apostles did not recognise Him in the full significance of His personality; so that near the end of His earthly career, He had cause to say: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" (John 14: 9).

III. THE CONTENT OF THE TITLE SON OF MAN.

The sayings of Jesus regarding Himself as the "Son

of Man" may be classified under three headings.

1. Eschatological.

When challenged by the high priest to declare whether He was the Christ the Son of God, "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt.26: 64). In this solemn utterance and others like it, Jesus revealed the significance which the title "Son of Man" had in his own mind. He proclaimed that He who was then rejected and condemned by men was the Messianic King, - spoken of by Daniel, - who was destined to come in Messianic glory to establish the complete and universal Reign of God.

2. Descriptive of the Character and Activites of the Son of Man on the earth.

The conception of the "Son of Man" was by no means entirely eschatological. Many sayings of Jesus refer to the conditions under which, as "Son of Man", He lived on the earth. He had not where to lay His head, (Matt.8: 20): He took a share in the social life of man (Matt.11: 19), and was often spoken against (Matt.12: 32). These are illustrations of the share which as Son of Man Jesus had in the frailty and trials of the children of men.

But there are other sayings which show that even in the days of His humiliation Jesus bore about with Him a

unique dignity and authority. "The Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2: 28), and "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2: 10).

According to the Apocalyptic view, Jesus regarded Himself as not yet the "Son of Man" who was to come, but the sayings just quoted imply that Jesus was already Son of Man and exercised His authority under the conditions of His earthly life. His unique Sonship and His Messiahship were a present possession.

The sayings dealing with the conditions and activities of the Son of Man upon the earth connect themselves with the conceptions in the eighth Psalm and kindred passages rather than with the Vision of Daniel.

3. The Suffering Servant.

The most notable enlargement which Jesus gave to the title was its combination with the great conception of the Servant of the Lord. In His pronouncement in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus identified Himself with this Isaianic figure; and after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus made clear that He was to carry out His mission by His suffering and death. "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt.16: 21).

A Suffering Messiah was a paradox to the disciples of Jesus and to the people generally. "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." (Matt.16: 22). Peter was expressing the prevailing idea, and Jesus recognised in His apostle's words the temptation which He had conquered at the outset of His ministry: " He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men," (Matt. 16:23, Cf. 4:10).

It is significant that the word *παράδωμι* which is used by Jesus in predicting the betrayal of the Son of Man occurs three times in the Septuagint Version of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: " The Lord hath ^{laid} on him (delivered him up for) our iniquities" (καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν); "Because his soul was delivered up unto death" (ἄνθ' ᾧ παρέδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ); "He was delivered up (betrayed) for their iniquities" (διὰ τὰς ἁνομίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη): (LXX. ~~Is.~~ 53:6,12). The repeated use of this word in Isaiah may have suggested it to Jesus.

Apart from resemblances in language, there is a general community of ideas between the description of the Suffering Servant and Jesus' prediction of His approaching Passion. Jesus said: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a

ransom for many" (Mark 10: 45). The Son of Man is the servant (*διδάκωνος*) who is to give his life as the ransom for many, - as "an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53: 10).

It is evident that in the mind of Jesus the Son of Man was identified with the Suffering Servant. We cannot tell at what stage of His earthly life He became conscious that the way to His throne was the Via Dolorosa; but when that idea did come to Him, He found in the lofty conception of the Suffering Servant a vehicle ready for the proclamation of this fundamental truth of His Gospel.

Jesus showed profound originality in combining diverse characteristics in His conception of the Son of Man. He shared human weakness and frailty. "He was despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53: 3; Luke 9: 22); and at the same time He was the Messianic King who would come again in power and glory (Dan.7: 13-14; Mark 13: 26; Matt.25: 31 ff.)

In proclaiming His Gospel Jesus condescended to express His thoughts by means of conceptions ready to His hand; but none of them was great enough for His purpose. In using them He transformed and transcended them. The popular idea of the Son of Man fell far short of the Person of Jesus. Even Simon Peter did not understand the full significance of his own words, when in answer to the question of Jesus, "Who say ye that I am?" he uttered the noble confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt.16: 16).

Chapter VIII.ENVIRONMENT and PERSONALITY.

In his "History of Civilisation in England", H.T.Buckle endeavoured to show that the character of a nation is determined by material environments, such as soil, climate, food, and aspects of nature. History, written on this principle, cannot fail to be one-sided; for no environment, - however strong and subtle its influence may be, - can completely explain the character and achievements of a people.

Still less can environment, material or otherwise, account for the personality of the individual. Personality is not merely the product of the combined influences which have contributed to its development. It is even more than the sum of the qualities, with which an individual is endowed. Behind all else there is the self, in which the characteristics of a particular personality are welded into a unity. This individual self is an entity which is, to a large extent, beyond the reach of all others. It is unfathomable, inexplicable. It dwells in solitude. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not inter-meddle with its joy" (Prov.14: 10).

Personality cannot be resolved into its

component elements by the methods of the chemical laboratory. In order to know it thoroughly, and to account for it, it would be necessary not only to study environment and heredity, but also to search out the secret counsels of God, and to explore the dim, bewildering regions of self-consciousness and self-determination.

The personality of great men is more of an enigma, than that of ordinary, commonplace people. In the case of the latter, it is possible, in great measure, to gauge their qualities, and to predict how they will act in certain circumstances. But in the personality of the really great, there is an element that baffles search and scrutiny. They strike out new lines of conduct; they upset the calculations of those who venture to predict their course of action, and they do not hesitate, when necessary, to defy convention and popular opinion. As Professor William James has written somewhere, - "to the highest order of minds, the unexpected seems the only law."

Amongst all the world's great figures, Jesus stands supreme. His character is unique. The study of His life and teaching brings one into the presence of a personality, that is commanding in a degree that no other has ever been. In the days of His ministry in Palestine, He was always the master of His circumstances; and even though it were possible to estimate accurately the various

factors and influences that composed His environment, the great mystery of His personality would be left unexplained. "That by virtue of which His followers call Him Lord, is precisely the stratum of His being which defies analysis." (Dr.H.A.A.Kennedy: "Expository Times", May, 1908).

The study of the environment of Jesus is a great aid to the understanding of the Gospel; but the unique quality of His teaching, and the manner in which He employed the various elements of His environment as vehicles of His teaching, were due to His own personality as the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Jesus accommodated Himself to His environment; but even in His accommodation, His originality and force of character were constantly displayed. He taught and wrought in a manner all His own. He followed no stereotyped rules. There was an inexhaustible variety in His treatment of men and problems. His contact with His environment was never merely passive, but was always active and creative; and He transformed all He touched, "Nullum quod tetigit, non ornavit."

The Gospel has been studied in these pages as the revelation of God's truth, which Jesus gave in a particular locality, and at a definite period of history. But it is not enough to study the words of Jesus so. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life,"

He said, (John 6: 63). No man can know the Gospel truly, until it becomes the inspiration of his own life; and to attain that end, he must pass beyond the printed page to the ever-living Teacher Himself. Jesus saith: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14: 6).

(Mark 10: 25) He was speaking after the manner of the dark saying; and the disciples were bewildered and amazed.

In the conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus imparted profound spiritual teaching in a form, which must have been largely enigmatical at the time. (Cf. John 3: 5; 3: 14-15). The same was the case at the well of Sychar, ^{when He said} to the woman of Samaria: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John 4: 10). So also with His words to the disciples on that occasion: "I have meat to eat that ye know not." (John 4: 32); and in the discourse on the Bread of Life, His teaching is cast into a similar form: "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life." (John 6: 27).

The thought of the suffering of Jesus was so remote from the mind of the disciples, that when He predicted that He would be delivered up into the hands of men, and would be killed, and would rise again, they did not understand His saying, (Mark 9:31-32). But apart from the fact that His rejection and crucifixion were so incomprehensible, He sometimes spoke of His Death and Resurrection in a way that perplexed His hearers. "What is this word that he said, ye shall seek me and shall not find me: and where I am ye cannot come?" (John 7: 36): Thus the Jews expressed their perplexity. Even to the question of His ardent disciple, Simon Peter, - "Lord,

whither goest thou?" Jesus did not give a direct answer: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards," (John 13: 36), and Simon Peter remained under the mistaken idea, that it was some dangerous enterprise in His earthly life that Jesus was about to enter upon. On a subsequent occasion, Jesus dealt more plainly with the same question: "Whither goest thou?" (John 16: 5).

In alluding to the new relationship which would be created between Him and His disciples, in consequence of His approaching death, Jesus said: "A little while, and ye behold me no more: and again a little while, and ye shall see me," (John 16: 16; Cf. 14: 19). The disciples were bewildered by the saying, as the people of Jerusalem were, on an earlier occasion, (John 7: 34); but Jesus proceeded to give to the disciples some enlightenment, as to the meaning of His words, so that they were at last able to say: "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." (John 16: 29).

The obscurity of some of the sayings of Jesus was due to the profound character of the truth He was revealing, (e.g. Matt. 11: 25-27). Others were difficult to understand, because they referred to events in the future, (Cf. Mark 9: 9-10). Some were obscure, because the time had not yet come for more complete revelation: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth," (John 16: