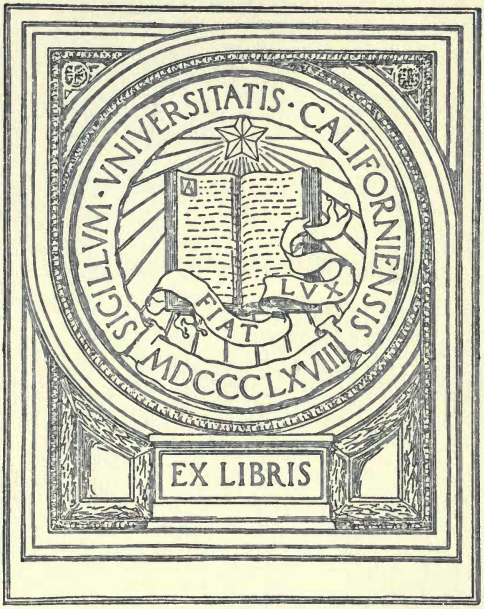

Chapter I.

WAS THERE AN HISTORICAL JESUS?

It sometimes happens in the scientific discussion of a problem that we make a considerable advance towards its solution by abandoning some point of view from which we have fruitlessly striven to master it, and confronting it from a fresh position. The experience suggests itself forcibly in the controversy with regard to the historical character of Jesus. Starting from the theory that the evangelical writings of the New Testament must be regarded as sources of evidence for the life-story of an historical individual, liberal theology has lost itself in a labyrinth from which it cannot escape. Even in circles where the dogma of a personal founder of Christianity is still rigorously maintained, people are beginning to see that very little biographical material can be obtained from the Gospels. During a discussion at Dortmund, for instance, Professor Kähler of

Halle, an adherent of the orthodox school, said that "we have not a single authentic word that was uttered by Jesus." Professor Steck of Berne, a liberal theologian, describes the present situation of the Gospel question in the following terms (in the *Protestantische Monatshefte* for March, 1903) :—

> The truth is that not only must the Gospel stories of miracles be regarded as the outcome of legend-making or symbolical poetry, but the rest of their contents, unassailable in itself, must be granted to be intimately bound up with that element, and must not be considered as authentic history. Any man who has made some study of the question, and closely examined the contents of these remarkable writings—who has, in other words, clearly recognised subjective influence in the different stamp set on the words of Jesus by the several Evangelists—must long ago have awakened from the dream that we have here a sufficiently solid ground for the construction of a biography. The parables and the Sermon on the Mount, like the other sayings of Jesus, are found to be permeated with elements that can only have originated in the Christology of the community, not in the self-consciousness of Jesus. For instance, the well-known saying, which might be taken as a genuine utterance of Christ as far as its general contents go, "Whoever will come after me must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (*Matt.* xvi. 24 ; *Mark* viii. 34 ; *Luke* ix. 23), cannot possibly have been spoken in this form before the crucifixion of Jesus. Thus there is a good deal in the Gospels that plainly bears the stamp of the consciousness of the community ; and,

> if we start from quite critical premises, we must come to the conclusion that we have no absolute certainty that any single saying in the Gospels was uttered in that precise form by Jesus himself.

Between these representatives of two totally different ecclesiastical schools we find the many attempts at compromise which, while granting that the documents do not really provide a biography of Jesus, nevertheless make every effort to construct one. Is it not time we recognised that the postulate of this kind of theology is false? Ought we not to approach the question from another side altogether?

I will deal here only with the negative side of the Christ-problem—the denial that Christianity takes its rise from an historical individual—in so far as it seems necessary to introduce readers who are unacquainted with the main lines of my social theology into the positive research of the present work. That Christianity should be regarded as a particular development of social life, and not as the work of a personal founder of a religion; that the rise and character of Christianity should not be sought in the "historical Jesus" whom liberal theologians put at the commencement of the system—all this must be so plain to one

who is acquainted to some extent with the methods of modern science that I may seem to have devoted far too much attention to the subject in my earlier works.

There is, even in scientific matters, a kind of hypnotic suggestion by which certain groups of ideas survive and impose themselves so effectively that a man often thinks he is looking at them with his own eyes when he is really examining them through the glasses of others and conceiving them in the thoughts of others. It is only by a suggestion of this character that I can understand the persistence of the idea of a life of Jesus. How such a literature arose originally is not difficult to understand. As the mental development of the race advanced from the transcendental world of the older metaphysic to the full reality of life, from dogmatic truth, imposed by an external authority, to a greater independence and self-reliance, the position of the older theology was shattered. It was compelled either to use all the available material for strengthening its position, or else to enter upon a revision of its fundamental assumptions. In this revision, however, theology has been hampered by its inherent weaknesses ; it has not been clear either as to

the methods that should be employed, or the end that should be held in view.

Theologians saw clearly enough that it was impossible to retain the contradictory narrative in all its Platonic-Christian naïvete, but they had not the courage or the energy to accommodate their faith entirely to the monistic temper of modern thought. They desire relief from all that has become irksome—emancipation from Rome and its priests, and even from the letter of Protestant formulæ—but German theologians at least have not yet reached a positive freedom, a consciousness of the independent, creative life of the modern spirit. They seek to retain and immortalise in science the dualism that has been cast out of the general life. They claim a separate province and a separate method of work, different from that of all other science, which is based on a division of labour. They have of late solemnly declared, in the person of one of their most influential representatives, Professor Harnack, that it is the science of religion ; but that merely means that theology refuses to apply fully and frankly the methods and laws of general scientific thought in its own province.

This opens out at once a clear field for

"lives of Christ." Since modern thought no longer tolerated the attempt to trace the rise of Christianity to the transcendental world of Platonic-Christian ideas, it seemed natural to convert the God-Man, to whom the Church traced its origin, the Christ with both divine and human nature, into a single individual, a natural human being. The next step was for theological science to construct the biography of this human Jesus; at first after the fashion of the older Rationalism, merely changing the supernatural features ascribed to Jesus in the Bible into natural ones, then in the spirit of critical theology, which regarded these narratives as later interpolations in the natural depictment of Jesus, and so sought to determine what was original and what was a later accretion.

Theologians imagined that they had thus met the claims of historical science. But, apart from the inherent difficulties that revealed themselves in the writing of the life of Jesus, and that eventually turned out to be impossibilities, the modern demand for intellectual independence and the religious temper that looked far into the future came into hopeless conflict with this historical postulate of the theologian. Protestant theology was

dominated, in its search for the historical Jesus, by the idea that Christianity was absolutely pure and divine in its origin—something quite distinct, even in its human embodiment, from the general life of the time, something that only contracted in the course of time the elements which the more advanced conscience even of modern theology has had to repudiate. But a theology that finds itself compelled, as we have seen lately in the case of Harnack, to postulate a degeneration from an originally pure principle at the very beginning of the story, is quite alien to the methods of historical science generally. It forfeits the very name of science. Clearly, it was not scientific, but sectarian, principles from which theology started, when it endeavoured to remove from the older figure of Christ all the features that had become distasteful to the theologians of the nineteenth century, and to ascribe them to later historical influences. To do this it needed the fiction that there was in the historical Jesus an absolute principle of Christianity and (as Christianity was considered the standard religion) of religion generally, so that it gave men an ideal by which they might test the religious and moral

value of the whole of life. On such a fiction the whole of liberal theology was bound to be shipwrecked. The autonomous spirit of our time will not suffer a man who lived at a certain time and place to be made the absolute law of its own life.

And thus the interest that lay behind the theologian's search for an historical Jesus disappeared from the mind of our age. If theology had succeeded in its task (though it has certainly not done so), no thoughtful man of our time would follow it in the further conclusion that the whole development of the Church must be measured by the historical Jesus. We can only regard it as a relic of the old theories of natural right and the Rousseau idea of perfection in the earliest stages of life—doctrines long ago expelled from the rest of science—when we find theologians seeking a primitive personality or a primitive principle of the Christian system, so as to place at the beginnings of its history the ideals that really arise only in the course of its further development. Why should not the historical elements that have co-operated with this historical Jesus in creating historical Christianity be appreciated just as fully as those that are connected with the person of

Jesus? Why should we say that the streams that flowed from Rome and Greece into the broad bed of Christian culture were impure, and that only the stream issuing from Jerusalem was pure? The far-seeing Zwingli pointed out long ago that we must not venture to confine the Holy Spirit to Palestine. How came a theology, calling itself critical and scientific, to insist that a certain Jew must in all circumstances be regarded as the creator of the Christian spiritual life?

Historical research cannot possibly tolerate this prominence of one single constituent of the Christian religion at the expense of all the others. The elements that have made their appearance in the history of the Church are as essential parts of Christianity as that which the liberal theologian now regards as the only vital one. Historical truth is always instructive and helpful, even when it contradicts our most treasured convictions; historical untruth is always dangerous, because it uses history to support its own interest in the past, and to give the stamp of absoluteness and eternal necessity to something that shares the limitations of time.

We have here, then, the feature that

doomed liberal theology from the very start. It tried to sit on two stools. It would be scientific, yet render service to an ecclesiastical system; it would study history, but in its investigations would leave intact those elements of tradition that secure to the Church a privileged position in life. Its religion is not a belief in the truth, but belief in a Church —its own Church, its own theology. If historical research had not so long cut off the province of theology from its general operations and abandoned it to professional clerics, as if one needed for such studies as this certain special qualifications that are only found in the theologian and not in the rest of science, we should long ago have done with these "lives of Christ." The documents that give us our information about the origin of Christianity are of such a nature that in the present state of historical science no student would venture to use them for the purpose of compiling a biography of an historical Jesus. It is merely theological hypnotism that maintains the figure of such a Jesus in the mind of our time.

The state of things in regard to these documents is plain the moment we get clear of the artificial devices of critical theology. The

Christ of whom the early Christian writings speak is not at all a man, but at the least a "superman," if not a son of God, a God-Man. In this Christ the divine is not merely united to the human, as liberal theologians have supposed; it is not a disturbing current flowing into the smooth stream of human history, so that one has only to separate the divine from the human once more in order to obtain the purely historical elements. In Christ the divine is always most intimately one with the human. From the God-Man of the Church there is a straight line back, through the Epistles and Gospels of the New Testament, to the apocalypse of Daniel, in which the ecclesiastical conception of Christ makes its first appearance. But at every single point in this line Christ has superhuman features; he is never what critical theology would make him—a mere natural man, an historical individual.

To consider first the Gospels, Christ is in the Fourth Gospel the creative Word of God, that was with God in the beginning, and was God, that became flesh and dwelt among men. The Gospel of Mark announces its story at once as the Gospel of Christ, the Son of God. Luke purposes to make a certain

selection among the traditions at hand, in order to find a doctrinal ground for Theophilus, for whom he is writing. As a result he begins with the announcement of the angel to Zachary in regard to the birth of John. He brings his Christ to birth in circumstances that are historically impossible, on the occasion of a census which certainly did not take place at the time he assigns to it, and which could not possibly affect Galilee, where Joseph and Mary are supposed to have lived.[1] He puts his birth in an impossible scene, under an open sky, amidst the song of angels. All this shows clearly enough that, when he talks of testing the Christian traditions, he has no idea whatever of historical criticism in the modern sense. Matthew lays stress on the virgin-birth of Christ. He makes the new-born child the centre of attention for the whole world and the object of a wide persecution. And these stories of the birth set out the programme for his further narrative of Christ's history; they give us the point of view from which he proceeds to tell the whole story down to the death, resurrection, and ascension.

[1] B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. ii., p. 511.

To look behind these evangelical narratives for the life of a natural historical human being would not occur to any thoughtful man to-day if it were not for the influence of the earlier Rationalistic theologians. Those theologians had inevitably to end in the search for an historical individual behind the Gospel narratives, because in this way they felt they could best secure their position in face of the orthodox supernaturalism. Liberal theology seeks to recognise itself in primitive Christianity. In accordance with its own religious conception, it regards Christianity as a theological school, and so needs a schoolmaster, a religious teacher, whom it describes as the founder of the religion. But the struggle between liberal and orthodox theology has only an historical interest for the modern mind. It has no further importance in science, since science has learned to look upon the ideas of both parties as momentary currents in the broad stream of history. A religious teacher, the head of a theological school, as liberal theologians conceive Christ under the title of founder of the religion, ceases to be necessary for understanding Christianity in proportion as we recognise in it a great historical development of the whole

spiritual life—the social and economic, religious and moral, artistic and scientific life—of the race. In that view the single individual, whatever be his name, will only be considered in so far as the active forces of his age are embodied in him; indeed, if in the matter of Christianity there were question of the head of a theological school, historical science would still have the task of gathering the ideas of the master from the context of his age.

Theological hypnotism derives a certain force from the fact that the figure of Christ in the Gospels has, in spite of its predominantly superhuman character, a number of quite individual traits. Sayings of his are quoted in which we seem almost to feel the beat of his human heart; stories are told of him in which we seem to have the very man before our eyes. But this fact only proves that, as no one questions, such sayings and stories are the work of a single individual; there is no indication whatever of the identity of the individual. When the early Christian literature began to ascribe individual characteristics to its figure of Christ, the greater or less intensity of these features was merely a matter of literary tendency or literary skill. There are narratives in the Bible which are even

more vivid than the Christ-stories in their impression of personal reality, yet scientific research has definitely ascertained that there is no historical personality at the base of them. To take two instances that will be familiar to the general reader, the figures in the book of Ruth are very sharply defined and vivid, and the prophet Jonas has a perfect stamp of individuality. Yet there never was an historical Ruth or an historical Jonas as described in the story. Both narratives are entirely the outcome of religious poetry. They belong to a later Judaic age, and are intended to meet the increasing Chauvinism of the Jews with the ideas of humanity and internationalism. Hence both narratives are particularly instructive in connection with the Gospel stories of Christ. The book of Ruth shows the real value, or valuelessness, of the genealogies which later Jewish literature occasionally inserts in its didactic stories. Without the least historical reflection it projects its heroine into the time of the Judges, and attaches to her Moabitic family-history a genealogical tree that leads in a direct line to King David. The Jonas story, on the other hand, is expressly given us as prophetic of the life of Christ, not only (according to the figures in

the catacombs) in regard to the death and resurrection, but even in the matter of the life and teaching; in the first and third Gospels the activity of the preacher to the Ninevites is put on a level with the preaching of penance by Christ to the Jews, the only difference being that the failure of Christ with the Jews is more tragical than the lot of Jonas, who had some success at Nineveh. If the Gospels themselves find a parallel for the story of Jesus in that of Jonas, why should we insist on reading an historical personality into the one while we regard the other unhesitatingly as pure romance?

The case is even stronger when we find the theologians grounding their historical Jesus on the Epistles, especially those described as Pauline. Whether a single line of the letters contained in the New Testament was written by the Messianic travelling preacher whom we know from the *Acts* seems, for important reasons which we may discuss later, to be more than questionable. The obstinacy with which the critical school insists on ascribing *Galatians, Romans,* and *Corinthians* to Paul would soon cease if it were not for the fact that these Epistles give a certain support, it is thought, to the hypothesis that Jesus was

historical. Critical theologians declare that they give this support, but it is really the reverse; it is the historical Jesus that supports the traditional view of the Pauline Epistles, and is the chief obstacle to the impartial historical appreciation of them. For the moment we may at least say that, if critical theology were restricted in its biographical work to these Epistles, there would never have been any question in theology of attempting to write a life of Jesus. The Christ of the Pauline Epistles has far less individuality even than the Christ of the Gospels. He is described as the Spirit, the Son of God revealed in the Apostle, the second Adam, the heavenly man, the head of the community. All that we find of an historical character in regard to him are references to his death and resurrection. But the death of the Christ of the Epistles is not the natural termination of a human life; it is something metaphysical, a drama enacted between heaven and earth. The resurrection, also, is taken entirely out of the sphere of earth, so that the question whether it means the restoration of one who was only apparently dead, or the revivification of a dead man, never comes within the range of the Epistles. It is an open question merely

in what sense we are to take the many revelations of Christ mentioned in the Epistles as incidents that often accompanied the ecstatic phenomena in the life of the community.

Further, wherever we find in the Pauline Epistles sayings and precepts that are described as "the words of the Lord" or "received from the Lord," such as the direction in regard to the celebration of the Eucharist (1 Cor. xi.), or the regulations in regard to matrimony (1 Cor. vii.), these are canonical rules for which there is no parallel in the words of Christ in the Gospels, and that, in fact, often differ from the recorded sayings of Christ; while general ethical commands, such as that of love as the fulfilment of the law, or love of one's enemy, or peacemaking, or avoiding anxiety, love of money, etc., are not grounded on the words of Jesus at all, but prompted by the personal conscience of the writer of the Epistle. Thus precisely those ideas which Protestant theology claims as the peculiar province of its historical Jesus seem, in the Epistles, to be independent of Jesus, and to be a simple outpouring of the apostolic conscience; while the rules of the Christian communal life, which the theologians regard as later accretions, are explicitly

quoted as commands of the Lord. Hence the Christ of the Pauline Epistles is rather an argument against the critical theologians than a proof of the historicity of Jesus which they maintain.

But is there not a profane literature that seems to mention an historical Jesus in places? Even critical theologians are ceasing to find any support in these writings. The final result of the inquiries entered upon in this department with such high hopes may be summed up in the words of Hamlet: "The rest is silence." It is clear that none of the writers who mention Christ at the time when Christianity itself made its entry into history —from the beginning of the second century of our era, the age of Trajan—can be quoted as independent historical witnesses, because they have all derived their information from the Christian tradition itself. It is, therefore, quite superfluous to quote the one or two passages in Tacitus. Josephus alone, the Latinised Jew, could be taken into account as a witness to the historicity of Jesus; and only that passage (*Ant.* 20, 9) where he speaks of the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ, because the other passage (*Ant.* 18, iii. 3), where there is reference to the miracles and the great

teaching of Jesus, is universally recognised as an interpolation by a later Christian age. But there are serious reasons for doubting the genuineness of even the former passage. Origen has frequently observed that Josephus was hostile to the Christian sect. How could a Jew, to whom (as to all his contemporaries) the claim of divinity by a Jesus must have seemed a blasphemy, and one, moreover, who, being half Roman, saw a kind of Messias in the emperor Domitian, have come to speak so impartially of a Jesus who was called the Christ? Josephus speaks with unmistakable disdain of all the Messianic claimants of his time as "impostors who, under the cloak of divine inspiration, incited the people to riot and fanaticism, and led them out into lonely spots where God would show them miracles as some proof of their forthcoming emancipation."[1] Distinguished theologians such as Credner and Schürer have totally denied the genuineness of this second passage in Josephus.

But even if the passage were admitted to be genuine, it would be no stronger than a spider's line, on which critical theology would

[1] *Jewish War*, ii. 13, 4.

find it hard to suspend a human form. There were so many pseudo-Christs in the time of Josephus, and far into the second century, that we have no more than a summary mention of many of them. There was a Judas of Galilee, a Theudas, an unnamed Egyptian, a Samaritan, and a Bar Kochba. There may very well have been a Jesus among them. Jesus was a very familiar name among the Jews—Joschua, Josua, the Saviour. We know of Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of a collection of sayings; then a Jesus the son of Schiach, a high priest and favourite of Archelaus, the son of the great Herod; and in Josephus we have a dozen men named "Jesus." Are we to conclude from the possibility that Josephus speaks, in a more than doubtful passage, of a Jesus who was called Christ to the identity of this Jesus with the one whose biography our theologians desire to write?

It was reserved for Professor Henke to discover that the officials of the Roman Empire had exact information, even in Nero's time, about the Christians, and particularly about the founding of the sect by a Jew who was crucified in Palestine, because Tacitus did not rely, in his famous statement that the founder of the sect was put to death by Pontius

Pilate under Tiberius (*Annals*, xv. 44), on the Christian tradition, but "on the documents and acts in the imperial archives at Rome." The archives would have had to be rather extensive if they were to deal with every crucified Jew, as Josephus (*Jewish War*, i. 5, 2) speaks of two thousand that Varus had crucified in connection with a revolt. Henke would also prove the historicity of Jesus by an appeal to a passage in Suetonius, in which it is stated that the emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome because Chrestos had excited a revolt. He says that, if Chrestos did not mean Christus, Suetonius would have written "a certain Chrestos," because in Latin the qualification would only be omitted in speaking of a generally known personage. Thus, according to Henke, the Biblical Christ was for Suetonius "a well-known personage"! His translation of the passage is hardly less remarkable. Suetonius writes of a persecution of the Jews under Claudius, on account of a revolt led by Chrestos. This is made to mean: Claudius drove the Christians out of Rome because they had become restive under the inspiration of Christ—who had been crucified some time previously in Palestine under Tiberius!

The name Christ was originally not a personal name at all, but, like the word Messias, of which it is a Latin-Greek translation, it was the religious name for a certain point of belief. The stamp of individuality which the word has come to bear in the modern mind was only given to it by the Christian community; even if an historical Jesus had assumed the name, we could only understand him in connection with the Christian community. On this account there was no Christ independently of the belief of the Christians; certainly there could be no such person for a Tacitus or Suetonius or any other Roman. A historical personality, of whom these writers might hear through sources independent of Christian tradition, would not be known to them as Christ or Messias, but by his personal name. Moreover, Chrestos, of whom Suetonius writes, is a real personal name. Hence a revolutionary Chrestos at Rome is quite intelligible in the ordinary historical sense. On the other hand, a revolutionary Messias, especially one who had been crucified in Judea, would have been entirely outside Suetonius's purview.

It is especially interesting to see how Henke (who was entrusted by an important

German Protestant organ with the task of saving the historicity of Jesus) explains the origin of Christianity from his Rationalistic standpoint, as the explanation is typical of liberal Christianity. He says: "I would ask readers who are unfamiliar with the work of writing history to form a picture of our own time analogous to that of the origin of Christianity. It would come out somewhat as follows:—

"In the Prussian 'Galilee of the heathens' (*cf. Matt.* iv. 15 with *John* i. 46; vii. 41, 52), in the beautiful district about Stallupönen, where the wolf and the fox still linger, in the notorious spot to which officials infected with liberalism were banished during the reaction fifty years ago, we will suppose that there was a small builder who earned a scanty living by making huts for the peasants and artizans. His son, a man of strong religious feeling, is stimulated by an older cousin, who is preaching penance among the pious folk, to reflect on the religious condition of the nation. At length he becomes conscious that God has imposed on him the task of introducing a real religion in the place of a superficial ecclesiasticism. One day the cousin crosses the Russian frontier, expresses himself too freely

on the morals of the court at St. Petersburg, is transported to Siberia, and falls a victim to the malice of the overseer. His young relative now feels that the time has come to commence his work. He moves about in the extreme east of Prussia, holds meetings, and attaches a dozen followers more closely to his person—a few fishermen, a retired excise officer, and others. Before a year is out the matter goes a little too far for the Consistory. The Messias ventures to attend a festival at Koenigsberg, is arrested at the requisition of the Consistory, and in some way or other ends his life at Koenigsberg. His immediate followers disperse, as the majority have already done. Some of them, however, notably the fishermen and a brother of the dead leader, who had at first, like his other relatives, regarded the proceedings of the Messias as so much eccentricity, but has been converted, make their way to Koenigsberg. In this centre of intellectual activity, the birthplace of the *Critique of Pure Reason*—and of a good deal of narrow-minded priggishness—they succeed in establishing a congregation of Messiahists, the members of which are, with few exceptions, artisans, labourers, fishermen,

serving-girls, etc. The active intercommunication of our time soon spreads the new faith to other towns of Europe, a travelling cloth-maker, a convert from the orthodox body and a very strong personality, taking a conspicuous share in the work. But it is not until thirty years afterwards that a second large congregation makes its appearance in New York, which has been established by apostles from East Prussia.

"I need not follow the parallel any farther. It is not my task to show how a world-moving power was developed out of this tiny local agitation. We have only to realise how much of the whole agitation would find publicity in our own time. The Press, and perhaps a writer here and there, would notice the execution of the cousin in Russia, because Russian despotism is a frequent matter of comment in the Press, and the cousin has attacked the king himself, as Philo and Josephus speak of John the Baptist assailing the sober Antipas. But all that happens to the Messias might remain utterly unnoticed. A police notice in some periodical and the police and court documents at Königsberg would probably be the only printed or written references to the affair. Why should the

Press spare time and space for such unimportant events—religious eccentricities it would deem them—when it has large public questions of industry, politics, etc., to deal with every day? It is only when the fanatical populace of New York makes a murderous attack on the Messianic community there, thirty or forty years afterwards, because, like the officials, the people take them to be Anarchists bent on assassination, and this event leads an historian of the time to inquire who these much calumniated men really are—it is only then that we may come to find a literary notice of the sect, such as Tacitus gives of the Christians when he is describing the Neronian persecution."

It would be quite intelligible if orthodox German theology had regarded this passage as a parody of the origin of Christianity. Instead of this we find their chief journals expressing their gratitude to the author for his helpful work, and it was almost farcical to see how the two opposite schools of theology stood together in the dogma of the historicity of Jesus without the least perception that the Jesus whose historical reality is passionately affirmed by the one school is just as energetically rejected as unhistorical by the other.

A Son of God, Lord of the World, born of a virgin, and rising again after death, and the son of a small builder with revolutionary notions, are two totally different beings. If one was the historical Jesus, the other certainly was not.

The real question of the historicity of Jesus is not merely whether there ever was a Jesus among the numerous claimants of a Messiahship in Judea, but whether we are to recognise the historical character of this Jesus in the Gospels, and whether he is to be regarded as the founder of Christianity. If the whole of the older Church, including the New Testament literature, entirely rejects the notion of a human founder of the religion, how can our theologians venture to suggest that this literature really wanted to describe such a human founder to its readers, though it did so very clumsily and ineffectively? If there had been a Christ-like Jesus among the leading spirits of the new religion, he could not have announced his Christship otherwise than by identifying himself entirely with the Christian community. He might very well have said—even as Christ: "You shall call no man master on earth" (*Matt.* xxiii. 9); but he could never have said, without radically

violating the vital principle of Christship: "You have one master, and that is I, Christ"! If Christ had to exclude earthly, human mastership from the community, he could only mean by the one master the living Messianic consciousness itself.

If liberal theology had further developed the ideas of its Tübingen master, it would never have lost itself in the labyrinth of these efforts to write a life of Christ. Ferdinand Baur studies Christianity essentially from a Christian point of view. He has one foot in the rationalistic sphere, conceiving Christianity as a theological school, and the early Christians as disciples or pupils of a master of the school. But he says just as explicitly (*Church History,* i. 40) that it is not so much the teaching of the master as the faith of the disciples in the resurrection, or the primitive Christian Messiahism, that influences the whole history of Christianity. A thorough pupil of Hegel, he knows nothing of that cult of the individual which liberal theologians encourage with their historical Jesus. Christianity is, in his view, essentially an evolutionary form of the religious idea, the religious universalism in which Messianic Judaism coincides with the tendencies of

Roman politics and the ideas of Greek philosophy. He says (*Church History*, i. 5):—

> The main point is that Christianity could not be the general form of religious consciousness which it is, if the whole history of the world down to the time of Christianity, the general spiritual culture that was communicated to all men through the Greeks, the all-embracing domination of the Romans, with all its political institutions and the general civilisation grounded on them, had not broken down the limits of national consciousness, and abolished so much that held the nations aloof from each other, not only externally, but much more internally. The Christian universalism could never have penetrated into the general consciousness of the nations if the way had not been prepared for it by political universalism. It is essentially the same general form of consciousness as that to which the development of humanity had advanced at the period of the appearance of Christianity.

If Christianity is, from the theological point of view, only the religious synthesis of the factors that control the historical development of the time, what has scientific history to do with an individual Jesus? Even if we had literary testimony to him, and his existence was ever so firmly established, he would throw no light on the historical necessity of Christianity. As an individual he would have to be ranged in the historical environment from which Christianity proceeded; he would be, like any other single

individual, a co-worker with many others in the great constructive work of the time, but in no sense the single creator of a design or the leading builder in its realisation.

Any man who has appreciated the idea of historical development will find it impossible to arrange the periods of the world's history according to the ecclesiastical calendar. He will smile at the naïve conception of ushering in the Christian era with a ring of the bell, as it were, at a precise moment. For him the cult of certain years, which still often passes for "religious instruction," will have no meaning. Any man who has learned to take the sociological point of view, and appreciates all the transitions, modifications, and retrogressions that have to be taken into account in the rise of new social forms, will look upon the notion that a suddenly converted Paul permeated Asia Minor and the Balkan Peninsula, within the space of twenty years, with the gospel of a Christ that had hitherto been quite unknown there, and set up numbers of Christian institutions there, as a miracle beside which all the others related in ecclesiastical history are mere child's play.

Hence we must study the factors that have influenced the rise of Christianity very

differently from what has been done hitherto, with the individualist theory of history. The history of the preparation for Christianity is itself an integral part of the system, just as the embryonic development of the individual must be accounted a real part of his history from the biological point of view. The older Fathers of the Church, who made Christ live in history ages before his individual birth, proceeded, in their theological fashion, more correctly than their modern successors, who fancy they can indicate the rise of Christianity to a second of time. The value of either religious or ethical ideas is far higher when they are conceived as a constructive product of the organic development of a certain culture than when, as is done in the individualistic theory of history, they are regarded as the personal contribution of a single genius.

Chapter II.

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The economic complexion of the Roman Empire is, in the main, that of an agrarian capitalism, with a tendency to pass from what was originally a purely agrarian to a purely capitalistic period. When the city-state was substituted for the older domestic tribes in the constitution that is ascribed to Servius Tullius, the chief economic stress, and so the centre of political power, still lay in private property; while the artisans at Rome were condemned to political impotence as belonging to the latter class. Differently from the fairly constant urban tribes, the number of those in the rural districts rose to thirty-one from the fifth to the third century; and within the ranks of these peasant tribes the differentiation set in that made land-ownership the most powerful factor controlling the economic development of Rome. At each fresh annexation Rome inoculates the conquered territory with its own

economic tendency. The life of the metropolitan city beats in the newly-founded urban colonies; and while a part of the annexed land is handed over to the impoverished peasantry, another part is reserved to the State as *ager publicus*, to become the real instrument of the capitalistic growth of the Roman nobility. The older policy of the commercial system had favoured the peasants, so that a merchants' guild that was established in 495[1] never prospered, but the trade with Greece, which exchanged its industrial products for Roman corn, put the political power more and more exclusively into the hands of the corn-growing owners of large estates.

> The small peasant is, naturally, not in a position to exchange his small surplus of corn with foreign merchants for expensive Greek wares. He has to content himself with the inferior products of Roman industry. It is only the nobles with the large estates that can deal directly with the foreign traders, and pass on to them their large supplies of corn.[2]

Thus mobile capital at Rome was not dissociated from immobile as an independent power, with the effect of counterbalancing a

[1] Drumann, *Die Arbeiter und Kommunisten in Griechenland und Rom*, p. 270. Livy ii. 27.
[2] Karl Hoffmeister: *Die wirthschaftliche Entwickelung Roms*, p. 27.

one-sided agrarian development. It remains bound up with land-ownership, strengthening its power and helping to accelerate its concentration. The Roman noble becomes a relentless exploiter of the poor peasant. He is a speculator on a grand scale, and menaces the State, which has to buy back at a high price the corn his producers have sent abroad, with the most stringent famine; in this way he stimulates the demand on the foreign market and increases immeasurably the gains of the inland producers, until the annexation of Sicily changes the situation, and the flood of cheap Sicilian corn forces Roman capital to convert corn-land into pasture and seek fresh subjects of exploitation. This does not bring any improvement to the peasant, however, whose fate is sealed whether the price of corn is low or high. Right accommodates itself entirely to might; it applies to private life the fundamental principles of political annexation. Gain is booty; not a claim to the outcome of labour, but occupation, appropriation of an enemy's goods, as Gaius, the jurist of the Antonine age, defines the Roman conception of property, in agreement with all the classical authorities of his time. Thus everything tends in the direction of the Gospel

saying: "To him that hath shall be given." There is no political and social, and certainly no religious or ethical, resistance to the evils of this great concentration of capital. The capitalistic accumulation on an agrarian basis has the whole power of the State at its disposal at Rome—the army, the fleet, the law, and the government. Official positions are sources of profit; they fall to those who are in a position to drive the less wealthy out of the field, and each fresh gain spurs them to fresh enterprises in order to retain the source of the wealth within the family.

Hoffmeister thus describes the economic position of Rome about two centuries before Christ:—

> Peace and tranquillity have hardly been restored after the exhausting struggles when capital begins to stir itself. The war has laid waste large tracts of country. They are used as before to establish new colonies of peasants. But capital sees in the rich Sicilian corn-fields a new and very profitable department, especially when the Carthaginian system is taken over. The State in turn sees in the provincials and their land a great alleviation of its tasks, and begins its fiscal method by first imposing on the conquered a natural tax, which is paid chiefly in corn, and is mainly set up for the purpose of feeding the army without cost in the future. And as there is always some surplus of the corn raised, it directs the ædiles to sell it as cheaply as possible in the metropolis, because the population of Rome,

> especially the proletariat, has long complained of the high price of corn, which ran up to a desperate figure during the war with Hannibal on account of the devastation of the corn-fields. Then, in order that capital may squeeze all it can out of the annexed province, the State does not raise its taxes directly, but farms out the work of gathering them to the highest bidders. The latter have to give a *cautio realis* for the result, a new impulse to capitalistic investment in land.....So the great serpent that is to strangle the finest strength of Rome, its peasantry, brings its coils closer and closer together.[1]

The remedies that were applied to this malady of the social organism were bound to fail. The two Gracchi fully recognise the extent and the depth of the evil, and are, in their way, full of a plan of salvation. It is afterwards written in the Gospel (*Matt.* viii. 20): "The foxes have holes and the birds of the heavens have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Just in the same way Tiberius Gracchus appeals to the people with the plaint: "The wild beast has its cavern and its den: every one of them has its place of refuge. But those who are called the lords of the earth have nothing left but light and sunshine. There is not a stone that they can call their own and lay their

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

weary head to rest on."[1] But every effort to reform the situation in the Roman world completely failed. The restoration of the Licino-Sextinian laws, which forbade any citizen to hold as hereditary property more than 500 acres of the common land, was frustrated by the cupidity of the great landowners, which had made the passage of them illusory from the start. The attempt of Caius Gracchus to form the money-changers and tax-farmers into a special organisation and free them from the jurisdiction of the nobles, so as to raise up a powerful antagonist to the large landowner in the person of the financier, really only created a new coalition of interests for common resistance to the substance of the reforms—the rehabilitation of a strong peasantry. In a few decades the new colonies of peasants were again expropriated, after the hereditary farms had been converted into free and inalienable property. The one thing that the brothers Gracchi really succeeded in securing—the legal sale of corn to citizens at a lower than the normal price—is found to be most mischievous in view of later developments. It converts the metropolis into an insatiable

[1] Plutarch's *Lives*: Tiberius Gracchus, c. 9.

stomach, swallowing up the life of the provinces and forming a new and powerful centre of attraction for the unemployed and shiftless proletariat, of which the metropolis ought to have been relieved by the founding of new colonies. Drumann sums up the economic development in these words :—

> The nobles were not content with being in almost exclusive possession of the State lands and monopolising the higher positions in the city and the army; they were the capitalists as well as the commanders. The city magistracy was the bridge by means of which they passed into the provinces for the purpose of exploiting the producers and cheating the treasury. Thus they came to possess large fortunes, by means of which they were able to exploit the poverty of their fellow-citizens. The small landowners sold their property to rich neighbours because they were in debt to them and could not pay; others had their land torn from them by force or by threats. They then maintained themselves as farmers or labourers; and even this was not easy, because the slaves, who were not usually needed for war purposes, were preferred to free workers.[1]

Mommsen observes that shortly after the time of Gracchus the farmers of a province, almost all Roman speculators, possessed on an average 100,000 hectares of arable land each.[2] We can quite understand, when Cicero tells us

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 152. [2] *Roman History*, ii. 76.

that Julius Philippus (104 B.C.), in pressing for an agrarian law, said in a speech that there were not more than 2,000 citizens in Rome who owned land,[1] or when we find half of the African province in the possession of six owners of latifundia in the time of Augustus.[2]

Thus we get the sharp contrast of rich and poor that finds its typical expression in the Gospel parables. Lucian, in his conversation with a friend, ridicules the *nouveau riche* at Rome who flaunts his purple folds in the eyes of people. In these circumstances one would find, often enough, cases of the younger son wandering out into the world with his share of the heritage and dissipating it, and sinking to the level of the labourer in the course of time, until he finds it difficult even to earn his coarse bread among the swineherds of the great corn-lords, and then bethinks himself how many labourers find decent work and sustenance on his father's property. The Gospel parables relating to taxes also seem to find a more suitable frame in the social conditions of Rome than in those of Palestine. At all events, it would be well to submit some

[1] *De Officiis*, ii. 21.
[2] Hoffmeister, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

of these points to a serious critical inquiry. In Palestine, and especially in Galilee, we should hardly expect to find tax-gatherers of this sort. Max Weber says :—

> Up to the beginning of the Empire the tendency of Rome's development was to leave the dependent populations of the realm a certain fiscal autonomy, and to fix the tribute for the whole ; just as the constitutions of Gaul due to Augustus led to the raising of such a tribute on the province, not at all in the sense of a distribution of the taxation among the taxable individuals, but merely a distribution among communities and races.[1]

With Augustus begins the attempt to substitute the direct taxation, described in *Matt.* (xvii. 24) as customary at Capharnaum, for the yearly contribution of communities ; and the census of Quirinus mentioned in the New Testament must be taken in connection with this form of taxation.

However, this attempt, which caused a revolution in Judea, was only brought to success under Diocletian and Constantine. Palestine had received explicit guarantees of self-government from Cæsar and recognition from the Senate, and the northern part of the country, which is, in the main, the scene of the Synoptic Gospels, could not possibly be

[1] *Römische Agrargeschichte,* p. 185.

affected by the census,[1] as this part formed an independent principality under Antipas. Josephus says expressly: "When the kingdom of Archelaus was reduced to a province, his brothers, Philip and Herod with the surname Antipas, continued to hold the position of princes."[2] The system of direct taxation was so little known in Palestine that, in order to determine roughly the number of the population before the Jewish war, they had to rely on the number of Paschal lambs sacrificed at Jerusalem.[3] A tax-gatherer named Johannes, who is mentioned by Josephus, lived in Cæsarea by the sea, the centre of the Roman administration, a town that was explicitly forbidden to the Jews by Nero. If the fiscal system had been organised in such a way in Palestine as the Gospel describes, the summary method of determining the population given by Josephus would be quite unintelligible. Hence, down to 66 A.D. there cannot possibly have been taxation registers in Palestine, least of all in Galilee, though these would be inevitable in a system of direct taxation with tax-gatherers living in the district.

[1] Stade, *Israelitische Geschichte,* ii. 511.
[2] *Jewish Wars,* ii. 9, 1. [3] Josephus, vi. 10.

On the other hand, if there had been a Roman fiscal system in Palestine, the procedure would have been much easier than that recorded by Josephus. His own words show how the Roman administration carefully considered the religious views of the Jews in fiscal questions. Hence, in Palestine there was no need whatever for the bodies of tax-gatherers that are mentioned in the Gospels. They were necessary at Rome and in Italy. There, according to Cicero, they belonged to the class which was hated by their fellows on account of their occupation.[1] We can thus understand the feeling of the Jews in regard to them without needing to form a picture of the administration of Palestine that does not correspond to the reality.

Finally, the state of the law in the Roman Empire also enables us to understand the obscure background of the economic life in the Gospels. For the creditor to sell the debtor with his wife and family, and for the debtor to lie in jail until he pays the last farthing, was not Jewish but Roman law. In Palestine the Jewish law of debt was followed, and Josephus describes this from the practice of his time as

[1] *De Officiis*, i. 42.

a law of humanity and mercy, in complete contrast to the Roman law :—

> Any man who has borrowed money or fruit shall, if his condition improves through God's goodness, promptly discharge his debt to his creditors, and be able to borrow it once more if he chance to need it. But if the debtor is unable to return it, he shall not be permitted, without taking judgment, to enter the house and take away the security. If the giver of the security has means, the creditor shall retain the security until the loan is returned ; but if he is poor the creditor shall return the security to him, especially if it is a bed-covering. For God himself is merciful to the poor. The mill, and all that pertains to it, must not be taken in pledge, so that the poor man may not be prevented from preparing his food, and so fall into greater want.[1]

On the basis of such a law of debt and security it would be impossible to have a state of distress and poverty on the part of debtors like that described in the Gospels. It is a purely Roman situation that we find there.

There were at all times free men and Roman citizens who were ground down by this development of agrarian capital. What would be the situation of this free proletariat in comparison with the lot of the great masses of human beings who, as slaves, made up the living inventory of the large estates, or led a subterraneous life in the mines? The

[1] *Antiquities*, iv. 8, 16.

spread of slavery made it more and more difficult for the free worker to earn his scanty living as a day-labourer. All that was left for him was the distribution of corn or the possibility of getting himself included among the clients of some distinguished Roman, and obtaining food in reward of his obsequious following in the train of the master. In that way many a man found his daily bread who said to himself: "To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed." On the other hand, the lot of the slaves, whose number went up enormously after the second Punic war, was very bad. One of the authorities thus describes it:—

> Their treatment was as bad as can be imagined. Where the ground was still cultivated they lived in herds under the control of a slave-master. Their dwelling was the well-known *caserna* of the workers, a half-subterranean structure with a number of narrow windows, which were raised high enough from the ground to escape being reached with the hand. Loaded with fetters, branded on brow and limbs, they went out in the morning to their severe labours, and were compelled to maintain it until the sun went down. "The slave must either work or sleep," said the elder Cato, the Roman model-employer of his time. There were no days of rest or holiday for the poor wretches. What did it matter if a score or two succumbed in the unhealthy dwelling, with insufficient food or clothing? The abounding slave

markets offered a fresh supply at a price that was cheaper than the cost of proper food.[1]

They included not only barbarian soldiers, who were condemned to that fate by the hard laws of war, but also men and women who had shared in the intellectual life of the time, peasants who had been ejected from their homes without a pretence of judgment and fettered to the chain of slaves.

It is in this deplorable condition of human life in the slave-world that we find the beginning of an upward movement that embodies itself at last in a new social culture, the Christian system. At the close of the Roman Republic the slaves formed a nation within a nation. We can form some idea of their numbers when we learn that 10,000 slaves were often sold in one day at the Delic slave-market, one of the largest in the second century B.C.[2] We are told that the freedman G. Cæcilius left 4,116 slaves at his death in the first century of the Christian era. In the year 100 the king of Bithynia declares that he is unable to send the required contribution, as the State officials have shipped off all the

[1] Karl Bücher, *Die Aufstände der unfreien Arbeiter*, 143–129 B.C.

[2] Mommsen, i. 75.

able-bodied men as slaves.[1] These slaves were drawn together by a common instinct—a feeling of hatred against a social order that gave rich and luxurious idleness power over the life and strength of countless thousands. This feeling swept away all limits of nationality. The barbarians were just the men to form a solid core for a revolutionary propaganda, to found the sense of international brotherhood on their common misery and give it practical expression.

We find, therefore, the beginnings of organised resistance, first to particular exploiters, and then to the whole system. After a number of lesser revolts in the preceding centuries there was a great outbreak in Sicily (143 B.C.) in the fertile country round the modern Castrogiovanni (formerly Enna), where "the misery of the slave's life seems to have been concentrated in its worst form."[2] Eunus, a Syrian, was the leader of the maddened slaves, and he erected a slave-kingdom, which lasted ten years and spread over the whole island. According to the chief reference to this outbreak in the fragments of Diodorus nearly the whole island

[1] Mommsen, ii. 74.
[2] Karl Bücher, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

became subject to the slave-king, who had the adroitness to choose a well-travelled Greek, Achaios, as his chief counsellor. The movement that centred about the prophet of Enna even spread to Italy. Tiberius Gracchus points out frequently in his speeches how the frightful war in Sicily, with all its perils and defeats, was the inevitable result of the pernicious system that was to be found in Italy also among the swarms of barbaric slaves.[1] The part that was played by the cross in this revolt of the slaves may be learned from the record that L. Calpurnius Piso, consul for the year 133, who was entrusted with the charge of suppressing the revolt, had all the prisoners crucified after the storming of Messana. Moreover, the religious background of the movement is so unmistakable that Bücher closes his account of it with the following words :—

> However much we may or may not be disposed to accept these religious influences, it is at least undeniable that they must be regarded as a mighty lever in these, as in numbers of later popular movements for redemption from human misery and degradation. Just as the religious socialism of the Anabaptists is not an isolated phenomenon, but a link in a great chain, so Eunus was not the last of his kind. The heroes of the second Sicilian slave-rising (104–99), which seemed to follow the lines of

[1] Karl Bücher, p. 72.

> the earlier one down to the smallest details, appeal also to the superstition of the masses. Even the strong figure of Spartacus was haloed, in the eyes of his followers, by the dim light of religious superstition.[1]

Bücher thinks it not impossible that the Messianic ideas of the Jews, perhaps in combination with certain Neo-Persian notions, found a concrete expression in the prophet Eunus.

Among the followers of the lyrical prophet-king of Sicily a shepherd-slave from the Tauros mountains, the home of the later Apostle Paul, had played a conspicuous part, and had kept the position of a military commander to the end. It appears that in this wild, mountainous region, the home of the Cilician bandits, there was a specially favourable soil for a revolutionary gospel of human freedom and independence. The first impulse to a movement that penetrated into the interior of Asia Minor, "preaching to the captives that they be set free," came from the west side of the peninsula, the ancient Pergamos, where the Apocalyptic writer of the New Testament places the chair of Satan. Here, in 133 B.C., Aristonicos, the natural son

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

of the last king of Pergamos, had raised a protest against the will of Attalus III., by which he had made over his country and treasures to the Romans. When the pretender to the throne, who had quickly mastered the coast-district as far as Caria, was driven by the Ephesians into the interior of Asia Minor, he gathered a great army of slaves, and with their aid founded a sun-state, Heliopolis, on a basis of liberty and equality.[1] As in the rising of Eunus in Sicily, so here, as the name Heliopolis indicates, Oriental religious ideas were the vehicle of the socialistic and communistic tendencies. When it is recorded afterwards in the *Acts of the Apostles* (xvi. 14) that the companions of the Apostle met at Philippi a woman of Thyatira, named Lydia, a purple-dyer, who had taken them at once into her house, we have some light thrown on the rapid conversion from the fact that Thyatira was one of the towns that had been stormed and taken by the vigorous armies of the Heliopolitans. In view of the state of things at the time the seed thus planted in the hearts of the lower classes of the population would

[1] Bücher, p. 105.

inevitably ripen into Utopian or Millennial ideas, with a pure ethical over-current and a radical communistic under-current. The *Apocalypse* of John mentions Thyatira as one of the towns which, like Pergamos, reject the servants of the Lord, practising whoredom and sacrificing to the gods. Seed of this kind does not die, even in centuries, but at length finds the soil that will afford it nourishment. Bücher says of Aristonicos, who ended his dream of a sun-state as a captive at Rome in 129: "He grasped the drift of the time, the agitation that was stirring all minds from the Capitoline Hill and the heights of Euna to the ridges of Tauros."

The last slave-rising, the most famous and considerable that Rome ever had to meet, took place in the year 72 B.C., and brought 50,000 slaves into the field under the command of the heroic Spartacus. It only shows that all the blood poured out on the cross at the time, as thousands of slaves expiated their belief in a day of liberty and justice, was not enough to extinguish the fire that glowed in the subterraneous regions of the Roman world. Social reform on a large scale was a pressing, world-wide need, and, as always happens, the economic development

had itself prepared the ground for the inauguration of a new order of things. Agrarian capitalism had in its own interest begun to cultivate its farms by a half-free, though really fettered, generation of peasants instead of pure slaves, for the purpose of obtaining greater profit from the soil. It is recognised by all the authorities on the subject—I need only name Kowalesky (*Die œkonomische Entwickelung Europas*), G. Adler (*Sozialreform im Alterthum*), and Max Weber (*Römische Agrargeschichte*)—that in this new form of colony we have the main lines of the industrial structure of the Christian Middle Ages. Hence we find references to it even in the Gospels.

Weber describes the position of the *coloni* during the imperial period in the following manner: The owner's manager or *ordinator* has under him a number of *coloni*, though besides these there is a family of slaves living on the estate under the authority of the manager. The *coloni* are independent hereditary cultivators, living on the estate, holding a position about midway between small peasants and day-labourers. The owner has police control of the *coloni*, and is at liberty to apply torture. In virtue of this

police power the owners at times thrust their underlings into prison as well as the slaves. The manager (*conductor*) was generally a slave, and there were many complaints of the brutality of these officials. In the early years of the Empire the oppressed *coloni* had no appeal beyond the estate, but in later years they were allowed to appeal to the ordinary courts. But the whole structure of the colonatus grew inevitably out of the economy of the latifundia. It enabled the wealthy Roman to enjoy the life of the town far away from his estates, and at length proved to be the only method of profitably cultivating the otherwise neglected soil.

Thus we get the picture of the higher slave (*Matt.* xxiv. 45), who has been set over the others by the master, and at one time gives them food in season, at another begins to beat them and riot with the drunkards, because he believes that the master will not return. Again we hear (*Matt.* xxv. 14) of the master who went across the country and abandoned his property to the slaves; or of the owner of a vineyard (*Mark* xii. 1) who entrusts his vineyard to the slaves to cultivate, and then demands an account of them; or of the man who yearns for a true and faithful manager

(*Luke* xii. 42). It agrees entirely with the passage in *Matthew* about the master who planted a vineyard, made a fence about it, dug a pit in it, built a tower, and, handing it over to the workers, went into a far country, when Max Weber says :—

> All the large estates had their wine-pits and oil-presses.....The making of wine and oil, as Cato describes it, is more or less at the domestic stage. .....The absolutism of the owners went to such a length that they became mere capitalists dwelling constantly in the metropolis, consuming their incomes and rarely visiting their estates.[1]

Besides these half-free *coloni*, who are in places the connecting link in the chain of development of the new Germanic order, the Roman Empire had a third social stratum, and this became very powerful in the imperial period. This was the proletariate of the towns, of which we have a lively picture in Pöhlmann's history of ancient Communism and Socialism (vol. ii.).

It is impossible to follow this account without realising at each step the resemblance of current ideas among this Roman proletariate to those of the older Messiahism. Everything in both material and spiritual life points to a coming age when glad tidings will

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

be announced to the poor. The writers who represent the educated proletariate of the time —Juvenal, Martial, and Horace—express their feelings in bitter satires, declaring that at capitalistic Rome a man is worth only as much as he possesses, and that the poor are everywhere despised.

> It is [says Pöhlmann] almost impossible to appreciate the flood of democratic resentment that was pent up in these men. The incredible anarchy that Rome had got into in the revolutionary period is really the work of a proletariate that fed on the revolution, not only metaphorically, but literally. Poverty became a powerful force in political and social life; and as such it outlived the Republic, and was a constant source of anxiety even to the absolutist *régime* of the Cæsars.

Yet there was a proud consciousness of internal freedom in these "poor" citizens. Martial, for instance, sings thus of true freedom :—

> To trivial baubles of the hour
> Thyself no longer bind,
> Feel thou art great and fortunate
> In gifts of heart and mind:
> Then, truly, good friend Maximus,
> Thou hast won freedom's worth;
> Then art thou lifted higher
> Than any prince of earth.

That is the voice of the Gospel, warning men not to lay up earthly treasures in the service of Mammon, and not to suffer the loss of their

own soul even to gain the whole world. It is a proletariate that would hold its head up. If fasting is its daily lot, yet the brave man will not bear a long face before the world, as the hypocrites do, to let his fasting be known. Martial warns his friend against vanity in suffering :—

> He sorrows not who in the eyes of men
> Seeks to draw profit from his pain.
> A real grief shuns the intrusive gaze,
> And mourns, dear Gallia, in its solitude.

But even in this stratum of the people we find the faith in a Utopia that lifts them above the sad reality. This faith is at first, especially in the more educated circles, directed to a bygone age, a Rousseauic belief in the bliss of humanity's first years. However, the mind gathers strength and inspiration from the legend of the past, and a standard with which it can measure the present. The Saturnian age is depicted in the most glowing colours, as we find in Ovid's *Metamorphoses;* and the festival of the Saturnalia, which was celebrated once a year, gave the slave a glimpse of what the world would be like if men would join as brothers in the enjoyment of the earth and its gifts. Even Seneca, the philosophic *parvenu,* speaks with zeal of the primitive communism of the golden age, "when a man

cared for his neighbour as for himself, whereas now—in the age of private property—the sharp sting of want robs a man of sleep."

Thus the Roman society is just at the point when we may expect something new to issue from its depths. For this it needed no impulse from without; its internal forces, destructive as well as constructive, sufficed for the work. These forces as yet lie deep underground. As Pöhlmann writes at the close of his book:—

> While ideas of social betterment degenerated into idle play in the suffocating atmosphere of absolutism and plutocracy; while Plato's *Republic* was cherished in the boudoirs of Roman ladies as a gospel of free love, gratifying their voluptuous craving for sensation and condoning their vicious freedom; there had long been proceeding in the lower strata of the Roman population a movement that was inspired by an absolute conviction of the existence of some way by which men might pass from this vale of tears to the isles of the blest. In this we have a revival of the old dream of the primitive happiness of mankind, the lost paradise that was one day to be regained. The belief in the divine enterprise that Plato had countenanced, the possibility of a social and moral regeneration through some great genius of the race of the gods or sons of the gods, takes definite bodily form in the heart of the people. From the depths of society arises that communism of the weary and oppressed which, in its way, to a certain extent, exhibits the common cast of thought and feeling, the common

purpose and aim, which Plato had declared to be the first condition of the future State. Nor were some of these people less radical in their rejection of the morbid civilisation and their shaping of the ideal. The minds of men were so irresistibly drawn to this ideal by the action of religious and socio-ethical forces that the idea of a millennium reached a pitch of development that forcibly recalls Zeno's ideal social order.

Chapter III.

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

The chief import of Greek philosophy, as far as Christianity is concerned, is that it created the forms of thought in which the West could assimilate religious impulses and experiences. Monotheism, the fundamental feature of the Christian system, had its theological and ethical consequences so fully developed in Greek philosophy that it led directly to the dogmatic and ethic of the Church. The way had been well prepared for monotheism by the development of Greek philosophy. The rational craving for unity, to which philosophic speculation owes its rise, led inevitably to the monotheistic conception. Philosophic thought had, since the time of Thales of Miletus, regarded the natural world as a whole, and sought its supreme life-principle, its ground of existence. In the same way it conceived the spiritual world as a unity. To the deities of popular mythology it opposed

the one God whom, in its abstract deduction of unity from plurality, it regarded as the essence of them all.

The Greek philosophers are all monotheists, except those of the atomic school, who are concerned only with the scientific interpretation of nature ; they remain monotheists even when, in practical life, they declare the popular deities to be particular revelations of the one God. Since Xenophanes wrote in the sixth century of the one God, supreme above all gods and men, not to be compared to mortals either in shape or thought, all eye, all ear, all mind, the idea of God's unity became an essential part of Greek philosophy. However, this philosophic monotheism has to find some connecting link with the world. At first God himself is a cosmic power and phenomenon, the All-One, enclosing the world in himself as an eternal being or eternal becoming. Then he becomes the World-Reason, creating and ordaining all things ; until at last Plato depicts God as the supreme unity of all the ideas of the invisible world, in which these ideas exist. This Platonic duplication of the world makes it needful to find some mediator between the supramundane God and the material world.

In Plato the mediator is the soul. First, in the form of World-Soul, it brings beauty and harmony into the chaos of matter; then, as the mind of man, it keeps alive the memory of the world of ideas, in which it had lived before its inclusion in the body; and lastly, as Eros, or the love of wisdom, justice, beauty, and goodness, and therefore of God, it unites man by invisible and indestructible bonds to his eternal home, the world of ideas. Thus Plato fashions the metaphysical features of the Christian system: the transcendental world with its transcendental God, and the conception of a mediator between God and man, who has his origin in God, and is of divine character and essence. In the further development of Platonism this mediator comes to occupy the chief position. He is the divine principle of life and revelation, a truly divine being, personified wisdom, the word of God.

However, this metaphysic is but the theoretic base of an ethical system which directs the philosophic craving for unity to the shaping of ideals of life. The social development of Greece soon brought to light the antithesis in men's minds between things as they were and things as they ought to be. After the lordly men of the Homeric age had

ended their aristocratic existence, there was a popular reaction against the tendencies of the exploiting nobles.

> The first symptom of this awakening of the masses [says Pöhlmann] is seen in the poetry of Hesiod. For him it is not external considerations that matter, but moral and religious views. Not the institutions, but the thoughts, of men are, in his opinion, the source of happiness or unhappiness. His song of labour strongly reminds us in this respect of the social-reform literature of a Christian and ethical idealism with which modern Socialism begins its development.....In the soul of the inspired poet there is the same child-like confidence as in the prophets and psalmists, and in modern Christian Socialists ; the belief that it only requires a moral and religious regeneration of society to free the world of all social and economic evils.[1]

Sicily and the south of Italy were then the Eldorado of all social reformers. They escaped from the native penury and lived in colonies under certain rules of life, or sought with poetic enthusiasm to remove the existing inequalities and injustices of life, and turned the whole country into a glowing centre of social revolution. It was here that, in the sixth century before Christ, Doric immigrants had founded a communist State at Lipara. It was here that Pythagoras and his pupils

[1] "Die Anfänge des Sozialismus in Europa," in *Sybels historische Zeitschrift,* vol. 43, p. 421.

had conducted their political experiments, trying to engender a new sense of life in mystic studies of numbers and with holy regulations and pious customs, and so to create a community of the good and pure in a wicked world.

These vague and ambiguous social ideas were worked into a philosophic system by the intellectual activity that begins with Socrates. In his absolute faith in the organising power of reason he made an extensive application of it to the political education of his fellow-citizens. His fundamental principle, that virtue is a form of knowledge and therefore teachable, applies to civic and political virtue. In this the political whole includes its several members in the same way as the abstract ideas of reason embrace the images of the concrete individual things subordinated to them. With the aid of this conceptual philosophy Plato then creates the philosophical superstructure of the Athenian city-state. This, as a rational structure, has a thoroughly ethical and normative significance; it aims at being a political ideal, a rational State, the State of the future, following the same aim as the ideal State of the prophets, save that it is created by the agency

of an abstract philosophy instead of by that of religious intuition. In Plato, as in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, the radical evil of life consists in the inequalities of possession, in the contrast of wealth and poverty that mars all the work and art of man. The roots of this evil are the love of money and egoism, which have brought about private property, and have, in the growth of capitalist exploitation, increased the ills both of the individual and the State. Hence the State must take up the struggle against this disorder. It must not itself be entangled in the evil of money-making in its chief organs, and so its leaders must have no private property; they must show in their own lives that the only treasures worthy of man's pursuit are, not possession and luxury, which are illusory goods, but the love of wisdom and virtue.

However, as the State rests on the principle of the division of labour, trade becomes indispensable as the means of exchanging the commodities produced. But if trade is not to be the source of luxury and money-making, it demands an equivalence of the things to be exchanged; and in so far as labour, as an economic factor of value, comes into exchange, a trade which seeks an equivalent for this

labour is just. Thus the economic problem of the Platonic republic is the same as that of the Christian Church; it is the question of economic justice, the community or State being in both cases regarded as the power determining this justice. It is true that in Plato only the full Athenian citizen is considered; but in Aristotle we find a consideration of the half-citizen, the lower caste, the *metoikos*. The age of Alexander, which destroys the barrier between Western and Eastern civilisation, and raises the mind to an international point of view, opens with a wider knowledge of the world, and a strengthening of the sense of reality. Aristotle's "best State" is by no means a "State of the future." He is determined to have right in the present, here and now, though this State of his will be intermediate between the idea and the reality, a combination of the divine and human. The State is an organism, a body with many members. The organising force is reason, which gives its form to all matter. Since reason cannot be a monopoly of birth or wealth, the control of the State belongs to the whole of the people; though the slaves, as an inferior class of men, are not included in this. The people must, in all their measures, be

guided by the supreme law of social life, the law of justice and virtue. Aristotle attacks the accumulation of wealth even more sharply than Plato, and carefully distinguishes it from the circulation of commodities that economic life demands. It is a civic philosophy of the golden mean that we find in Aristotle, preparing the way for a humane system that will sweep aside the limitations of nationality and class. We begin to see the man who will be neither Jew nor Greek, but is conscious of his own value and his personal needs.

The political organisation was strong enough in the earlier years to suppress these tendencies, which would make man the measure of all things, and recognise in each the rights of human nature ; but this oppressive political power fell with the collapse of the Greek system. The old antithesis of pleasure and pain once more gave expression to elementary human feelings, and dominated the ideas of the philosophic schools until long after the close of the age. At first sight the pleasure-loving pupils of Epicurus seem to have very little to do with preparing the world for Christianity, yet their habit of testing all life-values from the explicit standpoint of happiness is an unmistakable feature of Christianity.

But it is especially the Stoic philosophy that reappears in the Christian system. The ascetic morality of the older cynics is enlarged and developed into a comprehensive philosophy, so that the most extreme representatives of Stoicism come into direct touch with the later cynical school. In the Stoic school political life, which philosophy had since the time of Socrates regarded as man's highest activity and the fulfilment of all ethical precepts, passes into complete cosmopolitanism. Zeno, the founder of the school, contemplates a great social world-state, in which all men are united in an ideal community by the natural law of reason, and pursue the same aim of obedience to this law. As the inner law should rule a man, Zeno held that the ideal State should have no courts of justice. The Stoics generally look with disfavour on the judging of others, because, as Epictetus says,[1] no one should pass judgment on others who has not himself been judged by the right, and it is an indignity for a judge to be judged by another. Not external behaviour, but the inner mood,

[1] *Manual of Morality*, pp. 60 and 65 (Stich's translation).

is the concern of the Stoic. Man's inward being is, according to Epictetus (p. 65), a vessel that must be kept clean if the philosophy that has to be poured into it is not to be spoiled. Hence, Epictetus makes the same charge against the philosophers as the Gospel does against the Pharisees—that they often fail to practise what they preach. He says (p. 28): Avoid swearing—avoid it altogether if possible, but at least swear as seldom as you can. To its indifference to the country Stoicism joins indifference to the bonds of the family, going so far at times as to preach aversion from marriage (p. 7). On the other hand, every one who does the will of God is a brother or sister to the Stoic. For God is the Father of all men, and no higher name can be given to a man than that he is a child of God (pp. 71 and 72). Humanity lives in each human individual; hence he honours humanity who recognises it even in the wicked and does good to them. The only worthy vengeance on an enemy is to do him as much good as possible (pp. 56 and 58). There are innumerable passages in which the Stoic glances with disdain at the possessions of the wealthy, and opposes to the passing treasures of the earth, which only the fool will

gather, the real treasures of man, the attainments of reason.

Thus we find an ascetic system among the Stoics that at times reaches a downright contempt of life, a suicidal flight from life to the freedom that awaits man at death. The final aim of this philosophy in the early years of the Roman Empire is to save the soul from the prison to which life has relegated it, to protect it amid all the menaces of terrestrial existence. From the mingling of different philosophic views with the mysticism that was spreading over the world we get the idea of an end of the world which opens out a new hope in the vision of a world beyond.

> From the end of the second century [says Erwin Rohde] there is a pronounced religious reaction, and it grows more and more with the course of time. Philosophy itself becomes a religion, fed by aspiration and revelation. The soul no longer looks proudly and calmly on what may lie behind the veil of death; life seemed to demand a complement elsewhere; the hoary world seemed to have no possibility of growing young again on this earth. So with redoubled ardour hope flings itself with closed eyes into the new existence that is hid beyond the known and knowable world of the living. The soul is filled with hope and desire, but also with anxiety, in face of the dread secrets of death. At no other period of ancient history was the belief in the immortal life of the soul so

ardently and anxiously expressed as in these days when the older civilisation was passing away..... There was a revival of the ancient and venerable mysteries of Eleusis, which were celebrated until near the close of the fourth century. Orphic conventicles must have assembled for a long time, and the Hellenised east had many similar orgies. Foreign religions pressed into Greece owing to the mingling with Eastern races, and had more success than the old Greek cults. Stringent orders, the rigid reserve of sacred knowledge, aversion from the world and its pleasures, ceremonial purification and sanctification, penance and asceticism, were more widespread in the East than in Greece. By these means they prepared the believers for the highest they could present to them—a life of eternal happiness, far from this unclean world, in the kingdom of the holy and of those consecrated to God. The Egyptian religion spreads more and more down to the last days of the ancient faith; and with it spread the Syrian or Phrygio-Thracian cult of Sabazius, of Attis, and of Cybele, and the Persian religion of Mithra. Obscure mysteries and symbolic rites work on the popular imagination, and prepare it for a belief in magical influence. Even the higher culture of the time, degenerating into credulity and miracle-seeking, came at length to share in these purificatory rites, which had at first been confined to the lower classes of the population. The most cultivated men of the time reconciled themselves to all that was mysterious and incomprehensible, even in its most sensuous dress. The newly awakened religious feeling of the people had been accompanied by a return of philosophy to Plato and his religious speculations. Neo-Platonic speculation fills the last centuries of Greek intellectual life. It preaches a renunciation

of natural life, and absorption in the spiritual world beyond.[1]

This philosophy is the philosophy of poor men from the first. Appian speaks, in his description of the times from the Gracchi to Cæsar, of the "poor devils" who, in the obscurity of private life, because they have nothing better to do and need some consolation in their poverty, turn to philosophy. Thus a new kind of popular culture spreads. These philosophic "poor devils" really represent the mass of the people; we find even in the dens of the slaves, and among the wretchedly paid artisans, not a few representatives of the highest culture, such as Epictetus the Stoic, originally a slave in the house of a brutal Roman patrician. These poor men, who nevertheless have the intellectual power to frame a new world, are the outcasts and disinherited, devouring their spiritual food with the greater hunger in proportion to the scantiness of their earthly food. In these circles of spiritual luxury there was a vivid consciousness that man does not live by bread alone. A new pride in real human dignity was engendered, and man was not valued at what he possessed, but at what he was.

[1] *Psyche*, ii. 397.

It must have been the thought of this philosophy of the poor that caused one of the first defenders of Christianity, Melito of Sardes, to describe his religion as "Christian philosophy." The Bishop of Sardes explains how the Christian philosophy, which was first propagated among the barbarians, began to flourish under the illustrious sovereignty of the Emperor Augustus, and then kept pace with the progress of the imperial power.[1] Thus the Christian bishop acknowledges that Christianity, which he calls "our philosophy," was older than the Roman Empire, and he regards it as a special providence that the Empire was gifted with this foreign religion and its blessings.

[1] Eusebius's *Church History*, iv. 26.

Chapter IV.

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY IN JUDAISM

The share that Judaism had in the rise of Christianity is to be found in its Messianic doctrine. The word "Messiah," translated into Greek, gave its name to the new religion. Later culture received its most powerful religious impulses from Hellenised Messiahism, so that the history of the Messianic idea represents the religious side of the preparation for Christianity.

In the Old Testament records there is many a Messias, many an "anointed one," or "Christ," in the Greek translation of the term. Anointing with oil was an ancient religious usage. Originally it indicated the imparting of a divine blessing to men, at a time when nature and spirit were not yet antithetic ideas in the mind. The oil extracted from fruit was, like the fat of animals, a symbol of wealth and abundance. In the anointing with oil, the basic idea of Messiahism, supernaturalism

had found its symbolic expression. Messiahism, in contrast to Greek philosophy, could only thrive in conjunction with a conception of God and nature as really, and not merely conceptually, distinct. But inasmuch as Messiahism represents a link between a humanity that seeks, and a God that bestows, a blessing, it rises at once above supernaturalism. In the anointed or Messianic man it gives a symbol of the blessing in which God gives the best of his life to man. The Messiah or Christ is, therefore—it is most important to note—a general idea, a generic, not a personal, name, not the name of an individual, as Christian usage leads one erroneously to suppose.

There were many Christs before the time when the name began to be identified with Jesus. The second Isaias (xlv. 1) gives the name of Christ to a heathen king, the Persian Cyrus. In the second psalm Christ, the Son of God, is a victorious prince, probably one of the Maccabeans, who returns to live on Mount Zion. Again, the holy stone anointed with oil became the ancient centre of a cult, Beth-El, and this retained its Messianic character down to the period of the later kings.[1]

[1] *Amos* vii. 12 and 13.

In the well-known 23rd psalm the writer praises Jahveh because he has anointed his head with oil, and so made him a Messiah. Thus Messiahism is the very soul of the religious history of Israel. Its roots go back into prehistoric times, the legendary days of the wandering tribes, when the religion of ancient Israel was still animistic—a cult of ancestral spirits, which were conceived as embodied, first in the sacred animal, and then in the sacred tree or stone.[1] When the cult of Jahveh afterwards raises a tribal religion to the rank of general religion, the sacred symbol is used for the anointing of the leading personalities in Jahveh's name. Jahveh was originally, as the name indicates, the god of storms. The summits of the mountains are sacred to him. Sacrifice is offered to him where the winds blow and the lightning flashes. The cherubim on which he moves are the clouds, and the seraphim that surround him are flashes of lightning. Even at a later date the psalmist sings of Jahveh who touches the mountains and they smoke, and the earth and it quakes, and who turns the winds into his messengers and the flames into servants.

[1] Stade, *Israelitische Geschichte,* i. 409.

Hence all that is strong is sacred to Jahveh —the bull, in whose metallic image Jahveh is worshipped (2 *Moses* lxxii. 4; 1 *Kings* xii. 28, etc.), as the horned altar witnesses at a later date; the prince, the head of his tribe, who is a head taller than all the rest. So the strong Saul becomes a Messiah, the anointed of Jahveh, and then the stronger David, who slew ten times as many Philistines as Saul. The strong men bring the resisting tribes under their power; they create the kingdom of Israel. The new political greatness involves fresh economic arrangements. King Saul, indeed, is still a peasant, and in times of peace cultivates his land. But David lays the foundation of a standing army in the bodyguard with which he surrounds himself. He builds the royal town of Zion, and becomes a military prince. Solomon, finally, awakens a mercantile interest in the people, who had hitherto been purely agricultural. He creates a foreign trade with the Phœnicians and Arabs, and so commences the great economic revolution that raises Israel to the rank of a civilised people, but at the same time gives occasion within it to social struggles that will last for centuries.

The rulers and officials come to form an

independent class from the agricultural mass of the population. They thus place themselves in opposition to the people, who are now involved in the interests of the dynasty and split into factions. Trade brings new commodities and new needs into the country. Mobile capital arises, and begins its mobilising work, quietly but irresistibly, on immobile capital. The peasant, who had for ages cultivated his own land and secured a modest sustenance for himself and his family, becomes dependent on the trader. He becomes a trader himself, a debtor or a creditor; and, in proportion as the large landowners and capitalists strengthen their position, a proletariate is formed in the lower strata, and must do the toil of free or fettered slaves.

This was the situation about 760 B.C., when the prophets began the work of social reform. Prophecy applies itself to its proper task; it enters on the phase which secures for it a place of honour in the history of humanity. In older Israel prophecy has its roots, like all the cognate forms of religious life, in man's unconscious religious instincts. It is a Dionysiac fervour and enthusiasm. From the mountain summits where the common

sacrificial meal is celebrated come the swarms of fanatics with their drums and fifes and harps, and Saul himself is caught in their enthusiasm (1 *Sam.* x. 5–11). Among these older prophets, who are at first called seers, we find the men of God who have to announce Jahveh's message to the people in the oracle, after the lot has been drawn (1 *Sam.* ix. 9, 10, 20). The oracular sayings become law, and regulate the traditional order and morals —the Tora, the main trunk of Israel's laws. But the law is only oral, elastic, and indefinite, and the man of God who speaks in the oracle receives a gift for his work (1 *Sam.* ix. 7). Thus right is easily twisted in favour of the powerful and wealthy, as we learn even of the sons of the most powerful man of God, Samuel (1 *Sam.* viii. 3). In this way the leading personalities are entangled in a process that, in its further development, reveals the greatest social and ethical dangers.

This development is now confronted by the men whom we call the prophets in the narrower sense. First they appear as religious reformers, and enter into conflict with the leaders of the men of God, who had been the seers of earlier Israel. These men had fallen into such disrepute that Amos, the first

of the reforming prophets, protests against being included in the class (*Amos* vii. 14). It is true that at first the people would not drink the wine of these new prophets, because the old was milder and more pleasant. "If I were a seducer and a preacher of lies, and told men how they might drink and riot, then should I be a preacher of the people," says Micah of the usual preachers of his time (ii. 11). Down to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem Jeremias has to complain that the prophets go about Jerusalem with lies, confirming the wicked and leading astray the flock of Jahveh (xxiii.).

But they were social as well as religious reformers, and indeed their social reform is the soul of the religious. Amos preaches against the wealthy, the fat cows, who are unjust to the needy and exploit the poor. They turn right into bitterness, and trample on justice. They sell the poor man for a pair of shoes, raise the price of money, and give false measure and false wares. Then they carouse at the altar in pledged clothes, and drink the wine of the condemned in the holy places (*Amos* ii. 7); and Isaias cries woe over those "who join house to house and field to field, till there be no place, that they may stand

alone in the midst of the earth" (v. 8). It had been made so easy for people to continue their injustice and spoliation under the mantle of piety. Prophets and priests lived at ease with them, and caroused with them at the festivals, at which they made sacrifice to Jahveh. Hence the prophets combated the whole sacrificial system, which had become a mere gloss for the misdeeds of the mighty. "Jahveh demands mercy, and not sacrifices," says Hosea (vi. 6). Jahveh is sated with burning victims, and has no desire for the blood of lambs. He is an enemy to all this worship, with its sabbath-days and festivals, its outstretched hands and endless prayers (ii. 11–17). Jahveh wishes the people to do the right, to give justice to the oppressed and help to the weak. For Jahveh is himself right and justice. To do the right and just, that is what Jahveh demands of his people. Thus the prophets represent a power, but a spiritual and moral power. Jahveh's power is his justice, helping the weak against the wilfulness and domination of the stronger, defending the poor from the oppression of the rich.

But the preaching of the prophet can only be effective when it passes into law. It would

create a new order of things in Israel—a social order in which might no longer goes before right. Hence the prophets turn to political agitation; they aim to lead the political life, and to commend their ideas of religious and social reform to the rulers. The prophet Isaias, who was the moving spirit in the policy of Hezekiah, is the first to succeed in this. Later, after a great victory over the reactionary forces which were concentrated in an attack on the reforms, this was done to an even greater extent under King Josiah in the year 621. It was then that the compilation of reform laws, which we now know as the Mosaic *Deuteronomy,* was concluded, and became the law of the realm (2 *Kings* xxii.).

With this legislation Messiahism begins as a social theory passing into practical life. The fundamental idea—that all the defenders of Jahveh, the kings and prophets, are anointed (1 *Kings* xix. 16)—gives a Messianic and prophetic character to the whole life of the nation. *Deuteronomy* is the first historic attempt to make humanitarianism the starting-point of legislation. The rights of property are so restricted that the poor man is protected from any pressing danger of hunger. He is

to take from the produce of the field as much as he can pluck with his hand, without the aid of a sickle. The owner must not cut and gather the last stalk from his field, and must leave the gleanings on the field after the harvest; they must go to the poor. The pledge-right is restricted, so that the creditor can never take the debtor's millstone or garment, his last and most necessary possession. The day's pay must be given in full, and before sunset on each day. All ownership is temporary; in the fiftieth year, the jubilee year, each man must return to his possessions and his race. In the seventh or sabbath year there shall be no private cultivation of the soil; all the fruit that nature yields then shall be common property, for strangers as well as natives. This sabbath year is also a year of indulgence. During it all who have sold themselves into service must be set free with appropriate gifts of cattle and corn; no debts can be recovered, and no one must refuse a loan in view of the approach of the indulgence-year. There must be no beggars in the land. No one shall harden his heart against, or withhold his hand from, a poorer brother; and the children of Israel shall even

protect and love the stranger, and give him food and clothing.[1]

All these laws are inspired by the one thought: Jahveh is Israel's God; he is holy, and so his people shall be holy. In this way the laws are bound up with the cult of Jahveh; and, as the law is to apply to the whole land, the cult of Jahveh must be a national cult. In the older religion Jahveh was worshipped on the summits of the mountains and in the ancient sacred places. He was worshipped under different names and with all the freedom of local traditions. In order to centralise the new law the prophets have to obliterate all traces of the older cult. They zealously combat the worship on the mountains and the bronze statues of Jahveh that were found in the old places of worship. Jahveh replaces all the older deities in the new prophetic realm. He is jealous of his honour. His chief religious law is: Thou shalt have no other gods beside me. As the private and local cult is the centre of all the forces that are opposed to the prophetic law-reforms and their centralising tendency, the new law

[1] 5 *Moses* xxiii. 25; xxiv. 19–21; xxiv. 6, 10–17; xxv. 14; x. 18; 3 *Moses* xxv. 5, 10; xix. 9.

stands or falls with the establishment of the new national cult. The ancient faith of the people carries on a sanguinary struggle with the new faith of the prophets; but the old altars and sanctuaries are at length swept away. Jahveh becomes the only God of Israel, and in Jerusalem alone is his sanctuary. The worship of him can only be conducted in the forms prescribed in the law, and by the persons who are specially appointed for it.

Political events prevent the application of the practical test how far an effective national life could be conducted on this legislation; but they also prevent the people from making any development or modification of the laws on the strength of experience. Thirty-five years after the definitive establishment of the reformed laws the kingdom of Judah came to an end in the Babylonian captivity, and the law went with them into exile. There they had no political soil on which to try the experiment of living under the new laws.

The restriction only intensified the growth of the ideas in the popular mind, and at length they took concrete shape in the picture of the Messianic State of the future. That Jahveh rewards those who love and practise his law was the principle on which the

prophets had inaugurated their new moral order. The realm that lived under Jahveh's law would be a realm of prosperity, freedom, and peace ; and, as the prophets had painted Jahveh's kingdom in the brightest colours, the popular belief now fastens on the description. Permanent features of the Messianic prosperity are now fixed in the mind, and the contrast of these with the reality makes them more vivid than ever. As long as the people could test the new State in their own land, it was enough for the prophets to point to the connection between man's action and the divine reward or punishment in order to find support for the theocratic system in the popular mind. But in exile the problem of suffering comes to disturb this simple idea of a moral order. Before the exile the prophets, especially Hosea, had joined to their menaces of punishment the pedagogical assurance that Jahveh would cherish his beloved son, the people of Israel, with fatherly regard, so that they might do the will of Jahveh out of love of him.

But during the exile they have experiences that do not fit very well into this pedagogical system. In the national misfortune it is precisely the most pious, the most zealous,

servants of Jahveh that suffer most. Thus the second Isaias, who writes about the end of the exile, and whose work is contained in the last twenty-six chapters of the book of *Isaias*, sets out the problem of the suffering servant of God, and the prophetic traits of his description become typical for all Messianic stories of suffering in later years. This despised and humiliated people of God is atoning for the faults of others, not suffering for its own. The suffering servant of Jahveh bears the malady and the pain of those who say, when they see him, that he is being punished by God. In his case the suffering is a work of love, the pious man offering himself as a victim in order to bring salvation and peace to his fellows by his voluntary suffering, and so be himself blessed by Jahveh with Messianic splendour.

At the same time, the Messianic legal reform is further developed during the exile. As it is not confined by any political reality, it expands into a purely ideal kingdom, a theocratic priest-state, in which Jahveh would rule by means of his Messianic representatives. This idea of the coming theocracy reacts on earlier history. The whole ancient history of Israel is revised on

the lines of this plan. The extant historical documents are so altered that they no longer describe the natural development of the nation, but present a supernatural and miraculous story. The Jewish priest-state is made to be the goal of the whole history of the world, if not the real reason for its creation. The nation that is called to form this theocracy is represented as chosen out of all others from the beginning. It is exempt from the political conditions of natural development, and moves under God's own guidance. The history of the other nations with which ancient Israel had been connected, and from which it had been born into its own political and social existence, is modified from this theocratic point of view. They are all deeply stained in the eyes of the later Jewish historians. The history of Israel is one long process of extricating the chosen nation from them, and is a constant struggle of Jahveh against the people's leaning to the customs and ideas of these other nations, a process of purification from the heathen taint.

Hence, when the exiles are permitted to return, we soon see the effect of this theocratic view in those who make use of the favour. To secure the theocratic monopoly of the

Jews and exploit it in every way is found to be the chief pre-occupation of those who sit in the chair of Moses and represent his supposed laws. The synagogue makes its appearance, with its masters, rabbis, and scholastic exposition of the law. The party of "the pure," or the Pharisees, is formed, and regards the punctilious observance of the literal maxims as the height of holiness. And as at the time of the return from exile Ezra, the scribe, had demanded and carried out the great purification of the people from all non-Judaic elements as a religious duty of the people to Jahveh, so now the character of strict national exclusiveness fastens on the people under the leadership of the rabbis. The children of Abraham look down on all non-Jews as unclean, as heathens, and denounce their gods — with which ancient Israel had been on very good terms—as false gods and idols.

But underneath this upper-current of Pharisaic-Rabbinical thought there remains a strong prophetic reaction as a religious under-current. This is seen very plainly in the books of *Ruth* and *Jonas*. Both works belong to later Jewish literature, and are vigorously directed against Jewish Chauvinism. The book of *Ruth* is a romantic poem, putting

back its story into the time of the Judges, in order to show that pure virtue was found not only in Palestine, but also in the people of Moab, whom the theocratic historians had branded with an ignoble origin, and, in fact, making a woman of this hated race the mother of the Davidic dynasty. In the same way the story of Jonas is intended to preach to the writer's contemporaries that Jahveh found a people ready to do penance even in despised Nineveh, and that he applied a severe remedy to the prophet who had yielded to the national illusion. Here we have, in opposition to the prevailing narrow nationalism, the broad and free view which was preparing people even in Judea for the formation of an international community. We have already the God who causes his sun to shine on the good and the bad, and the rain to fall on just and unjust; the God who ignores the limitations of the Jewish national God, and becomes identical with the world-wide God of Greek philosophy.

In morality, also, there is a reaction against the Pharisaic-Rabbinical school. The ethic of the synagogue was juridical from the first. It was based on the written letter, and the interpretation of this by the masters. Hence popular morality was purely conventional and

external. The individual could not grasp its meaning, and never asked about its inner foundations. The authority of the school regulated life down to its smallest details, and the people, who did not understand the law, and still less the Rabbinical art of interpretation, could do nothing but bow to the foreign tongue. There was no connection between what the learned master declared to be clean or unclean, and the moral conscience of the individual.

Then a more human and natural morality forces its way into the sacred sphere of the synagogue from the Jews who live among the Greeks and have something of Greek feeling —the Jews of Hellenistic cultivation. We recognise this in the proverbial literature of the Old Testament. In this collection of proverbs, first appearing under the name of Solomon, man seeks to deduce the norms of ethical conduct from his own experience of life. He sees that certain consequences follow certain actions, and makes a moral philosophy for himself. As in that of the Greeks, the good is wisdom and the bad folly. Man is turned upon himself in this morality of the *Proverbs*. It is true that God, the Most High, has imposed his will as law on men ; but this

law is at the same time the supreme wisdom of life, the innate moral reason. Obedience to God's law springs from rational acceptance of it; it is the realisation of the wisdom that man has taken as the guide of his life. Hence the morality of the proverbial literature leads directly to that of the Gospels. The foundation of morality is in both cases eudæmonistic: the good is good for man—it is that which gives him strength and life, and makes him happy.

There are also material points of contact throughout. In the Solomonic *Proverbs* the force of patience and self-control is praised, and the writer commends goodness of heart, gentleness, and mercy; avarice, pride, injustice, and hardness of heart are described as enemies of human happiness. In particular, the sayings of the Jesus who is known to us as the son of Sirach contain all the chief points of the Sermon on the Mount. The sayings of Jesus in the Old Testament offer the most remarkable parallel to the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels. The love of God is commended as true piety, and men are warned to avoid hypocrisy in piety (*Jesus Sirach* ii. 18; iv. 15; i. 34). The Gospel urges men not to fear those who kill the body, and praises those

who are persecuted for justice' sake; the pious Jesus of the Old Testament urges men to cling to truth even unto death, and to embrace the right without shame or fear before men (*Matt.* x. 28; v. 10; *Jesus Sirach* iv. 24–33). Readiness to help the ailing, the weak, and the oppressed, the giving of alms, gentleness in judging one's neighbour's faults, generosity in pardoning injustice—all these virtues of Christian charity have an eloquent pleader in this collection of the sayings of the earlier Jesus; and the dangers of wealth, of accumulating treasures, of monetary anxiety, are, to say the least, as strongly urged in these sayings of the Old Testament Jesus as in the Sermon on the Mount. There is really not a single idea of any importance in the Christian sayings for which we cannot find a parallel, or at least a point of contact, in the sayings of the Old Testament. The parallel is sometimes so plain that we can be certain the later compiler has made use of the earlier. Thus the rich man in the Gospel parable says to his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"; and God says to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which

thou hast provided?" (*Luke* xii. 19). So, in the sayings of the older Jesus, the man who thinks he has done something says to himself: "Now I will enjoy life, and eat and drink of my goods—and he knows not that the hour is so near when he must leave all and die" (*Jesus Sirach* xi. 18). In this way we have in the proverbial literature a further development of the prophetic morality, made fruitful by the eudæmonistic ethic of Greece, according to which the moral law is conceived in proportion to its worth for the human personality, and is brought into intimate connection with human nature.

The proverbial literature is also significant as the introduction of the Greek idea of the Logos, an independent divine reason, intermediate between God and the world, which afterwards finds canonical expression in the Christology of the Church. Even in these sayings wisdom is represented as a distinct being, the epitome of all the divine gifts to man. Divine wisdom, man's highest good, is personified, and described as a creative force, existing before the world. It was with God in the beginning, and without it nothing was made of the things that were made; and it is even called the Logos of God (*Sayings of*

Solomon viii.; *Jesus Sirach* xxiv.). In the *Wisdom of Solomon* this raising of the divine *Sophia* to a distinct divine existence is fully accomplished. This *Sophia* (wisdom) is not only a cosmic, but also a moral and religious, principle of life, the intermediary between man and God (*Wisdom* vii. 25). In this way Hellenism introduces into Judaism, which is unable to protect itself even in the synagogue, the dualism that will one day rend the whole Rabbinical structure. About two centuries before the Christian era we clearly perceive within Judaism the working of the spiritual movement that has been inherited from the prophets and eventually finds expression in the Gospels. The morality of the Gospels, too, must be taken entirely in conjunction with the Hellenistic ethic of the proverbial literature.

At length, under the influence which Greek philosophy exercises on the Jewish religion, we get the new literary growth of the Jewish Apocalypse, which is most significant of all. In this Judaism, with its strongest impulse, Messianism, joins on to Platonism, and from this mingling of the two chief fruits of ancient culture we can understand the prominent position that the Apocalypse had in the

spiritual development far down into the Middle Ages, if not in the theological thought of our own time.

The chief example of this class of literature is the book of *Daniel*. As is usual with writers of the time, the author puts the scene of his story in a remote historical and geographical environment. The revelations which the book conveys in the form of dreams and their interpretation centre about the person of Daniel, who is supposed to have lived at Nebuchadnezzar's court at Babylon ; whereas the real situation with which the book deals is some four centuries later than the Babylonian kings, and belongs to the time of the Maccabean revolt under the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes. The book of *Daniel* twice clearly describes in their broad lines the historical events that occurred from the Chaldaic to the Syrian supremacy. Four great empires have gone to pieces. With the last, the empire of Alexander, the Jews came under Greek dominion. They then formed the apple of discord between the two chief Hellenistic kingdoms that had been made out of Alexander's empire—that of the Ptolemies and that of the Seleucidæ. At last, in 198 B.C., the Syrian king succeeded in

wresting the province of Palestine from the Egyptians and uniting it to his own dominion, and the Jewish people soon threatened to become a victim of the Hellenising zeal of the Syrian monarch.

It was in this situation created by Antiochus Epiphanes that the book of *Daniel* was written in 167. From the fourth of the great beasts that symbolise the four great empires the author sees a little horn (together with ten others) growing ; this is the king who makes blasphemous speeches against the Most High and his sanctuaries, purposes to abolish the festivals and the law, and has the holy places delivered up to him. The book of *Daniel* then describes the historical events that follow this Syrian despotism in the form of visions of the future, and gives its Messianic hopes and ideas as revelations that interpret his pictures of the future. But in his ardent struggle with the political ascendancy of Hellenism the author has penetrated so deeply into Greek thought that his own tendency, Messianism, has assumed a thoroughly Hellenistic shape. The Messias, who is to free them from the Syrian yoke and bring their rulers to the dust, is described as one who comes on the clouds of heaven, as a son

of man. He is brought before the Ancient of Days, and receives from him an eternal rule and kingdom, that shall never be destroyed, and all peoples and races and tongues shall do him homage (*Dan.* vii. 13 and 14).

Here, therefore, the Messias has a human form, and has lost his specifically Jewish features. It is a super-terrestrial man, coming on the clouds of heaven and having direct communion with the Deity. Whether Daniel's "Son of Man" is to be conceived as a definite individual or a personification of the Messianic kingdom, at all events this transcendental conception of the Messianic man would be quite impossible on a purely Jewish soil. The heavenly man, the character in which the Messias is always depicted afterwards in the New Testament (*Matt.* xvi. 27; xxv. 31; xxvi. 64; 1. *Cor.* xv. etc.), belongs entirely to the world of Platonic thought. He is the ideal man, coming from the invisible upper world into this nether and visible one, to raise up an eternal kingdom in it. For the first time in the Old Testament we find in the book of *Daniel* the idea of personal immortality, which is also part of the Platonic system. The deliverance of the people from the misery and oppression of the time is

accompanied by a resurrection of the dead, the great judgment day: "Many of those that sleep in the ground shall awaken: some to eternal life, and some to eternal shame. The teachers shall shine like the glory of the heavens, and those who have led the people to justice, like the stars, for ever and ever" (*Dan.* xii.). Hence, both in its origin and its aim the Messianic kingdom of the future, in Daniel's Apocalypse, belongs to the other world; and just as the heavenly hierarchy of the angels is the connecting link between the world of the heavenly Son of Man and his eternal kingdom, so the "teachers" are represented as his earthly hierarchy, working together with the angels.

The further development of the apocalyptic view fixes this stamp of other-worldliness more and more on all earthly things, until the theory culminates in the Christian theocracy with its God-man Messiah. The ideas of this Jewish apocalyptic literature often pass so insensibly into those of Christianity that theologians have been puzzled whether to attribute particular passages to one tendency or the other. Thus in the book of *Ezra* we find the signs of the time that will precede the last judgment and the appearance

of the Messias described as they are in the Gospels—wonders in the sun and moon, the prevalence of injustice, great fear on the earth, so that the very stones cry out. In both places, moreover, the day and hour of the Messianic appearance are hidden. But when the day comes the Son of God, Christ, will reveal himself with all those who are with him. Then the Son of God, Christ, will die, and all who draw human breath, until, after seven days, the past fades away and the earth gives up its dead.

The connecting link between this apocalyptic other-worldliness and reality is communism, which forms the economic background of the Apocalypse, though it is not prominently expressed. In the third book of the Sibylline Oracle communism is expressly proclaimed to be justice demanded by the law of God. It is said of those who dwell in the Utopian city that the apocalyptic writer takes as his Messianic ideal :—

> They dwell on justice and virtue, and there is in them no covetousness, the begetter of a thousand evils to mortal men, of war and hunger without end. With them the people are just in the town and the country. They do not steal in the night from each other, nor drive away the herds of cattle, sheep, and goats ; nor does anyone take away his neighbour's landmark, nor does the wealthier man

> injure the poorer. No one oppresses the widow, but rather helps her with gifts of corn, wine, and oil. He who has many possessions among the people sends a part of the harvest always to the poor, fulfilling the word of the great God ; for the heavenly power has created the earth alike for all, and in the breasts of all alike put the best feelings. .....The immortal in the starry heavens will give men a common law over the whole earth. There will be no war and no sterility on the earth, no hunger, and no crop-destroying hail, but peace on the earth ; and king shall be a friend to king unto the end of all time. (Kautzsch edition.)

Covetousness is the great crime, and in the last judgment, which the Messianic Son of Man will pass on all creatures, it is especially the rich and powerful that will suffer.

So prophetic Messianism culminates, at a moment when the Christian era opens, in an apocalyptic expectation of a world-kingdom in which "no man shall any more say of a thing that it is his." Then the Christian theocracy inherits this Jewish vision, and the chief economic precept of Christ's kingdom, to give all one has to the poor, becomes the starting-point of the new Christian apocalypse.

Chapter V.

THE COMMUNISTIC CLUBS

It is a general feature of social life that, with the growth of a State, natural links are formed between the individuals and the body politic. These are small groups and associations, originally relics of the older tribal organisation, then independent corporations, which allow a fuller and freer play of individual action than the uniformity of civil law can admit. The more the State seeks to centralise its power, the clearer becomes the antagonism between its legislation and the free unions of its members, until the conflict of interests leads either to the suppression of the associations or the destruction of the State.

When we regard it in this light the struggle of the Roman Empire against Christianity ends in the victory of the Christian communities. These are found to be unions in which the associational tendency of the old world has concentrated its whole strength, and in which it at last passes out of recognition

into a "Holy Catholic Church." The research of P. Foucart[1] and Otto Lüders[2] has made plain to us the chief features and the historical significance of the ancient associations. Just as the old racial body in Hellas or Rome had its centre of unity in the common cult of a tribal deity, so all the associations that are formed within the mature political structure are united in the service of a certain hero or god, under whose patronage the members work. In Attica these associations are from the first independent of the political league of the people; they differ from it in their organisation and their peculiar cult. We find the first official mention of them in the Solonic legislation, from which they were transferred into the Roman Twelve Tables. Gajus refers to them in the fourth book on the Twelve Tables: "Associates are those who belong to the same *collegium*, called by the Greeks *hetairia*. The law gives them the power to enter into whatever agreements they will, provided they do not transgress the law."[3] As to the names of

[1] *Des Associations réligieuses chez les Grecs*, Paris, 1875.

[2] *Die Dionysischen Künstler*, Berlin, 1873.

[3] Foucart, *op. cit.*, p. 48. [*Eranos* means originally a meal to which all contribute, or a picnic.—TRANS.]

these associations, we find, besides the older name of the Orgeoni, the name Thiasotæ and the members of an Eranos; the Thiasotæ exhibiting the religious, and the Eranistæ rather the secular, character, though, as Otto Lüders says, they may be taken as identical. The protective patron, the tribal deity or hero at the centre of the Thiasic cult, gives his name to the association. Thus we find Soteriastæ at Rhodes, with the saviour-god, *Zeus soter*, as their patron. Then there are Heracleistæ at Delos, and other associations are dedicated to Dionysos, to the moon-god, or to the sun-god.

These deities are not of purely Greek origin, even when they have Greek names, or are combined with Greek names; they generally come from Asia Minor, and are oriental deities. The Heracleistæ of Delos, for instance, have not the Theban Hercules for patron, as Herodotus observes, but the Syrian Hercules, who was sacred to merchants and sailors. It is quite clear that this association within the national limits bore an international character, and this is expressly confirmed by the discovery of a number of lists of members of such bodies. Thus, according to an inscription, an association at Cnidos

included one freeman, three foreigners who served as slaves, and a native slave. Even women were admitted to full membership. The associations regulated their own affairs with complete independence. The meeting of members, or synod, was the supreme tribunal for all matters pertaining to the association. It determined the forms of the reward or punishment of the members, regulated the conditions for their admission and exclusion, and its power was unlimited. At the head of the community was the *archithiasos* or *archeranist*, though he had merely to carry out the resolutions of the body, and could do nothing of his own initiative in cases that were not regulated. Anyone, even the women, had the right to speak at the meetings. A resolution passed by the synod received the name of "decree." From a fragment of a decree that belonged to the *acta* (minutes) of an association at Piræus we learn that the causing of divisions and tumults was a ground for excommunication; and this synodal decree, renewed in the age of the Antonines, may be taken as typical for other cases.[1]

As in all ancient religious associations, the

[1] Foucart, pp. 17, 19, and 42.

common meal, generally in conjunction with a sacrifice, is an essential part of the cult. To these symbolic meals, which lasted until the fourth century of our era, and are mentioned by the Council of Laodicæa, the members either bring food and drink with them, or else the cost is defrayed out of a fund to which they all contribute. From the fact that six out of seven decrees refer to meetings that were held in the month Munychion (April 18th to May 18th), Foucart concludes that the meetings must have been particularly important during this time. But there was a general assembly every month that went by the name of the *ἀγορὰ κυρία*—the lord's (or master's) meeting. During the common meal the memory of the patronal hero was honoured and hymns sung to him;[1] and in an association that was formed in honour and religious service of all heroes, known as the Heroistæ, the second distribution of food at the meal was, by a common decree, made in memory of all heroes.[2] The members of an association were occasionally called, especially by their enemies, after the day in which they celebrated their regular meal. Thus there were Eikadists, who met on the twentieth day of the

[1] Foucart, p. 120. [2] Lüders, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

month, sacred to Apollo, and Tetradists, who met on the day sacred to Aphrodite Pandemos. In the second century of our era the followers of a certain custom in celebrating the Christian sacred meal were called Quartodecimans by their opponents, after April 14th, which they chose for the purpose.

Before admission the applicants were rigorously examined by the president as to their cleanness, and, in harmony with the religious ideas of these clubs, it was essentially oriental standards by which the purity or impurity of the applicant's life was judged. Abstinence from certain acts and foods was enjoined, and the purification, which generally took the form of baptism, was given in accordance with the results of this examination. The poet Eypolis, a contemporary of Alcibiades, ridicules the members of an Eranic association dedicated to the Thracian goddess Cotytto as βαπταί = baptised. Most of the decrees of the Thiasic synods relate to the social rights and duties of the members. Here we see the associations in their economic and social significance. They are societies for giving support out of a common fund, defraying the cost of the funeral of a member, and sometimes creating a fund for loans without interest

and providing hospitality and mutual assistance to members who are travelling. If the patronal deity is acknowledged by the State, the societies are recognised as juristic persons; they are defended in court by their syndic, and can acquire landed property. Artisans are much found among these pious fraternities. It was a sphere in which labour, despised by official society and the nobles, received the honour due to it; and the union of forces gave considerable power to the class, and prepared it for a moral and economic change in the fabric of society. At Smyrna there was an association of gold and silver workers. Thyatira must have been an especial centre of these societies. Here there were flourishing guilds of cloth-makers, dyers, potters, and bakers.[1] But the most widespread were the guilds of theatrical players, which had their centre at Teos, and were dedicated to the god Dionysos.

All these organisations found their connecting link in the common cult of their divine patron. The cult differed very considerably in detail, but in the main it was everywhere dominated by certain leading thoughts. The origin of the ideas in Asia Minor was always

[1] Lüders, p. 16.

apparent. The Lydo-Phrygian myth of Attis, the lover of the god-mother, and his tragic death and happy resurrection; the story of the Cretan Zeus, who was born in a cave and afterwards died; Demeter, who wandered over the earth in search of her daughter; Dionysos, Sabazios, Adonis, who were persecuted for succeeding in being sons of God—all this is the great drama of life, passing once more to youth through death and the grave, in mystic commemoration of which the associations are formed. All that obtained an official recognition in the Eleusinian mysteries is found with endless variations in these obscure circles of the old world—the eternal theme of the slain and resuscitated god. When we see oriental sun-worship penetrating these societies, when we find in Lydia two monuments of the holy fraternity of Zeus Mosphaltenos, the sun-god, we see once more, as in the cognate worship of Mithra, that the phenomenon of life is the basic thought of these bodies, in which religious and social instincts are blended.

The historical significance of these Thiasic societies has been estimated at very different values. If we look merely at the surface of their social life, we may agree with the writers

of the Empire in their severe strictures on the Thiasic cult, just as the older Greeks had raised an energetic but unavailing protest against the admission of foreign oriental deities into the country. The mild ecstasy into which these orgiastic celebrations plunged their participants, the nocturnal darkness that shrouded their secret assemblies, the class-antagonism between the representatives of national interests and these religious international feelings reaching to the lowest proletariate, enable us to understand very well the general hatred of contemporaries for these fraternities. The people of Rome looked on these nocturnal orgies as *sacra myctelia,* as ceremonies in honour of the god of night, and believed them to be excesses of shame and of the most unbridled licentiousness. The fanaticism of the priests of Cybele went so far as to demand self-emasculation; and, as we learn from early Church history and the Gospels (*Matt.* xix. 12), these ascetic extravagances might spread to a wider circle.

But the matter has another aspect when we look at it from the larger historical point of view. We must then subscribe to the conclusion of Wescher,[1] who sees a stimulus

[1] *Revue Archéol.*, 1864, ii. 460; 1865, ii.

towards the construction of new social forms in these Eranic societies. He reduces their significance to three points—the fraternal character of the associations, the examination as a condition of entry, and the admission of women to equal rights with men. He says :—

> Is it not natural that in a period of moral and religious unrest, such as the Alexandrian period was, the number of societies should greatly increase? Is it surprising that many men and women abandon the official religion, which has sunk into impotence, and embrace this free, spontaneous, brotherly cult, which responds better to their secret aspirations? We must seek the real cradle of this religious movement on Greek soil. It is a great honour for the Greeks to have given such examples to the world before the rise of Christianity. The common fund in these societies was for the purpose of mutual support, and there was a great solidarity among the members, the rich giving and the poor receiving. Indigence was no ground for exclusion.

Karl Bücher, also, comes to the same conclusion :—

> If at that time (130 B.C.) these cults—the ancient natural religions of Asia Minor, of Dionysos and Aphrodite—were embodied in a large number of close societies and pious fraternities in Greece itself, what spread them so widely was, not so much the magic ocean of a restless sensuality into which an over-stimulated race would so easily plunge, as the equality of all members, whether Greek or barbarian, man or woman, free or slave;

a practice peculiar to these societies and quite alien to Greek sentiment.[1]

In order to understand the further development of these social communities and their impregnation with new ethical-religious ideas, we must turn to another group of associations —the Jewish synagogues. The Romans regarded the synagogues as a special kind of *hetairia,* and so put them under the associations-law. In his work on superstition Plutarch takes all these congregations together, whether they celebrate the Sabbath, like the Jews, or have any other form of cult and religion that the Romans regard as slavish and barbaric.[2] As a matter of fact, the same organising forces of the time are at work in the formation of the synagogues as in all the other congregations; one may even describe the synagogues as Eranic bodies of a higher rank. They constitute the religious centre of the ordinary merchants' guilds, alongside of the Tyrian brothers of Heracles, who are soon eclipsed by the synagogues. This commercial situation, demanding an extensive traffic in money together with mercantile interests, must have been of great

[1] *Loc. cit.,* p. 116. [2] *De superstitione,* vii. 12, 13.

importance in the economic development of the Empire. It would ensure the currency of mobile capital and lend support to the political leaders in their exploitation of the provinces. On this account the Jews were accorded great privileges in the Roman Empire, of which exemption from military service and other State burdens was not the least. When Cæsar, who thought that the associations were becoming a menace to the State, sought to suppress all the other *hetairia* in Rome by a decree, he left intact the privileges of the Jews and "expressly excluded from the order the assemblies, funds, and institutes for meals of the Jews."[1] The wealthy merchant families of Alexandria were the most astute financiers of the time. With their banks, loans, and credits, they controlled the nobles and knights, if not the court and the government. The Rabbinical schools at Rome had learned from Jerusalem the art of securing great influence and doing good business with their prayers. They had indeed incurred a dangerous odium on that account, and under Tiberius this brought the conscription for the Sardinian *coloniæ* upon thousands

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities,* xiv. 10, 3, 8.

of their fellows, and was always breaking out in eruptions of popular passion. But the influence of Jewish finance in the Roman Empire cannot seriously be questioned. The Jewish synagogue was the organisation of commercial capital. This capital was at the service of a rigidly inclusive system, in which the religious centralisation greatly supported the idea of an economic solidarity of all the members. As Hausrath says of the Jews :—

> They were egoistic in their interests, and were accustomed to seek the help of the Roman authorities against their townsmen. As a rule they obtained it, because it was consonant with the testament of Cæsar and the traditions of the divine Augustus to continue in this matter the policy of the Ptolemies, which had seen in the Jewish *coloniæ* the indispensable allies of the existing powers. Hence the number of Jewish settlements increased more and more at the beginning of the Empire, and we must see in them, on account of their connection, a very powerful factor in the history of the time, placing its lever in the imperial court no less than in the poorest quarters of Rome or the remotest provinces. The all-important trade with the countries on the Euphrates was so completely in their hands that even diplomacy often made use of the great Jewish houses in Antioch, and the chief business at Alexandria, the export of corn to Rome, had fallen mainly into their hands. This situation was the more conspicuous as the Jews not only held rigidly aloof from the life about them, but maintained the connection with the chief centre of their own

national and religious life. However much it was modified, the Jewish community abroad remained a piece of Israel, and the same customs were found in the hut of the small usurer and the palace of the great broker. The connection with the central state of the Jewish theocracy was maintained by even the most distant bodies. If they could not go to Jerusalem, they sent gifts of money, which were collected every year, received in the fore-courts, and conducted into the Temple with common ceremonies.[1]

While Judaism was thus a mutual-aid society, held together by the communistic tendencies of Mosaism and Messianism, and spread throughout the Roman Empire, with the several synagogues as paying-in counters, the Temple at Jerusalem as the central treasury, and all the servants of Jahveh as ideal sharers of it, we find the communistic feature of the religion most clearly in the Essenes of Palestine. Josephus puts the Essenes on a level with the Pythagorean communities of Greece, and praises, as a remarkably just custom that they have had for many years, their perfect communism of goods, so that the rich cannot enjoy more than the poor.[2] It is the radical communism that John the Baptist proclaims to be the will of Jahveh for all his countrymen: "He who has two coats shall give to

[1] *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte,* ii. 93.
[2] *Antiquities,* xv. 10, 4; xviii. 1, 5.

him that has none; and he who has food shall do likewise" (*Luke* iii. 11). When Josephus assigns as the cause of John's arrest and execution, differently from the Biblical narrative (*Mark* vi.), that Herod, seeing the mighty stream of people going out in the attraction of John's preaching, feared that he might excite the people to a tumult, as his advice seemed to be followed everywhere; we can form some idea of the extent of the revolutionary propaganda of this communist preacher by the Jordan.[1]

Thus the way was prepared for Christianity on every side. The figure of Christ is drawn in all its chief features before a line of the Gospels was written. Philosophy has framed a general view of things, a metaphysical dualism, into which the Christ-figure is introduced. The economic situation at Rome has provided the explosive matter that will be discharged by Christianity; and in the religious brotherhoods we have the organising forces that direct all the currents of the time to the forming of the Christian communities. In this sense Christianity was naturally inevitable. Historical evolution put life into

[1] *Antiquities*, xviii. 5, 2.

an organisation in which the incipient social fermentation of the Roman Empire combined with the religious and philosophic forces of the time, and created the new Christian culture.

Chapter VI.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

That the community is the starting-point and the centre of Christianity can be clearly seen on an attentive reading of the New Testament. The existence of the community is assumed even by the Christ of the Gospel of *Matthew*, when he refers to it as the last appeal in all disputes between Christians, or when Peter is described as the foundation on which it will be built, so that the gates of hell may not prevail against it (*Matt.* xviii. 17; xvi. 18). According to Hausrath,[1] the mother of Jesus at the marriage-feast of Cana stands for the true Israel, the community of the pious, which has given birth to the Messias. In any case, the Christian community is, according to the so-called prayer of the high priest in the Fourth Gospel, the clearest possible expression of the communist ideal, the absolute

[1] *Loc. cit.*, iv. 412.

unity of the members with each other, with God, and with Christ (*John* xvii. 21). In the Epistles known as Pauline everything turns on the community. It is the incarnation of Christ, the visible body of the Lord, who is the Spirit. It is in the community-life that Christ first has terrestrial existence. Whoever sins against the community sins against Christ, and its regulations are the directions of Christ.

Now, the Christian communities are societies, and must have been formed analogously to other societies of the time. They must be conceived as religious-social organisations after the manner of the time. They belong to the great category of the religious-social *hetairia,* the Eranistic societies, and the synagogue congregations. This throws a new light on the antagonism between Jewish-Christians and Gentile-Christians. We can easily distinguish between Christian communities that were developed from synagogues and those that were formed from the Thiasic corporations. In the former, the Messianism is at first confined to the Jewish communal life, the synagogue. In the latter, the common worship, even after it has assimilated Messianism, and so become Christian,

remains faithful to the old Thiasic methods, until the Messianic communities developing from synagogues admit the elements of the other organisations, are separated from the synagogues on that account, and amalgamate with societies of the second class. Indeed, Josephus shows how much the communal life of the synagogue may adapt itself outwardly to that of the Greco-Roman corporations when he gives us the instance of the powerful synagogue at Delos.[1] We find mention of Thiasic meals and of funds that are collected for these meals; and it is expressly stated that the life of the synagogue at Rome ran on the same lines.

We know very little about the particular procedure in the formation of these Christian communities, or the persons who were most active in the work. As a rule, they only come into the light of history when they are engaged in internal or external quarrels. Ecclesiastical tradition does, it is true, name a number of men who are supposed to have, as apostolic missionaries and evangelists, brought the communities into being; but most of these names are of no historical value. On the

[1] *Antiquities*, xiv. 10, 8.

other hand, we find a few covert notices in the *Acts of the Apostles* which should be of some use to us in studying the formation of the older communities, since they have escaped the influence of Church theology. We must put among the earliest fragments of the New Testament those parts of the *Acts* (from ch. xvi. onward) that give, with lengthy interruptions, an account of the voyages of Paul in the first person plural. In this account—the "We-document"—which clearly comes from some travelling companion of the Tarsian preacher and Messianic propagandist, two important geographical points are mentioned as having communities that received the wanderers. It is said that disciples were found at Tyre, and that brothers were discovered at Puteoli (*Acts* xxi. 3, 4; xxviii. 14).

Tyre was the centre of the merchants' corporation, a very extensive guild that had Hercules for patron, and still had stations at Puteoli in the later half of the second century after Christ.[1] At Puteoli, moreover, the slaves and freedmen on the imperial estates were organised, possibly under the protection of this Jewish merchants' guild, in a special

[1] Lüders, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

collegium, which had a particular personal and social aim, besides the ordinary functions of mutual aid and burial.[1] From this we may conclude that the inauguration of Christian communities at first followed the route that was marked out by pre-Christian organisation ; and the formation of communities at Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Smyrna, and other places, points to the same conclusion. We must, therefore, regard the Christian communities as branches of the great tree of the guild-life of the time, developing organically out of the existing societies, or growing out of the same ground beside them. The "disciples" at Tyre and the "brothers" at Puteoli were members of an organisation that pursued aims closely related to those of the Messianic preacher, if the organisation had not, indeed, already assumed a Messianic character.

From this point of view, we can clearly understand the importance and the meaning of the name of Christ in the communities that bore it. Even if the first official notice of the Christians that we have—the letter of Pliny to Trajan (*Ep.* x.)—did not explicitly say that

[1] Max Weber, *loc. cit.*, p. 276.

the Christians sang antiphons "to Christ as a God" *(Christo quasi Deo)*, and so were to be numbered among the *hetairia,* or religious-social corporations, the whole early Christian literature without exception declares that from the first Christ was the centre of the communal cult. The very name of Christ indicates this, and it is even more clearly seen in the circumstance that communities arose that called themselves after him, and united in honour of him. Christ could not possibly have come to occupy this position in the Christian community as an historical individual, who had taught certain religious doctrine and "founded" a Christian religion. There were, indeed, societies in the Roman Empire that took their names from a human individual, a philosopher, or a king. But Foucart shows that these societies were entirely different from those that assembled for a common cult and named themselves after their common hero.[1] A society founded by a Jewish rabbi, Jesus, might have named itself after him ; but in that case it would certainly not be a society for the purpose of worshipping him : no hymns would have been sung to him, and no eucharist,

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 4, note.

or common meal, would have been celebrated in his honour. Moreover, the name of Christ had been so entirely raised into the sphere of legend by the Messianic Apocalypse that it could no longer be applied to a human individual.

Hence liberal theology was bound to fail with the human Jesus which it postulates as founder of the Christian communities. The desperate position of advanced theologians in this respect may be seen very well in the following words of one of that school, R. Emde: "Which did Jesus claim—the mantle of the prophet or the crown of the Messias? The opinions of the most distinguished authorities are acutely divided. Wellhausen writes that Jesus explicitly disavows the claim to be the Messias. Holtzmann says that the Gospel story loses its stoutest support if we relinquish the Messianic character of Jesus. Paul de Lagarde observes that it did not occur to Jesus to put himself forward as the Messias; while Harnack finds that this piece of the evangelical tradition—the Messianic character of Jesus—survives the closest scrutiny. The thesis of Johannes Weiss, that Jesus describes himself objectively as the one to whom the Messianic predicate of Son of

Man fitly belongs, is rejected by Hans Lietzmann with the remark that 'Jesus never arrogated the Messianic title of Son of Man.'"[1]

If the attempt to restrict the organising principle of the Christian communities—the Christ-idea—to a single individual leads to these absolute contradictions in the case of the leading authorities of historical theology, all working with the same philosophic means and exegetic methods, there must be some radical defect in the theory. Our theologians cannot agree whether the Jesus postulated by them declared himself to be Christ or warned people that he was not Christ; whether they must consider the Christ-dignity as the highest point of the development of the human consciousness of Jesus or as a pathological concomitant! In view of this situation, we may well disregard the passages lately adduced from profane Latin writers in supposed witness to the historical Jesus of Nazareth until our learned theologians are agreed at least as to whether this Jesus claimed, or expressly repudiated, the name of Christ. How little the early Christians thought of identifying

[1] *Jesus of Nazareth, Prophet or Messias*, p. 6.

their Christ-god, their titular hero, with an historical person is seen from the fact that there is a complete confusion among the early pictures of Christ. Victor Schultze says in regard to the oldest figures in the catacombs: "Christ, in the character of the Good Shepherd, is not conceived as the teacher and leader of Christendom in the early Christian images, but as lord and protector of the dead, whom he hides from the power of death and conveys to the green meadows of Paradise. It seems probable that in the development of this idea there was some admixture of the later pagan notion of Hades as the benevolent host of the nether world and shepherd of the dead."[1] When it is further stated in the description of the Christian idea of the shepherd that "the Good Shepherd is almost always found with one or other pastoral utensil, such as the milk-can, wallet, staff, or flute," we can recognise in the Good Shepherd, the protective deity of the Christian communities, a modification of Attis, the lover of the mother of the gods, the protective deity of many of the Lydo-Phrygian associations, who always has pastoral emblems on

[1] Foucart, *Die Katacomben*, p. 113.

the images—the crooked staff, the syrinx, and sometimes cymbals and pipes.[1] Attis was also the host of the nether world; he greeted the dead that winter sent there, and rose again from the dead in spring, like the Christ-god. Karl Bötticher finds an Orpheus-Christ: "Christian theology in the earliest specimens of plastic art represents the Saviour in the image of Orpheus, in the full sentiment of the Greek myth, who drew to him all the animals of the wood and field by the sound of his lyre."[2] When the gospel type of the Jewish carpenter at length takes shape, the Greek-hero type remains alongside of it, and the two are in the end combined in the canonical type, the crucified and resuscitated Jesus, who was neither Jew nor Greek.

Thus the Christian community shares with all the religious-social bodies of antiquity the fundamental principle of association for the purpose of a cult. Their Christ is the patron of the community, the genius of the society, giving his name to those who unite to do him honour. The thoroughly modern idea of religion as personal life and experience will give no clue whatever to the nature of early

[1] Foucart, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
[2] *Aus dem Festleben der Hellenen*, p. 21.

Christianity. Religion only becomes a personal life in this sense in an age that has differentiated into personalities; and it is so only in proportion to the advance of this differentiation. From the first religion appears as a social function of life. It is race-religion, or State-religion, and this social character naturally passes on to the free associations that are formed within the limits of the race or State. Hence the liberal theologian's talk of personality as the support of all religious life is absurd and unhistorical as far as the origin of Christianity is concerned, because that system has its roots entirely in the community or congregation. Personal religion was only evolved out of this social religion in the course of centuries, and could only replace the older form after severe struggles. What the religious person calls Christianity to-day —a religion of the individual, a personal healing principle—would have seemed folly to the early Christians. Such a thing was to them a sin against the Holy Spirit that would never be forgiven, because the Holy Spirit was the spirit of church-unity, of religious concentration, of the absolute subordination of the flock under the shepherds. In early Christianity there could only be personal religion

by the mediation of the society or church. An independent cultivation of personal religion was heresy, or separation from the body of Christ.

Even when the prophet of the Old Testament gives expression to his firmest religious conviction, Jahveh the people's God is behind him, and what Jahveh says to him is not a private concern of the prophets. His words are not directed to the individual, but to the community, and are in fact the religious expression of the social conscience in the living prophet.

The original affinity of the Christian community to the Thiasic and Eranic cult-associations can also be seen in the peculiar form of the earliest organisations. Among the Christians we find the Eranic meal as an integrating element of the common life, and in it is celebrated the memory of the common hero in the rite of a sacrificial meal. The further details of the Christian eucharistic celebration show plainly that this common meal must be conceived analogously to the Eleusinian mysteries, the cult of life that is born again from the dead. The figure of a Messianic Eranos is seen clearly in the description of the ceremonial supper in 1 *Cor.*

xi. 16. The extravagances, the licentiousness and drunkenness, that are so often associated with the Thiasic meals at a later period are not wanting. The ecstasies that were customary in orgiastic celebrations are found in the description of the gift of tongues (1 *Cor.* xiv. 5–19), and it is mentioned (v. 14) that ecstasy sometimes rises to the degree of frenzy. Ratzinger expressly describes the Christian common meal as a subordinate Eranos: "The wealthy brought what was needed, and the poor were invited to partake of it. All took their places at the table, over which the bishop presided—men and women, powerful and lowly, master and slave. The meal opened with prayer, and they ate, as Tertullian says, only to appease their hunger, and drank in moderation."[1] The description given in 1 *Cor.* xi. shows that the reality did not always correspond to this ideal. It must have been in view of these ecstatic and orgiastic excesses that the apostolic letter converts into a common decree, or precept of the Lord, the command that women shall keep silent at the gatherings.

The practice of hospitality, of almsgiving,

[1] *Geschichte der Christlichen Armenpflege*, p. 66.

and of benevolence, that is so often urged upon the Christian community is also quite within the programme of the Thiasic societies; so is the granting of loans. The burial of dead members that was undertaken by the Thiasic societies must also originally have been practised by the Christian congregations, as we gather from the polemic of the Gospels (*Luke* ix. 60; *Matt.* viii. 22) against the practice and the later development of the Church into a comprehensive cemetery. Kolde comes very near to the truth when he says: "The fraternities are very old, and when we consider their close resemblance to the religious associations of the Greeks and the Romans, which were formed for the cult of some deity or other, dedicating altars to them and celebrating their festivals, we are disposed to trace the Christian fraternities directly to those of the heathens."[1] What he says of the Christian fraternities leads directly to the other religious associations of the Greeks and Romans. To allow oneself to be baptised for the dead in order to enable the dead to share in the blessings of the Christian community is a practice mentioned in the first *Epistle to the*

[1] *Die kirklichen Bruderschaften und das religiöse Leben im modernen Katholizismus*, p. 6.

Corinthians (xv. 29), and is quite on the same footing as the later practice of saying masses for the dead.

Finally, we also find in the Messianic Thiases the tributary obligation of members, the common tax. This is by no means a temporary gift to meet the casual need of some community, but an essential part of the organisation, according to 2 *Cor.* viii. and ix. It is at first voluntary, not an obligation for which one is liable to be brought before the judge, like the contributions that were made by the members of an Eranos. Tertullian especially boasts of this voluntary character: "Each one brings a fitting gift on any day of the month that he can or will, and as he wills. No one is compelled, but all bring freely. They are the offerings of piety. The object is not to divide them for meals or drinking or shameless excesses, but to support the needy or provide burial for them when they die."[1] But this voluntary character is supported by a definite obligation, as is clear from the *Epistles to the Corinthians*. It is only the amount of the offering that is left to the individual; the obligation to offer something is fixed; and

[1] *Apology*, 39.

very soon a more or less specific rule is drawn up in the communities, enjoining that the offerings be laid on the altar during the ceremonial meal. Further, each participant has to undergo a purifying examination and the rite of the sacred bath before he is admitted. He then becomes a member of the community, subject to the common decrees; and in case of misdemeanour he is subject to the penitentiary discipline, and eventually excommunication by the community, just as was customary in the Eranic societies.

Thus the Christian community belongs entirely, as regards its form, to the class of religious-social bodies that were spread over the whole Roman Empire; but from the first it contains the reforming forces that are destined to lift it above all the others and make it the base of a new social order. There is no question but that the whole mystery of these forces lay in the fundamental religious principle of the Christian organisation—the belief in Christ; and that therefore it was mainly religious impulses that led to the victory over the olden civilisation, though it must be added that what constituted the strength of the principle in this victory became the limitation and the weakness of

Christianity in its further development. All the deities and heroes in whose honour the Eranic societies were formed were part of an antiquated philosophy. They had passed the zenith of their career, and only dominated actual life out of the recesses of the past. But in the Messianic system the future was alive. The Christ-god is the one who is to come, for whom the world must prepare. Christ, as an actually worshipped common deity, belongs to the sphere of the religious life of a certain age. He struggles for recognition ; first for the recognition of his equality with other divinities, then for a paramountcy over all the inferior gods of the Empire. But, as the Christ whose second coming is expected by the community, the congregational god includes from the first the capacity to become the cosmic divinity, the Christ of the Church, equal to the Father in all things.

Thus the belief in Christ spreads the Messianic hope among the organised masses. It captures the hearts that are sick of the past and full of despair for the present. This hope for the future is very real in the earlier communities. It embraces all the ideals of life that had appeared either in Greek philosophy or Jewish theology, realisation of which

was ardently awaited by the whole proletariate of the time, disinherited by the economic development. The trend of these ideals is towards a world without hunger and poverty, without masters or slaves, a communistic world in which "no one will call anything his own, but all things are in common" (*Acts* ii. 44; iv. 32). To this communistic-messianical ideal the community adds a new economic principle—the worth of labour and the restriction of the right of consumption to those that work and produce. That "the labourer is worthy of his hire" was a maxim stated long before in *Deuteronomy*, and the whole of the enslaved and free workers of the Roman Empire looked to the fulfilment of it as a redemption from oppression and injustice. In the Apostolic letters, too, it was the duty of the cleric to work with his own hands, though in other respects the rule had been established that the servant of the community should be maintained by the community (1 *Cor.* ix. 6); this was already a Thiasic rule. In the parable of the workers in the vineyard the Messianic community formulates its economic programme—namely, that the same wage shall be paid for quite different amounts of labour (*Matt.* xx. 1). Aug. Oncken rightly

observes that in its proclamation of the rights and worth of labour the Christian community provided the bridge to the ancient Germanic idea, the principle of the free community.[1] While all possession was founded on might by the Romans, so that the right of ownership really amounted to a right of spoliation, the Germans held that there was an equal duty of activity for all the members of an economic body.

In this way the Christian form of social life outstrips the older Thiasic societies. It is no longer merely an association for the discharge of certain important social functions. It is a self-contained social structure, a fraternity; not only in the older sense in which Herodotus at times gives the name to two races that follow a common cult, not merely in the later sense of the brothers of the Common Life, but in a comprehensive religious, ethical, and social sense. On that account the community sets up its own courts, and holds aloof from Roman jurisdiction. The saints that are to judge the world must not take their cases before secular judges. When any quarrel arises in the community someone must be

[1] *Geschichte der Nationalökonomie*, p. 74.

chosen within its bounds to decide between the disputing brothers (1 *Cor.* vi.). The Messianic community's consciousness of sovereignty girts it about like a wall. The more self-sufficing it feels itself to be in its organisation, the less need it has of the larger political organism in which it is placed. The corporate principle, which caused a certain rivalry to the State in every Thiasis, is here pushed to its extreme consequences. It is a State within a State, a new economic union on a social basis, growing up within the old society with its agrarian basis.

However, this communal order, the original form of which is spoiled by later modifications, involved from the first the contradiction between the ideal expectation of the future and the actual historical conditions. The Christian expression for this is the contradiction between the belief in Christ's second coming and the fact that he did not come. This contradiction must be regarded as the evolutionary principle of early Christianity. In fact, the first phase of its development that is historically known to us turns on this very contradiction. The Christianity of which we have the historical sources in the New Testament, and that first deserves the name in the

narrower sense, became a reality because it had to face this contradiction. It is mainly distinguished from the older Jewish Messianism by the fact that, in its struggles with its opponents, in the doubt as to the second coming of Christ that history excited, it came to a new consciousness of its own life.

The Biblical documents make it perfectly plain that the whole principle of Biblical Christianity lies in the death and resurrection of Christ. The Gospels point from the start towards the tragedy of the Cross. Their central idea is that Christ must die and rise again. This idea is directly connected in the Gospels with the confession of Christ; it overshadows even the story of the birth as a sort of presage of the suffering that awaits the new-born child. The Epistles, especially the four that bear the name of Paul—one to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, and one to the Galatians—which make plainer even than the Gospels the dependence of Christianity on the death and resurrection of Christ, clearly intimate that this death and resurrection of Christ is not an individual experience, but one of the community. The death and resurrection of Christ is completely identified with the death and resurrection of

the community. Through baptism the community is buried with Christ, in order that it may awake with Christ to a new life. The Christian congregation sees the fulfilment in itself of the words, "For thy sake are we slain the whole day long, and led like sheep to the slaughter."

But it is also conscious of victory, and is confident that it will triumph over all the forces of life. Just as Christ was crucified in weakness, yet lives in the strength of God, so all those who are weak in him live also in the strength of God (*Rom.* vi. 3, viii. 36; 1 *Cor.* xv. 4; *Gal.* ii. 20). Even in the Gospels the carrying of the Cross is made an indispensable condition of discipleship, and of expectation of the glory of Messianic life. In the Epistles Christ is the head, the community the body. But the head is one member of the body; it is as little without a body as the body is without a head. In the Gospel of John Christ is the vine; the community represents the branches. But the vine is made up of branches, and cannot be conceived apart! It is said in the Synoptics, "He who heareth you heareth me, and he who despiseth you despiseth me." Here, again, Christ lives in his disciples, his community. What the

Gospels give in the form of a history of Christ is the same thing that the Epistles give as theological doctrine and communal Christian right—the Christian community's sense of its oneness with Christ. This sense is based on the fact that the community experiences death and resurrection, is crucified and raised again from the dead.

In a sociological study of Christianity we are not called upon to discuss when and how the various historical episodes took place that inspired the community with this faith in Christ. It would make no difference to sociology if an individual experience—the crucifixion of a Jesus under Pontius Pilate, or an episode from the revolt of Judas of Galilee[1] —had been introduced into this Christ-story of the Gospels. There were Messianic agitations and pretenders to the dignity crucified every year among the Jews. We need only point out that this individual experience is isolated from that of the community, yet subordinated to it and substituted for it. However many Jews and slaves were put to death on the cross, the crucified Christ of the New Testament is not

[1] Cf. *Acts* v. 36 and Josephus, *Antiquities,* xviii. 1, xx. 5, 2.

a single one of their number. He is the ideal connecting link of them all in the crucifixion of the Christian community, and it is very probable that this experience has its historical background and Biblical conclusion in the persecution under Trajan. In the Neronian persecution the civic position of the Christians in the Roman Empire hardly calls for consideration. We have in it only the brutal act of a half-demented ruler, the vagueness of all current information about the Christian community making it easy for popular fury to be turned on them. Even under Domitian the idea of the Christians is so vague that they cannot be distinguished from the Jews. A regular judicial procedure against the Christians, such as is assumed in the Gospels (*Matt.* x. 18–20; *Mark* xiii. 11 and 12; *Luke* xxi. 12–14), only begins under Trajan, when the Christians first become confident that persecution will not destroy but ennoble them—that, in other words, death will be followed by resurrection.

Then the apologists begin their literary defence against the heathens. There must have been a definite attack before there could be a defence. It is true that the Gospels in their story of suffering have associated the

earlier mishaps of the Christians with the experiences of Messianic prophets; but that is for them merely the way of the cross, the ascent of Golgotha, not the process itself that denied the Christian faith the right to exist in the Roman State. Moreover, in the Gospel-narrative death and resurrection are inseparable. But there can be no resurrection for a Jew crucified under Pontius Pilate; there can be at the most only a vague hypothesis of a vision, quite devoid of historical reality, or the familiar refuge in theological phrases. Yet for the community the resurrection was real and actual. It was not destroyed in the persecution, but restored to new strength and life. The old nature-myth of the dying and reviving god had at last found a human, ethical, and social expression in this actual Christ-story. This crucified and resuscitated god was now the soul, the spiritual life-force, of Christian humanity. But in this belief in their living and ever-present Christ, which was fostered by the official persecutions, we have the radical significance that the Christian community attached to itself. The common organisation, as the incarnation of the Christ-god, claimed unrestricted rights, and it was merely a theological presentation and

establishment of these rights when the community attributed to Christ an existence before and beyond the world.

The chief documents for this first phase of the development of the Christian organisation are the Epistles, especially the four principal Pauline Epistles. German theology still clings obstinately to the older tradition that at least these four Epistles were written by Paul, the cloth-maker of Tarsus and wandering preacher, between the years 53 and 62, and has made many concessions in order to maintain the unity of these documents. But when Henke (quoted above) declares, in his attempt to establish the Biblical Jesus from profane Latin literature, that the genuineness of these Epistles is universally admitted, he is quite wrong. The traditional view of the Pauline Epistles has some very weighty opponents, especially among the Dutch theologians—Pierson, Loman, Meyboom, Matthes, etc. In a searching study of the *Epistle to the Galatians*, which is extended by critical notes to the chief Pauline Epistles, R. Stech (of Berne) is forced to deny that any of them were written by Paul. He points out that De Wette had shown long ago that the Pauline Epistles, even the principal ones,

fared no better than the Gospel of John in regard to external authority, and he then concludes that the Pauline Epistles, which have hitherto been regarded as the work of one man, should rather be looked upon as the work of a school, in which was developed the main theme of Paulinism, the tendency to greater freedom from the law.

That liberal theology, which with a light heart denied the Pauline authorship of all the other Epistles ascribed to him (with some reserve in the case of the *Epistle to the Philippians*), and threw back other important New Testament writings to the middle, if not the end, of the second century, has not been able to break free from the old tradition in regard to the chief Epistles, is due, as Stech points out, to the dependence of the critical school on its Tübingen founder, Ferdinand Baur. Baur suspended his critical work at these Epistles, because he thought he had found in them the key to the antagonism that in his theory shaped early Christianity—the antagonism between Jewish and Pagan Christians. In this way the old tradition continued unobserved in the new school, even long after the theory for the sake of which Baur had clung to the Pauline authorship of these

Epistles had been abandoned. The *Acts of the Apostles* may belong in its present form to the latest group of Biblical literature, yet its testimony must not be overlooked or disregarded, as is done by liberal theologians, the moment it differs from a passage in the Epistles. In one important point the witness of the *Acts* proves strikingly superior to that of the Epistles—namely, in its complete silence as to any literary activity on the part of the apostle, though the far greater part of the work is devoted to him. It dwells most minutely on the various stations in Paul's wanderings, and all the possible and impossible things that happened to him; but it never says a word about his having written letters or entered into correspondence with his communities.

Yet these Epistles were no private letters, but documents of the highest importance for the communities mentioned in the *Acts*, the foundation of which is attributed to Paul. His voyages are supposed to have been jotted down in a diary—the "We-document" in the *Acts*—in which there are detailed notices of the ships he sailed in, but none whatever about these important letters! When Paul, in the *Acts*, comes to Rome, he is so

completely unknown there that he has to introduce himself, and no one knows anything of any brother that has come to say anything ill about him. Yet we are asked to believe that he had written to them that classic monument of early Christian theology, the *Epistle to the Romans*, several years before! Indeed, the traditional view can be refuted out of the Epistles themselves. The fact that they bear the name of Paul will prove nothing to those who are acquainted with the literary devices of the time. There was no such thing in those days as literary proprietorship. To write under an assumed name was supposed to be an act of homage to the one whose name you chose. The whole of antiquity had the custom of selecting the name of a writer merely to indicate summarily a certain tendency or spirit. Hence the occurrence of the name of Paul should not mislead anyone, as everybody admits in the case of the lesser Pauline Epistles and the other Epistles in the New Testament that have the name of an apostle.

First, then, as regards the *Epistle to the Galatians*, our theologians seek in vain for a passage by means of which the account of the missionary journeys in the *Acts* can be reconciled, without strain, with the dates given in

the Epistle itself. It must seem strange that the writer of the Epistle, who is supposed to have been long known to those he addresses as the founder and apostle of their community, speaks of his life in the first chapter just as if the Galatians had never heard of him before. He creates a serious difficulty for our liberal theologians—of the "Life of Jesus" school—by boasting of it as a special distinction that he asked nothing of the men who could have given him all information about the historical Jesus; he merely meets them casually, and enters at once upon his apostolate. Yet this Paul is so convinced of the Gospel that he announces, without having learned it from the apostles at Jerusalem, that he pronounces malediction on any man that preaches a different one! That is hardly consistent with the idea of a man who still bears on his soul the scars of a profound spiritual struggle. The animosity against Peter and the other apostles at Jerusalem does not seem to be founded on certain experiences during the course of his apostolate, but is clearly caused from the first by his own call to the Gospel.

In the *Epistle to the Romans* even the simplest issues are so confused for the liberal theologians that the elementary question,

whether the letter is directed to a circle of converts from Judaism or from Paganism, divides them into two camps. In the Tübingen theology it is regarded as certain that the letter was originally addressed to Jew Christians, while the Erlangen school teaches the opposite. They overlooked the conspicuous circumstance that the *Epistle to the Romans* is a really Catholic one, a monumental exposition of the theology of the Roman Church. It has in view, in its comprehensive universalist tendency, not a narrow, local type of community, but the establishment of the idea of Catholicism. The real features of the local Roman community are known to us from the Clementine literature and the *Pastor* of Hermas. From the latter work especially, which, according to an old tradition recorded by Origen, was written by the Hermas who is mentioned as a pupil of Paul in the last chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans,* we learn something about the ideas of this local community down to the middle of the second century. The theology of Hermas is entirely Judæo-Christian. It betrays no acquaintance whatever with the ideas of the *Epistle to the Romans,* and in its emphasis of the number of the apostles as twelve has no place

whatever for the apostolic authority of Paul. If the community in the city of Rome had already possessed the canonical *Epistle to the Romans* more than half a century, the Clementine vagaries and the work of Hermas would have been impossible.

Recent liberal theologians divide the *Epistle to the Romans* into two parts, which are regarded as more or less independent, and must have had different authors. The two closing chapters, which give the local tone proper, were declared by Ferdinand Baur himself to be a later addition and not written by Paul. But this very diversity in the different parts is in keeping with the character of a Catholic epistle. The "City of God," in which all the peoples of the earth will be gathered on the lines laid down—that bestows happiness on all its members—shines clearly from the whole letter. In it, again, the old antithesis of faith and works is bridged over; the theology of justification by faith is just as decisively vindicated in chapter iv. as is the claim of good works in chapter ii. Such catholicity as this is very far removed from the fresh and still primitive Christian movement that liberal theology sees in the apostle Paul.

Paul is believed to have been at Corinth for the first time about the year 53, to have remained there a year and a half, and to have visited it at least twice afterwards. However we may arrange the chronology, we must, in any case, if Paul is the author of the *Epistles to the Corinthians*, admit an interval of six years between the first stay at Corinth and the composition of the first Epistle, as we have to conceive Paul in captivity at Cæsarea about the year 60. And we are asked to believe that the situation which evoked the letter was developed in a newly-founded Christian community in these few years! A Petrine party is supposed to have arisen at once at Corinth, so that disciples of Peter must have followed on the heels of Paul. The first Epistle affirms that there are people at Corinth who say, "We are for Peter." The letter also recognises a clergy that stands apart from the community with full hierarchical self-consciousness. The writer calls himself a follower of Christ quite in the sense of the apostolic succession, and on this ground demands that the community shall follow him (1 *Cor.* xi. 1). The colleagues in whose names the writer speaks regard themselves as real clerics, as preachers in the place of Christ. They are

the masters of the divine mysteries. God has revealed to them what no other human mind has discovered. Hence the cleric stands in the place of Christ. In virtue of his vocation he gives his rule as the command of the Lord, and he expects obedience of the community in all things, because it is Christ who speaks in him.

The earlier Christian maxim, that no one must be called father on earth, is already violated. There are, it is true, many shepherds, but not many fathers, in the community; yet the cleric has a right to be recognised as the one who has engendered the community in Christ (1 *Cor.* iv. 15). There is an organised cult at the gatherings of the community, in which the laity respond "Amen" to the psalm sung by the cleric (1 *Cor.* xiv. 16). Thus the letters, which are unmistakably made up of a number of independent letters, indicate a state of things that could not possibly have developed during the period allowed by the accepted chronology, and that clearly marks the transition from the sovereign community to the hierarchic Church. However, the community rules are not yet rigidly fixed. The letter gives certain directions that it would be useful to follow, but that cannot

be imposed as canonical rules, like what are called the Lord's commands (1 *Cor.* vii. 6, 25). As precepts of the Lord the first Epistle names the canonical rule that the women shall be silent in the gathering, and the prescriptions by which worship is secured against disturbance from ecstatic phenomena (1 *Cor.* xiv. 37). The regulation of the Eucharist is also based on a saying of the Lord (1 *Cor.* xi. 23). To the apostolic authority the word of "the Lord" is much the same as the word of Jahveh was to the older prophet, and this also was sometimes announced as the word of "the Lord" (*Isaiah* i. 10; *Zeph.* i. 1). But these rules of the Lord are either not found at all in the Gospels, or only in a radically different form. Thus, for instance, the Gospel gives the right of matrimony from the man's side as a saying of Christ, and the first *Epistle to the Corinthians* from the woman's side; the latter at least recognising the right of the woman to leave her husband, provided she does not contract a fresh marriage.[1]

If the letters to the Corinthians are to be regarded as collections of community-decrees, we seem to be in a position to estimate their

[1] *Mark* x. 2–9; *Matt.* v. 32, xix. 4–6; 1 *Cor.* vii. 10.

place in the whole process of the development of the community's life. They indicate the transition from the voluntary service of the community to the professional caste of officials. This inevitable evolution seems to be indicated in the *Epistle to the Galatians,* which R. Steck rightly regards as the latest of the four chief Pauline Epistles. In this we find the rule (vi. 6): "Whoever is instructed in the word shall share his goods with the one who instructs him"; whereas the practice of the apostolic wandering preacher was quite different from this. The letters to the Corinthians afford us a glimpse at the time of the transition from one custom to the other. Personally, the Pauline writer adheres to the earlier practice; he works with his own hands, and so maintains himself by his own trade (1 *Cor.* iv. 12; ix. 15). But this personal independence makes him all the more energetic in claiming that the service of the community shall be a remunerated profession (1 *Cor.* ix. 7–14). At the same time we see how the primitive communism, which had proved a hindrance to the common life according to the parable of the rich young man in the Gospel, had been converted into a more or less regulated system of contributions, or offerings to be brought

on certain days, and so the foundation of a common fund has been laid (2 *Cor.* viii. and ix.).

It is the same process of organisation that has led in the thirteenth chapter of the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, a second-century work, to the rule that the members of the community shall bring their "first fruits"—the first results of their economic production—to the teachers of the community.

Chapter VII.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

If we are to appreciate great historical connections, we need first of all to make a general survey of the characteristic features of the whole province of life under consideration. The traveller looks down from his high point of vantage over the general structure of the country that lies at his feet before he proceeds to study it in detail. Historical inquiry too often proceeds in the opposite direction. It restricts itself within a narrow philological sphere, and declines to look out on the broad world of human experience. Above all things, specialists will not understand that history is a whole, and that the several phenomena must be appraised as expressions of the life-spirit that presides over the historical development. Historical specialists of the old school have little sympathy with each other. Each works his own field, just as if it had nothing to do with the others.

On this account the work of explaining the origin of the Christian Church as a whole has not yet been accomplished. The theologians who have written the history of the early Church regard it entirely as a theological institution. The economic and social development that accompanies the origin of the Church lies outside their field of study, and does not, in their opinion, enter into the formation of the Church. It is true that Plank of Göttingen had tried in his great work (1803) to give us an account of the history of Christian society, but the narrow Protestant position from which he started causes him to regard the social side of Church-life as an aberration from the religious ideal of the Church; and the more narrowly Protestant theology studied Christianity in its own interest, the less hope there was of its giving us an estimate of the whole Catholic Church, embracing all spheres of life in a Christian unity. Political economy dare not take up the economic study of the early Church; it halts at a domain which an ancient tradition exempts from profane research and reserves for theology. It has left the whole province of theology untouched, as if it had nothing to do with the economic and social

life of the Church. Hence, even where political economy touches the economic life of the Church, it avoids any historical appreciation of the life of the early Church, as if this were quite a unique and peculiar phase of economic history. Sommerlad (*Das Wirtschafts-programm der Kirche des Mittelalters*, 1903) is wholly dominated by Protestant theology. He is bound by a theological exegesis which is, on its side, greatly concerned lest modern Socialists should find any support for their tenets in the principles of the early Church. This apologetic interest prevents the author from giving us a sound historical appreciation of the economic development of the Church. Brentano also (*Ethik und Volkswirthschaftslehre*, 1902; and *Die wirthschaftlichen Lehren des christlichen Alterthums*, 1902) studies the economic development of the Church from the modern point of view, and arrives at the erroneous conclusion that, as the medieval writers who dealt with economic matters were moral philosophers, they were bound to take up a position of comparative hostility in indicating the natural position of man towards economic goods, and in regard to the main impulse to commerce and the further development of economic life.

The position of man towards economic goods was just as natural in the Middle Ages as it is now; the goods were different, and the man was different, but that is all. And this ecclesiastical form was just as soundly economic for the time, it corresponded as fully with the economic conditions of life then, as the unecclesiastical, capitalistic form does to ours. As far as I know, A. Onchen of Berne is the only one who has taken the ecclesiastical economic system as a special epoch of economic evolution, though his sketchy account of the connecting link between the economic and the theological side of church-life is very slight.[1] It is true that a number of recent theologians, especially of the Christian Socialist school, have dealt with the economic life of primitive Christianity; but their interest is entirely due to their preoccupation with the social questions of our time. They want to find norms of economic life in the Bible or the Fathers, or to combat certain economic dogmas with weapons taken from the ecclesiastical arsenal. But the authority of the Bible is so paramount with them, and their belief in the absolute correctness of one

[1] *Geschichte der Nationalöconomie*, 1902.

economic form so strong, that they have never properly conceived the task of studying the economic views of the Church in the living flow of economic development. In view of this situation the following attempt to study the social form of the Church as an organic whole, and to indicate a living contact between its dogmatic and its economic history, must, indeed, have the nature of an experiment, but an experiment that must be made if we are to have a correct idea of the general historical significance of the Christian Church.

The Christian brotherhoods, out of which the Christian Church at length developed, differ according to their geographical position or their racial elements, as the Epistles clearly intimate. In some the apocalyptic is paramount, in others the philosophy of the poor folk; while in the Roman community a third element must be added to these Jewish and Greek elements—the spirit of a metropolitan proletariate. All three kinds are Messianic societies, and worship the Christ-god as their common hero. But the Christ-god appears under different national traits in each of them. Among the Jews he is the Son of Man that will come on the clouds of heaven; to the Greeks he is the Logos of God, enlightening

every man with a divine light; at Rome he is the advocate of believers with God, the Paraclete. Just as the Hellenistic philosophy of religion arose out of the blending of the Hebrew and Greek spirit at the close of the fourth century before Christ, and had its centre in Alexandria, so the Christian culture was born of the permeation of Hellenism with Roman political and economic life. From the broader historical point of view there are three streams of culture in the Old World that meet in the Trinitarian Church, and the Church has dogmatically embodied their special vital principles in the Triune God. The first person of the Trinity looks towards Palestine, the second towards Greece, the third towards Rome. But these three persons are combined in one Deity; a Trinitarian culture has been brought to a comprehensive unity in the Church. When the three streams of culture first meet they are all at the same stage of development. Roman politics, Greek philosophy, and Jewish theology speak the same thoughts in different characters. Under the cover of national features their various spirits press on to the common aim of humanity. Rome represents the principle of unity in a world-monarchy, in which all the

parts are held together in subordination to the idea of right. Its religious embodiment is the Holy Spirit that stands for the unity of the Church, acts through the jurisdiction of the bishops, and finds expression in the decrees of Councils. Greece has created a philosophy in which the unity of the world is built up in thought, and all details are subordinated to the logical idea. Its representative is the Logos, the Son, the Reason of God. Finally, Palestine gives the world theocratic Messianism, in which the unity of the world is brought about by the subordination of all life to the moral idea of justice. Its representative is the Father, the Moral Legislator, the Creator and Ruler of the world. The spirits of Rome, Greece, and Palestine are united in the Catholic Church, and so the religious ideal of the Church, the Christ that lives in all its functions, is itself Trinitarian. He is a Triune God-Messias, Logos, and Pneuma.

In the development of its Christology the growing Church harmonises the various features of these Christ-figures, and Rome creates, in the Christ of the Gospels, the form that unites in itself all the essential characters of the three. The Christ of the Gospels is entirely the ecclesiastical or Catholic Christ.

He gives the rules of the canonical life; he reveals in himself the fundamental canonical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Poverty means emancipation from the service of Mammon, the voluntary surrender of all one's goods to the community. A correlative feature is almsgiving, which is openly rewarded by God, and, as in the sayings of the Old-Testament Jesus, is represented as an economic function of the communal life. Chastity means contempt of marriage, repudiation of sense-life even to the extent of self-emasculation, asceticism in the sense of dualistic systems. Hence in the Gospels Christ opens his work with a forty days' fast; he commends fasting as pleasing to God, and declares that it is a necessary rule of life until the second coming (*Luke* xiv. 20; *Matt.* xix. 12; v. 28, 29, and 39; *Mark* ii. 20). The obedience that the canonical Christ demands is absolute; it leaves no room whatever for personal assertion or individual freedom. For Christ's disciples nothing must have any value in itself; their own life has no rights, nothing more to say to or to claim from those who have undertaken to follow Christ (*Luke* xiv. 33; *Matt.* x. 33).

In the first three Gospels Christ is himself

the embodied ideal of this canonical life. He creates the apostolate in order to spread and realise the canonical rules, and in the person of Peter chooses Rome as the rock on which the Church shall be built. The fourth Gospel, on the other hand, presents the glorification of this ideal from the standpoint of the Church. All private poverty, abstinence, and subjection find their greatest glory in the Christian idea of unity, enlarged to a world communism, because what belongs to the whole belongs to the parts, and what is true of Christ is true also of his disciples and all that through them have a share in Christ (*John* xvi. and xvii.).

This ecclesiastical ideal harmonises perfectly with its economic basis, and can only be understood in connection with it. Canonical poverty is only intelligible in relation to the early Christian communal life. It is not poverty in the modern sense, not pauperism as an accompaniment of individualist production ; it is an economic form of the social life. The community is supreme in all that pertains to it, and so is the ideal owner of all property. In the agape, the common meal, it has constituted itself a social consumer ; in the offerings and first-fruits it creates a communal property. The community is higher than the

individual; the more it asserts its ideal right of ownership, the richer it seems to be itself, the more truly are all its individual members poor. The common property is the property of the poor. Hence canonical poverty is only a special ecclesiastical expression of the communal economy. The Fathers do not declare property generally, and not the common property vested in the Church, but only private property, to be inconsistent with Christian sentiments. That the whole frame of mind of early Christianity was communistic, and only recognised social ownership as the foundation of ecclesiastical administration, has been fully proved by Brentano in his rectorial speech at Munich and his *Untersuchungen über die wirthschaftlichen Leben des christlichen Alterthums*. The idea had already been advanced by L. Stein in his *Die soziale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie* (p. 238). A few passages may be quoted from these works:—

> God created men for brotherly community, he himself giving his son and surrendering the Logos as common good, giving his all to all men. Hence all is common, and the rich must not desire more than others. It is the will of God that all be enjoyed in common. It is not fitting that some should have a superabundance, while others are needy (Clement of Alexandria).
>
> All that God is has been given for the use of us

who have usurped it. No one is hindered from sharing the advantages, but the whole human race may equally enjoy God's goodness and generosity. The day lights the world for all, the sun shines, the rain moistens, the wind blows; they that sleep have the same sleep, and common to all is the brilliance of the stars and the moon. The owner who follows this model, and shares his profits and fruits with his brethren, giving to all and rendering justice, imitates God the Father (Cyprian).

Just as when one who has taken a place in the theatre thrusts aside all who enter afterwards in the idea that the seat which was common to all has become his property, so it is with the rich. They appropriate what is common to all, and call it theirs on the ground that they first came across it. If they would take only what is required for the satisfaction of their wants, and distribute the surplus among the needy, there would be no rich and no poor (Basil the Great).

The same Father argues that the rich—that is to say, every man who has more than he really needs—is a thief and a robber, and then continues:—

The bread thou hast belongs to the hungry, the mantle thou wearest belongs to the ill-clad, the shoes thou hast on belong to the unshod, the silver thou hast heaped up belongs to the needy. Thou doest injury to as many men as thou couldst give to.

When we possess as our own what is sufficient for us, it does not belong to us, but to the poor, to whom we do violence, and we are guilty of a criminal usurpation (Augustine).

The root of private ownership is, according

to Chrysostom, an injustice that the individual has not, indeed, committed himself, but that he has inherited from his fathers.

> For God did not create some rich and others poor in the beginning, but gave the earth to all as a common possession. Hence it is an evil deed for one to rule as lord over all, instead of enjoying all things in common. Community of goods is natural, and based on the will of God. God gave us the necessary things as common goods, so as to teach us to possess other things also in common.

We do not, however, need to dwell on these various indications when we have realised what the Church meant with its Christ. This Christ, as the ideal unity of all the faithful, is himself the religious embodiment of communism. In him each personal existence—the individual with all he is and has—is united to all the others that belong to the communal body of the Christians. They must be one, just as Christ is one with the Father; they are all branches of one vine, members of one body. In this faith in a communal Christ there cannot be any poor except in the canonical sense; the poverty demanded in the Gospels is a necessary postulate of the Christ-idea.

Hence we see clearly here the deeper motives that have led liberal clerics into a

desperate attempt to expunge the canonical Christ from the Gospels, or to obscure his clearest features with theological ambiguities, and delineate a human individuality. It is anxiety in regard to the Christian communism that is at work in this "Life of Jesus" school. In view of its connection with a past that still has authority over it, the liberal school cannot take the early Christian communism as a merely historical phase of economic development, and so be independent of it. It is concerned for its own system of private capital, when it cannot succeed in replacing the communal Christ by a personal one in the Gospels. But this Christian communism embodied in the canonical Christ proves nothing for the present. As an historical phenomenon, it is no argument either for or against any modern form of economic life. This communism was not only an injunction of Christian ethics, but also, in fact mainly, an economic necessity of the time. It proved the salvation of society from the impossible situation created by Roman capitalism, and was at the same time a connecting link between antiquity and medieval feudalism.

Christian communism, moreover, is subject

to the law of economic development. The first movement takes place with the centralisation of the Church and the rise of the clergy. What was before common property and under the common authority, now becomes the property of the Church; and the Gospel shows, by means of the story of the anointing of Christ's feet, how the contradiction between the offerings now made to the Church and the older practice of giving to the poor may be solved by pointing out that to honour Christ is more important than giving to the poor, who are always with us. The poor, in the canonical sense, are now mainly the religious bodies, the *fratres sportulantes*, as Cyprian calls them; and in the fourth century there was a tradition that one third of the Church's income went to the bishop, one third to the other clerics, and another to the poor. This movement began in the second century. The Gospel of Luke mentions these *fratres sportulantes*—the clerics who depend for their maintenance on the offerings of the community, and have no private property (x. 1–14). It is only a necessary form of this social economy of the Church when we find capitalistic trade forbidden, as well as interest on capital. Both prohibitions are based on

the right of labour, which must be regarded as the foundation of the Christian economic system.

Oncken points out that there is some resemblance between the Christian brotherhood and the Germanic society. In the ancient German market individual exchange was unknown; production was directed to meet social consumption, and a social decree determined in particular cases the conditions of exchange between the corporative bodies. The early German right of property rests on labour, not on booty or exploitation or force, as did that of the Romans. The feeling was that labour gave one a right to the values it created. Nevertheless, while recognising the resemblance, we must seek the real origin of the Christian economic in the Old Testament legislation and the economic and social views of the prophetic reformers. In his history of the Christian prohibition of usury Frantz Xavier Funk (of Tübingen) gives the views of the Fathers on the subject. Interest is denounced by Lactantius and Cyprian as an exploitation of one's neighbour's need for one's own profit, a direct violation of the duty of benevolence. The two Cappadocian Gregories chiefly emphasise the fact that interest is profit

without labour, a harvest where one has not sown. Augustine regards interest as a violation of the equality of exchange. In taking interest we receive more than we gave; and that seems to be an oppression of the poor, all the more shameful because it covers itself with the mantle of benevolence.

Thus the prohibition of interest is closely connected with the doctrine of just price that necessarily follows from the communistic view of the early Church. The just price is a perfect equality of value in the wares exchanged. Trade is only permissible on this basis of a just price, and the chief task of canonical legislation is to secure the maintenance of real equivalence between the two elements in the bargain.[1] In the just price the value of labour is the factor that determines the equality of the exchange; in fact, labour is the only just factor of gain.

> In the usual form of society (says Endemann) it is always deemed most natural that service be given in labour. In the estimate of labour which Christianity had engendered, society found its most fitting base in common toil. If offerings of money came as well, that made no difference to the principle. Labour remained the chief thing, the

[1] See W. Endemann, *Studien in der romanistisch-canonischen Wirthschaftsrechtslehre*, ii. 31.

element that fertilised the money-gift of each member and justified the profit. At the same time, nothing could be said against the society that arose from the combination of the pure labour element of the one and the purely capitalistic element of the other. The gloss-writers and earliest commentators of the canonists understand by society a general community of goods, the common economy of a family. There could be no doubt whatever, on canonical principles, of the possibility of a society in which every member has work to do. It is even held possible in theory that each member has nothing else to do but work, though in practice the formation of a purely labouring society, without money or equivalent, would hardly have been possible.....Roman law does not speak of any society that is based solely on a union of labour with labour. To the canonist this union of labour with labour *(societas opera cum opera)* is the most just and natural of all forms of society.

However, this labour economy did not evolve immediately from the Roman capitalistic economy. It was not formed without some resistance in the community itself, and was followed by many protests. The Synod of Elvira in 306 forbade any person, even lay, under pain of excommunication, to take interest; but the Council of Nicæa in 325 only forbade it to clerics. In the Gospels the question of interest is by no means settled. At one time the loan of money without interest is either directly demanded, or at least assumed

(*Luke* vi. 34; *Matt.* v. 42); yet the story of the useless servant, who fancies no one can reap where he has not sown, does not seem to know anything of this theory of just price (*Matt.* xxv. 14), and actually claims that one ought to make interest on capital. Thus the Gospel shows that in the early Church there was a looser practice as well as the rigid anti-capitalist feeling; Cyprian complains, in fact, that even bishops occupy themselves in making interest. The early history of Callistus, especially, who became bishop of Rome at the beginning of the third century offered grave difficulties to those of the more rigorous school.

Callistus had had special gifts for financial work in his earlier years, and had kept a bank. He was at first the slave of a prominent Christian, who handed over to him a considerable sum which he was to put out at interest. On the strength of his master's solidity he secured the moneys of widows and others, came at last to the verge of bankruptcy, and was then asked for an account by the master. He fled, but was captured, and sent by the master to the tread-mill. Obtaining his liberty through the entreaties of his Christian brethren, then sent

by the prefect to the Sardinian mines, he won the favour of Marcia, the most powerful mistress of the Emperor Commodus. At her request he was restored to liberty, and was shortly afterwards appointed Bishop of Rome.[1] Callistus knew very well how to get along without labour, and to make friends with the mammon of iniquity (*Luke* xvi. 9); and in Marcia we have a "sinner" that may have caused some concern to the Christian Pharisees (*Luke* vii. 37). Döllinger says of her in a work on Hippolytus and Callistus that she was a zealous Christian while concubine of the emperor, and that she seems to have taken her place in the Christian community, and been admitted to the sacrament of the altar. It is quite possible that the Gospel stories of the faithless manager and the great sinner, which clearly allude to well-known and much-discussed episodes in the Christian community at the time, may have been admitted into the Gospel in order to express the ecclesiastical feeling in regard to this conduct of a Roman bishop under the eyes of the Roman community.

When, in 321, the Emperor Constantine

[1] L. Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

gave the Church the rights of a juridical person, and so the right to receive legacies and acquire landed property, a new period was opened in its economic development. The earlier desire of the communities to be able to buy the land in which the treasure had been discovered was now fully realised. There is, in fact, reason to believe—according to Plank—that some Churches had received landed property as gifts, etc., even in the third century. In any case, before half a century had passed legacies had been secured in such abundance that in every province the clergy possessed, in the name of the Church, one-tenth of all the property.[1] In this way the Church became a political reality. It had grown from a social union fighting for legal recognition into the Catholic Church, the Christian theocracy. This ecclesiastical property belonged to one single master, but he was not of this world—he was invisible; it was therefore inalienable, and so was in contrast to the political state, laws of which had first brought it into existence.

Thus the Church inaugurates the contradiction that characterises the history of the

[1] Plank, *op. cit.*, i. 279 and 287.

Middle Ages. Canon law seeks to permeate civil law, especially the agrarian law of the nations. To do so it must adapt itself to conditions that are inconsistent with its real nature. The clergy became a "great domestic economy, branching out into innumerable parts," but its unity is ambiguous; it includes a real and mundane, and an ideal and transmundane, sphere. Christ has become the Man-God with two natures, the human and divine; and in this theory of Christ, so unintelligible to the modern mind, the Church has given dogmatic expression to the feeling of its own nature, its claim to a world-wide dominion.

If from this point of view of the history of the Church we take a general glance at the problem of Christ once more, we find that most enigmatic of hieroglyphics, the writing of the world's history in the name of Christ, now quite plain and intelligible. Christianity as an historical phenomenon is rooted with its whole being—its social structures, its ecclesiastical orders and forms of life, its religious and moral ideas—in the conditions of the world which it moulds into shape. We must, therefore, take the most elementary Christian idea, the name of Christ, in conjunction with

the whole intellectual culture from which it has emerged. The Christianity of the New Testament opens as the Gospel of Christ, the Son of God (*Mark* i. 1). With the belief that Christ, the Son of God, founded the Christian Church, the new Christian culture came into the world. And what this faith meant to those who hold it can only be appreciated when we understand how the nations were brought to accept it. The Christians had to start from what was usually meant in their time by "Son of God," and even in the special application that they made of the phrase they remained in touch with what "Son of God" meant in the current phraseology.

This meaning was taken at first from the Old Testament. The Bible speaks of various kinds of sons of God. They are the highest and noblest races, that have not kept their racial purity, but mingled with inferior ones. They have fallen in love with the daughters of men, and so initiated the degeneration that leads at length to the legendary Deluge. With the development of the religious spirit the gifts of bodily strength and physical nobility diminish, and are changed into moral distinctions. Jahveh, the god of right, loves his people,

and would have it do the right. Hence Hosea speaks of the people of Israel as the Son of God, whom Jahveh has loved and brought out of Egypt. Jeremias speaks of the love of Jahveh for Ephraim, his first-born son. And when the Messianic hope strikes new roots in the Maccabean struggles for freedom, it combines with the belief in sons of God. The peoples shall be given to the Son of Jahveh, the victorious hero; they shall pay him homage with the kiss of subjection.

In the New Testament these warlike echoes are not heard at first. The peacemakers are declared blessed, because they are the sons of God. Man's likeness to God must make him merciful and love his enemies, so that he may be a son of his heavenly father. Then the idea of a Son of God takes a further step. All men become sons of God by faith. Finally, a new spirit enters into the New Testament from Greece, a spirit that had already touched parts of the Old Testament. It comes from the schools of the philosophers, where serious thinkers have brooded over the problem how the one invisible God communicates his supra-mundane power and superhuman spirit to the world, and has revealed himself to it. These philosophers built a bridge between the manifold

and the one, the visible and the invisible. In thought the two were one, and the thought was revealed in the word. Thus the Word, the Logos, is associated with God. He is the light that shone out of the unfathomed depths of God, whose rays pass into the visible life of the world in the various objects and episodes about us. And the Word is born of Wisdom. It announces wisdom, and whoever loves wisdom is a philosopher; he has a share in its divine life, of which each divine word is born. God himself loves his Wisdom, his *Sophia;* she is espoused to him, is the spiritual mother of truth, which gives the world the only-begotten son, the Word or Logos. We find the *Sophia* as the assistant of God in the work of creation in the (so-called Solomonic) Proverbs of the Old Testament, in the sayings of Jesus, son of Sirach, and especially in the *Wisdom of Solomon.* In the Fathers of the Church it becomes the reason that God had in himself from the beginning, from which he begot the Son, the creative word of the world. We meet it also in the form of the virgin-mother of God, the one blessed among women, the dolorous mother of the divine son that is born to be crucified; and then in the Gospel of John as the intelligent

worker of the first miracle, by which the Son revealed his glory, the inheritor of his spirit.

There are three phases in all through which the title of "Son of God" passes in the Bible. The name is used at first as the name of a race or people; then it loses its national limitations, and is applied to men with certain moral qualities; and finally it associates human life with its eternal and divine ground, and creates the formula for a supersensual view of human life, the claim of the unconditioned and the absolute in the world of men.

We have to put ourselves in this world of rich and varied fancy if we would understand what is meant in the Church by the phrase "Christ is the Son of God." This Son of God cannot have been an individual human being, otherwise all those could not have been ranged along with him who showed the same regard for peace-making and all-embracing charity. Still less could it have meant an "historical personality," otherwise the Virgin could not have been given him as mother and the Spirit of God as begetter. In virtue of the whole phraseology and feeling of the Biblical writers, it must have been a common or generic name, at least in the New Testament; the name of those communities that combine the ethical

ideas of ancient Israel, the belief in the beloved Son in whom Jahveh is well pleased, with the philosophic ideas of the Greeks, the doctrine of the divine Word, which, as child of the divine *Sophia,* constitutes the eternal foundation of all life and movement.

In this way we get rid of all the difficulties that people create for themselves in the "Gospel of Christ, the Son of God," as soon as we recognise that the Biblical writers had no idea of introducing to their readers an individual human being as the Son of God and the Virgin. Any man who reads into the Gospels a conscious or unconscious project of this kind will find it difficult to see in the further history of the Church, which bases itself on faith in the Son of God, anything but a strange confusion. He is prevented from seeing in this faith of the Church the classical expression of a form of historical life that is determined by the history of the time. On the other hand, when it is applied to the Christian community, the name "Son of God" indicates the tendency of the whole spiritual life of these communities—the tendency towards a divine ideal by which the consciousness of these communities is satisfied. They aim at being the "Son of God"

among the peoples of the earth; they could give themselves no lesser name. As Son of God the community gave all its members the high sense of freedom that made them lords of the Sabbath, or any other external direction of life; it drew nearer to the inner law of the spirit. For this Son of God there was no law but what it appointed to itself. In face of it all force and domination disappeared, and only the law of mercy and charity remained.

This Christian community felt itself to be raised to a sovereign height as the fulness and the centre of the times. The Church acknowledged an eternal son that existed before Abraham was, before the foundations of the world were laid. So the Christian community, as the Son of God, took to itself all that sought the same goal, the thinkers and poets of the heathen as well as the prophets and pious legislators of the Jew. It found in all of them the same living word that appeared in the Christian community as the begotten of the Father. It looked forward into all coming time, told of its own suffering and final victory —in the story of the crucified and risen Son of God—and worked out its own religious self-consciousness in the faith in a God-man, in whom there should be no separation, yet no

confusion, of divine and human nature—the transmundane character of its sentiment and the secularity of its practical aims, the absoluteness with which it was permeated in all that it believed and taught, and the relativity of the earthly conditions that it would pervade with its absolutism.

By this faith in the God-man the Church became truly Catholic, the one universal Church that gives to the world the widest communist manifesto that was ever framed, demanding a communism of the inner as well as the outer life; not only a rigid organisation of economic, political, civil, and juridical relations, but also a moral and religious order, a rule of faith and thought to which the individual is implicitly bound, and that leaves him no right as an individual, but places all right on a common ground. The *one* Christ in all men—the poor, ailing, imprisoned Christ present in all that are poor, ailing, or imprisoned—that was the programme of this religious organisation, a programme such as had never before been given to the world. None should ever more hunger in the land, none should be poor, no ailing man should lack help, no dying man lack consolation. Christ was to be man as

well as God. The Christian communism, that had its centre of gravity and its key-stone beyond this world, would, nevertheless, have regard to the realities of this life—would be a Catholic Church.

This divine-human self-consciousness of the Church relieved the strain that had come over the Old World in the form of an apocalyptic expectation of the end of the world. With its transcendental faith it created a redemptive force from the leaden weight of misery, a hope for the future that lifted men above the cruel realities of life; and at the same time with its secular programme it remained on the earth. It embraced the man of the time in the totality of his spiritual impulses, his moral sentiments and his instincts.

It is another question whether this divine-human self-consciousness of the Church performed all that it promised; whether the Church in its faith that passed all bounds of time did not bring upon itself the judgment that another, a secularised, Son of God—human history—wrought on it. And it is also a question whether the man of our time can still find in the language of the early Church the words in which he can express the ground and aim of his human nature according

to his own faith. Child of God, Son of God, Kingdom of God—all these are now mere Church-phrases, not the language of our age. No one now understands them in the streets and the market-places; they are all but unintelligible even to the faithful within the Churches. But this raises the question of the future of Christianity, and of religion generally. It is a question that we do not find lightly thrown out by a few sceptics; it is proposed by history itself—a living question of humanity.

Chapter VIII.

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY

In the year 1873 there was published a work of Frantz Overbeck's entitled *Die Christlichkeit unsrer heutigen Theologie* ("The Christianity of Modern Theologians"), in which the author, then professor at the University of Basle, maintained that modern theology lacks precisely those qualities that it most loudly claims—namely, that it is scientific and Christian. The book came at the unfortunate hour of the height of a political liberalism that sought a support of its political ideas in religious liberalism, and it was laid aside as a literary curiosity. It seemed very strange that any man should attempt to saw through the branch on which he himself was sitting. The author found himself more and more isolated, and his book dropped out of theological literature.

Now the world is astonished to see it appear in a second edition. The publisher must have considered that the book is not yet

—after thirty years—out of date, and that it has, perhaps, a mission to fulfil to-day even more than when it first appeared. As a matter of fact, the charges which the author brings against the theology of his time are much more founded now than they then were; they seem, indeed, to the modern reader to be too tame and moderate, or at least too theoretical and academic. Religious life has begun in these last thirty years to take stock of itself. This has brought to an acute pitch the contradictions between theology and science, between the early Christian and the modern view of life, that were at first perceived by only a few bolder minds. They culminate in the question whether there is any place at all for Christianity in the modern world, and so bring us to face the problem of its future.

This question naturally finds its simplest expression, and possibly its answer, in the problem of Christ. The spiritual and moral autonomy of the individual that has been growing ever since the sixteenth century, and that has now set free all the forces of human personality, reaches its highest and noblest embodiment in religious autonomy. Hence the first question on which the future of Christianity

depends is, whether it is consistent with the complete autonomy of the religious personality. Theological liberalism has failed to answer to this test with its historical Jesus. Early Christianity was autonomous in its way; the Church was an authority to itself, and made its own laws. Its faith in Christ meant that God himself was present in it in human form, and spoke through the mouth of its organs, through the Spirit that proceeded from Christ. The Church was only heteronomous as regards the individual; and it became this more and more in proportion as it was centralised by the clergy. Thus the original autonomy of the communities passed over to the central institution, and finally to the infallible pope.

At the separation from Rome Protestantism, accustomed to authority and desirous of it, fell into a curious plight. Where was it to find the ultimate tribunal for deciding religious questions? Was it to be the earthly ruler or the clerical estate, Luther or the Bible, the national Church-assembly or the individual community? Rationalism found an escape from the difficulty. Christ was to be the supreme authority in the Protestant Church; but this did not mean the God-man Christ

whom the Catholic Church proclaimed to be its heavenly head and the basis of its power, but the historical Christ, the natural human being, the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth. The critical knife was, therefore, brought into requisition, and everything was cut out of the Gospels that referred to the Christ of the centralised Roman system. But as liberalism lacked the force and courage of real religious independence, it had to find a new authority for the faith in the historical Jesus; and so, while crying energetically for "separation from Rome," it bound its followers all the more to—Jerusalem! It bids the modern world make Palestine the centre of its religious feeling and thought!

In this it succumbs to an inevitable fate; the island on which it believes it must save its historical Jesus grows narrower and narrower. First religious thought discarded the ideas of heaven and hell, angels and demons, signs and wonders, from which liberalism had not been able entirely to detach its historical Jesus. It called these ideas the shell, and distinguished the kernel as the morality of the Gospels, especially of the Sermon on the Mount. But this morality, which was enthusiastically set forth as great

and beautiful, is rigidly opposed in its most elementary principles to the conscience of our time. It demands self-sacrifice and self-denial, whereas our life is based on self-assertion. Hence now we are told that there is a "shell" even in the ethic of Jesus, with which we need not concern ourselves, and a "kernel" that has an eternal significance. And when we inquire more closely about this "nucleus" of the various theologians—as in E. Grimm's recent *Die Ethik Jesu* ("The Ethic of Jesus")—it is found to be elastic enough to adapt itself to all the ethical views that are looked for in it, and runs counter to no desire of our theologians. Finally, since, especially in the liberal polemic against the sociological treatment of Christianity, this device of distinguishing between shell and kernel entirely broke down, they were content to say that there *must* have been an historical Jesus, and declined to ascribe any definite historical features to him so as to save the mere vague fact of his existence.

In this way liberal Protestantism has come down to the last slender lines of its spider's web, and remains there for the time. To speak of a religious founder of whom we know nothing whatever beyond the fact of his

existence, but who is nevertheless made, as founder, the original principle and absolute standard of Christianity, is merely to admit that Protestantism wants an authority at any price, and cannot offer one with any definite features for critical inquiry to study. What liberal theology is doing is to date its own view two thousand years back under the name of the historical Jesus, to bind the present down to a definite spot in the past. The Protestant Church dare not bring its religion into the full and rich life of to-day, or to release the prophetic and aspiring forces of life from the actual needs of men; and so it has found an historical Jesus, as a sort of *deus ex machinâ*, to satisfy the craving for authority. Such is the half-heartedness and the real untruth of liberal theology that it can only save its liberty by basing it on an historical Jesus, and that it can only venture to preach its most advanced ideas if it is allowed to wrap them in the mantle of its historical founder.

It is, moreover, quite a mistake to think that this liberal Christianity, which is more correctly called Jesuism, stands on a different footing from the older Christianity. It has struck out the Christ-element from its Jesus.

That Jesus never appears in the New Testament except as Christ is offensive to it, and the circumstance is regarded as the first step in the adulteration of the religion of Jesus, or as a pathological development of Jesus; at least in so far as it is not found possible so to interpret the meaning of the name Christ, by means of Harnack's principles, as to make it quite harmless for Protestant sentiments. Jesuism lays the chief stress on the fact that it has received its gospel from a human being, an historical founder of a religion. It employs the whole of its theological ingenuity to prove its ideas to be, not speculations of its own, but developments of the thoughts of Jesus. Early Christianity was profoundly convinced that its Gospel was "not of man," and that its teachers and apostles had received it "not of men or through men." And as these Christians were so convinced that they had been bought dearly by God, they were proportionately determined never to be the slaves of men. Hence any theology that would subject men to a human personality, such as the historical Jesus, lies outside the range of Christianity; unless we admit that it is not too much in earnest with its Jesuism, and that in its dependence on history merely seeks a way of establishing its

own independence, its political and ecclesiastical atomism.

Liberal theologians treat Jesus as a model and portrait, and, strictly speaking, demand that men shall copy it. But any man that rounds to a full personality must refuse to be a copy, and even liberal theology feels that it is impossible to create copies of Jesus. It, therefore, reduces the model and refuses it, and in doing so only increases the difficulty to which it is exposed from the start by its inherent contradiction—the effort to establish the freedom of the modern man on a basis of dependence on a man of the remote past. For social theology, on the other hand, Christ is what he always was—a type. The type neither postulates nor permits copies. It is itself capable of development with the further advance of life, and is represented in the fulness of the forms that are organically included in it. A racial type is itself a living structure, passing through all the modifications that the race or people experiences in the course of its history.

From the sociological point of view, Christ is originally the type of the independent man living in communion with the Church—the God-man. With the differentiation of the

world-wide Catholic polity into territorial polities the Christ-type in turn is nationalised. It appears, in the shape of the historical Jesus, as the patriot, the democrat, the revolutionary, according to the particular phase of political development that the national life is passing through. The national life now becomes like the personal individual. The Christ-type also becomes personal. It becomes the independent human being; and we have the possible future of Christianity in the fact that this autonomous personality still reveals in the depths of his nature all the features that give the most vital expression to the Christ-type from the first. It is easy to see, therefore, that the most personal ideal of man that modern thought has created, Nietzsche's Zarathustra, is nothing more than the Christ-type made personal. Here the individual has the same consciousness of eternity as the Church once had in its belief in its immortality. He does just what the Christian commune did in the full consciousness of its divine-human autonomy, when it broke the older tables of values, and produced new ones to supersede them. The Christ that says to the necessity of suffering, "I will," and so makes a path to glory out of the path of suffering, now becomes

a personality that re-fashions all that happens to him in his own mould, and converts all foreign pressure into an act of his own will. Zarathustra the lover, who becomes of his own fulness a source of blessing to men, who speaks the great "Yes" to all life—the over-man, the man of the future, who leads us to new and undiscovered lands over the infinite sea of life—is Christ become personal, the Christ that once gave himself for the good of humanity in the loving sacrifice of the community, and leads his followers into new spheres.

However, man's religious autonomy does not float in the air. It is based on the solid ground of reality. In this reality is included the whole of the past, the whole of history; not as it is presented theologically or politically and made subservient to all kinds of interests, but as a great and ever-rejuvenated life, the eternal law, opening up the unfathomable depths of life to each man that comes into the world. Hence the man of to-day cannot be really autonomous if he does not understand the life that speaks to him in the Christ-type of the past; if he does not assimilate its message, and fashion it into new and progressive life. Thus, while the

sociological study of Christianity explains the social character of the Christ-ideal, it frees it from its rigid frame of the historical past, and follows its traces in the living development of Christian culture. Here we have the answer to the question of the future of Christianity.

Just as Christianity was a thoroughly prophetic religion from the first, and derived its chief power from faith in the future, so the Christ-ideal will continue to energise in men as long as there is prophetic work to do and a distant goal to be reached by humanity. On the other hand, if one would deny all future to Christianity, one has only to strike out the historic moment in the past to which our academic theologians would tie down the religious personality. He need only do as the theologians do—make the central issue of Christianity be what happened in the past, instead of turning to the greater and more Christian question of what is to be in the future. The future of Christianity depends, therefore, on whether the way is left open for its natural development, for its Christ to grow with our ever-deepening and broadening life. If life puts forth new buds, if science and art and ethics and social life strike out new paths that diverge from what has been called the

sacred past, those who hold to the *theological* Christ have the familiar torture of clinging to the old, yet not wholly shutting themselves off from the new. But for those who believe in the *prophetic* Christ it is a source of jubilation that the decomposing forces of the past give way to the creative forces of life. The prophetic Christ evokes creative men, in whom all that is only excites a hunger for what is to come ; men who, when they have read a page in the great book of life, burn to know what there is on the pages yet unread, and are happy if with their lives they have planted one living seed that will help in the service and the liberation of the coming race. The spiritual man may be inseparable from the economic man, but the spiritual man, as the greater and more really human, will assert his right for the future. He will spiritualise the economic man more and more, and subordinate him to his aims ; and even to-day, in those circles where it is now intelligible and pardonable that men should say they live by bread alone, the conviction is spreading that our whole economic life is only of value as a means to the higher cultivation of personality. For the spiritual man the question is not one of the future of religion, but whether

the name of Christ will retain its place in that future.

In order to answer this question properly, we must distinguish Christ as a theological conception from Christ as a religious type. The theological conception is definitely historical, and so belongs directly to the past. The future of religion will assuredly not be Christian in the theological sense, because to the theologian Christianity is an academic doctrine, diverging wider and wider from life in proportion to the gulf between its origin and its traditional development. But in our day the name of Christ is undergoing a change somewhat similar to that experienced by those who bear the name of prophets. Under the pressure of theological ideas we saw in the prophets a class of soothsayers who, in virtue of supernatural enlightenment, gave a detailed account of the canonical Messias. Sociological research has discovered the prophets to be merely the religious and social reformers of their time. By this means the theological idea of the prophet has been discredited. It is secularised, and changed into the type of all aspiring faith, so that to be deemed a prophet is once more the highest expression of human greatness and power.

In the same way the discrediting of the theological idea of Christ will infuse a new life into the name in the mind of our age. The older Christ-ideal of the Churches will have fresh power imparted to it by the acceptance of a secularised Christ as the type of human autonomy, of the man who remains strong amid struggle and suffering, in order to offer the infinite fulness of life that is in him for the service of humanity. It is no longer the Christ of the scholiast, the theological ideal-man with all sorts of academic limitations. It is the Christ of the people, of the laity, in whose figure all the simplest and most natural, and therefore the noblest and most divine, forces of the human soul will find an expression that is at once sensuous and spiritual. A secularised Christ of that character was in the mind of Richard Rothe, a man whose tomb is in honour with our theologians, when he wrote of Christianity that "it was on the way towards a more and more complete secularisation—that is to say, on the way to divest itself of the ecclesiastical form which it bore on its entrance into the world, and to assume the features of general human life, which is in itself moral."[1]

[1] *Theologische Ethik*, v. 390.

We have a familiar instance of the development of religious ideas throughout thousands of years in the days of the week, with one day of rest. Owing its origin to the worship of the stars in the interior of Asia, the weekly day of sacrifice and celebration was incorporated into the religion of Jahveh, after the fruitless struggles against it of the earlier prophets, and became a foundation of the whole cult of Jahveh in the Genesiac story of creation. Transferred from the Sabbath to the Sunday at the detachment of Christianity from Judaism, the weekly ceremonial day formed the starting-point of the Christian cycle of festivals, and is now rapidly being secularised into a purely social institution. But the removal of its theological character has only made the Sunday even dearer to the heart of the people. Its purely social character as a day of rest has given a new meaning to the old religious regard for it. It has become a day of devotion to the inner life, of spiritual refreshment, of impressing anew on the mind the higher aspects of human nature.

The Messianic idea from which the Christ-ideal was evolved has as long a history as the Sunday. Its origin is lost in the prehistoric stages of the life of Israel. Then it was

fertilised with the most vital elements of Greek philosophy. It passed on into the political atmosphere of the Roman Empire, and made its way through the Germanic markets and villages. And as history, like nature, makes no leap, it cannot ignore its spiritual development. The secularised Christianity of the future, harmonised with the realities of the present, will not be less, but more, Christian than the older ecclesiastical system; and infinitely more so than the transitional Jesuism of our liberal theologians. It is not the badly-cemented fragments of morality that went by the name of enlightened Christianity even in Schleiermacher's time; it is not the "essence of Christianity," which, according to Overbeck, gives the inessential characters rather than the essence that it announces so confidently; but the eternal stress of humanity, awaking to the contradictions of life, and once interpreted in the festivals of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, that we must look to for the future of Christianity. Where we have to-day the verbose theologian, watering down the thoughts of antiquity and altering them to suit his purpose, there will be heard in the Christianity of the future the great festival of life, in which all man's creative powers will

celebrate their resurrection, and the past will espouse the future in the great nuptials of life.

We can see clearly enough the future of Christianity. The deeper comprehension of nature's spirit in modern painting and poetry, the living intuition that is shared even by modern science in its most arduous research, reveal to us how the Logos of Greek philosophy, that gave its cosmic position to the early Christ-ideal, is divesting itself of its transcendental characters and entering upon a new incarnation. The problem that embraces all other earthly problems and holds the breath of all combatants—how man, as he becomes a personality, may change the bond that binds him with all living things from a rigid necessity and oppressive burden into a living freedom and progressive force—will find a new solution apart from the Christ of the Churches. It directs us towards social structures in which all life's institutions will be made to serve the development of human personality.

That is not a rejection, but an evolution, of the Christ-ideal. It is done in the same sense and with the same right that all the earlier ages used when each one made and believed in *its* Christ. And if the strong, resistless

pressure of real life thrusts aside the ascetic Christ, whose life is over, that is no destruction, but a fulfilment. It is the eternal death and resurrection that seems to be the inalienable law of real life. Liberalism even would find its place in the Christianity of the future if it would abandon the impossible task of establishing its Jesuism on the past, and presenting it to us as the real and primitive Christianity in the name of ancient literature. It could then claim for its Jesus the same religious right that any Christ-ideal may claim that is surrounded with personal love and endowed with religious force. Such a Jesus would be the religious expression of an individualism that has undeniable merit and historical justification. Without the artificial covering that theology has thrown over it with its supposed historical Jesus, it is easy to see that the Christ-ideal that we find in this Jesus is—not in spite of, but precisely on account of, the quality of love that is ascribed to him—at the bottom only the religion of the individual.

Bauer