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THE SOURCES OF THE
MORALITY OF THE GOSPELS

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BY
JOSEPH McCCABE

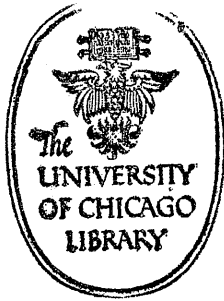
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PREFACE

THE object of this work may be declared in few words. It essays to give an answer to two questions which interest all who follow the advance of Christian theology, or are attracted to the comparative study of religion and morals. A vast literature has been written of late years on the doctrinal or the historical issues raised by the New Testament; and the very sacrifices which have been imposed on theologians in regard to the personality of Christ have made them more eager to exaggerate the distinction of his teaching. The critical student may welcome a careful and specific study of the sentiments ascribed to Christ in the Gospels. The two main questions which I have held in view are: (1) Are there any original or distinctive elements in the moral teaching attributed to Christ?; (2) If that teaching takes its place in the natural evolution of morals, what were the strains or traditions which we may recognize as contributory to the Christian ethic?

Writers are too apt to appraise the "uniqueness" of Christ's teaching without any close study of those other moralities which they thus assume to be inferior to that of Christ. Rarely does one notice in their pages more than a few superficial observations on the Stoic morality, and still more rarely do they put the words

of Stoic and other moralists side by side with those attributed to Christ. I have endeavoured to make the work of comparison easy for the reader by giving first a sketch of the evolution of moral sentiment in the great pre-Christian civilizations, which modern research has now so amply traced, and then putting side by side the sentiments attributed to Christ in the Gospels and the corresponding sentiments of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman moralists. The field of research has been too vast for me to venture to claim that I have detected all the parallel sentiments in non-Christian writers of the age of Christ; but the reader may find that the material I have collected and collated suffices to yield an answer to the questions I kept before me. Whether the words ascribed to Christ in the New Testament were ever in reality spoken by him does not much concern me; still less the question whether Christ had an historical existence at all. But these questions press continually on the mind of one who endeavours to appreciate the Christian ethic at its proper historical value, and some consideration has been given to them. It will be seen that, whether or no we can explain Christianity without Christ, we can assuredly explain the teaching attributed to him without assuming either that he existed or that an authentic word of his Gospel has reached us.

J. M.

October, 1914.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF CHRIST

NEARLY fourteen hundred years ago the idea was conceived of dividing the history of mankind into two eras. The four or six thousand years which rival Biblical interpreters believed to embrace the whole period before the appearance of Christ were the age of darkness, of sin, of weird hallucinations. The gospel of Christ had inaugurated a new era. It had fallen on the dark chaos of human imagining and endeavour with the suddenness of a tropical sunrise. By it, henceforward, whoever willed might guide his steps to higher things, and the drama of life would be, in essence, the struggle of the passion or the pride of man against the revealed standard. A few centuries, possibly a few thousand years, might be granted for the unfolding of this singular drama. Then the breath of an angry God would scorch the canopy of the heavens and the plains of the earth, and the world of flesh and sense would exist no longer, and the countless millions of men and women who had stood their trial in it would find themselves confronting, not the humble prophet of Nazareth, but a figure clothed with all the terror and majesty of the Infinite.

There are still many who take this naïve and melodramatic view of human life, but a light has

fallen on us which makes pale the illumination of ancient Judæa. We now know that the four or six thousand years before the coming of Christ were occupied by civilizations which were at least more refined and enlightened than the medieval civilization which was based on Christ's message; and beyond those millennia were vast earlier ages in which dull-witted races shaped the first forms of man's religious and ethical and political tradition. We know that the fifteen hundred years which followed the acceptance of Christ's teaching were certainly no nearer the golden age than the fifteen hundred years which had preceded. The thunder of war has gathered volume from century to century; the acreage of squalid poverty has not been lessened, if it has not been enlarged; vice and crime have flourished as luxuriantly as they had done in the valley of the Nile or on the banks of the Euphrates; and, in the very name of Christ, the grossest superstitions have been imposed on a blind and impotent people by their priests, and millions of pagans, Jews, heretics, and schismatics have been slaughtered in the interest of his Church.

These are not the bold assertions of isolated scholars, but facts known to everyone of moderate education. No doubt the world will continue, as a matter of convenience, to use the Christian chronology—possibly, in the course of time, changing the names to the Old Era and the New Era—but it is no longer possible for the majority of educated men and women to see the history of man divided into two parts by the flaming sword of a miraculous

interposition. You say that a God came upon the earth and walked among men for thirty years. Where, then, are the signs of his passage in the course of human events? At what point is the flow of the sluggish stream of human progress quickened? Or did this God regard war and poverty and the greater crimes of men as of less moment than correct notions about the Trinity? Or had he no power to dispose the hearts of men to a speedier acceptance?

The characteristically modern answer to these questions, which have tormented believers ever since the true history of the world became known, is that Christ did indeed teach a superb and unique moral doctrine, but human nature needed a long and slow preparation before it could assimilate and apply that doctrine. Numbers of the more eminent theologians and preachers in every country, and the majority of cultivated people who are not theologians, have been compelled to abandon the belief in Christ's divinity. He was a man of moral genius, but a man sharing the intellectual limitations of his race, his class, and his time. If we follow the Gospels, he implicitly believed the utterly erroneous view of life presented in the Jewish books; he believed that lunacy and disease were due to possession by demons, and that the end of the world was near. His distinction was purely ethical. He had, it is said, a moral insight of the most amazing and unique character; but he was not omnipotent, and had not the power to fashion the hearts and minds of men otherwise than they were.

He could recognize stony ground; he could not make it fertile.

This is the new Christology; the liberalism of the few to-day, the orthodoxy of to-morrow. Scores of Christian writers press it on us with increasing confidence. Away with myths and miracles and other stumbling-blocks, they say; let us take complete account of history and science, and put the Christian creed in a form that will no longer repel the learned and sincere. They sacrifice the old idea of redemption, the miraculous birth, and the resurrection, so that they are unmoved by the discovery that it was the general tendency of higher religions to proclaim "redeemers" and invest their birth and death with myths. They sacrifice the healing miracles of Christ, and are therefore indifferent to the discovery that such miracles were part of the common stock of religions in ages of ignorance and have singularly lessened in frequency as the world has grown wiser. They hint that, at a pinch, they might even sacrifice the historicity of Christ. The essence of their contention is that the moral teaching ascribed to Christ is (whatever its origin) so profound, so elevated, and so distinctive that it really did open a new era nineteen centuries ago, and it gives the Christian religion a great superiority over others. As to the prolonged inefficacy of that teaching in Europe, they save Christ's prestige by sacrificing his divinity. If men had to evolve for a thousand years before they could actively realize Christ's implicit condemnation of slavery, and still another thousand years before they could grasp his

implicit condemnation of war and oppression and a hundred other evils, is it not plain that he was ages in advance of his time? And who can say how much the constant droning of his words into the ears of men during those two thousand years may not have contributed to the quickening of the world's moral progress?

It is hardly necessary to quote passages from modern divines to illustrate this conception of the Christian ethic. The whole tendency of our time is to shift the stress from dogma and history to ethic. Lately, indeed, I have been surprised to hear a few divines complaining that I wrongly represent them as insisting on the "originality" of Christ's ethic. They have lived through so many disillusionments that they are beginning to scan the horizon of culture for new menaces; and on that horizon, just now, they perceive two clouds which may or may not grow larger—the challenge of the historicity of Christ and the challenge of the originality of his ethic. On the latter point, indeed, there already exists a formidable literature (especially on the Jewish side, though little of it is available in England), and divines are glancing at it with concern. I lay too much stress on "originality," they say; and "originality is not the most important thing in an ethic."

These divines will hardly plead that it is historical efficacy, rather than originality, which distinguishes the Christian ethic. They know something of the moral history of Europe after the fourth century. But we may disregard these feeble protests. The

claim of a unique distinction for the Christian ethic is common to every branch and shade of Christian thought. It is urged by liberals as effusively as by the illiberal. Where is the Christian writer who does not claim that Christian morality is superior to Buddhist, Confucian, Egyptian, or Stoic? who will allow the figure of Christ to be put side by side with the figures of Zarathustra, Buddha, Kung-fu-tse, or Apollonius of Tyana even as *primus inter pares*? It is true that Reuss long ago pleaded for moderation in this claim, and Dr. Schmiedel does not claim that the figure of Christ is "unique"; though he modifies his apparent concession by a quarrel with the term. At all events, there is so general a belief in Christian circles, scholarly and unscholarly, and even beyond Christian circles, that Christ taught a distinctive ethic, in advance of all the moral systems of the time, that the point is well worth serious historical examination.

I have so far spoken only of the more liberal Christian believers, but it must not be supposed for a moment that the results I reach are of interest only to them. The liberal divine is apt to be impatient when one criticizes less learned versions of his creed. You are flogging a dead horse, he says; or, You are disinterring the bones of an ancient theology. As if he did not know that the majority of the clergy, and the overwhelming majority of the members, of every branch of the Christian Church still implicitly believe this older theology! As if he did not know that even the Church of England encourages them in these ancient

delusions by every line of its ritual, its hymns, and its whole official literature! As if he did not know that in the Church of Rome, containing nearly two hundred million Christians, no scholar dare breathe a word of doubt about this medieval creed; and that even Scottish Churches still gravely debate whether a man may doubt the historicity of Jonah and the whale, or the appalling crudity of eternal torment! As if he did not know that this old version is officially stamped on the minds of children in nearly every school in Christendom! And as if he did not himself take a part in Christmas and Easter celebrations, and virtually endorse the legends embodied in them!

In point of fact, it is far more urgent and useful to correct the errors of millions than to discuss the opinions of an enlightened few; nor does it entirely become a Christian minister to boast that Christ, unlike the Scribes and Pharisees, turned to the people, and that Christianity, unlike Stoicism, chose the market-place rather than the study, and then chide us for taking an interest in popular beliefs. Unhappily, the millions do not read serious historical works, or their beliefs would have been corrected long ago by their own divines. I once tried the malicious experiment of putting before a working-class audience in a small Scottish provincial town the opinions about Christ and the Gospels of the more advanced theologians of our time. When, at the close, I assured them that these were the views of leading divines in England and Germany, and that I had not quoted a single heretic to

them, their anger and embarrassment were a curious spectacle. Millions of believers have not the dimmest notion that the religious legends they treasure are rejected by a high proportion of the more learned divines of their own Church. But if there is one point on which, it is understood, nearly all are agreed, it is the unique, exalted, superior, and original character of the Christian morality.

To the simple believer this claim is even more important than to the learned theologian who has no other claim to advance. The attribute of divinity disappears at once if Christ can be shown to have expressed no other moral sentiments than those which were current in all the higher religions and philosophies of the time. This I intend to show with the utmost thoroughness, putting side by side the words of the Gospels and the words of other moral teachers. But, as I wish to confine myself throughout this volume to the ethical issue, it is well to premise here a few words on the more general question of the character and the historicity of Christ.

Nine-tenths of the members of the Christian Churches still believe that Christ was God. They base this belief on the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Who wrote these Gospels, what length of time elapsed between the death of Christ and their appearance, and on what precise ground one ought implicitly to believe them, they neither know nor care. They do not know that the surviving non-Christian literature of the first century has been searched in vain for some reference to what

they conceive to be its mightiest event, or for some Christian reference which would recommend these anonymous Gospels to our confidence. They do not know that the majority of divines find internal evidence that the earliest Gospel was not written until about the year 70, and they are unaware that in an oriental atmosphere forty years is still ample time (as we have seen in the case of a Persian prophet of the last century) for a rich growth of legends to gather about the memory of a religious teacher. But these things are matters of scholarship, and the ordinary believer has no time for them. He prefers to take the word of his local preacher, who is generally dreadfully ignorant, against the word of the first scholars of his own Church.

But he does at least read or hear, or has at some time read, the Gospels. He leaves it to theologians to cement, with medieval phrases, God and man into the single personality of Christ. For him Christ was God, because he worked miracles (or some unknown writer says that he did). He then follows the movements of God, as recorded in the Gospels, with exclamations of awe, delight, and pride. It does not trouble him in the least to find God holding a naïve conversation with Satan on a pinnacle of the temple (and, presumably, gravely reporting it to his followers afterwards), or talking to the myriads of minor devils, who dwelt in Judæa, in very much the language that a Zulu witch-doctor uses for the same purpose. He sees nothing whatever incongruous in the suggestion that nineteen hundred years ago insanity was due to diabolical possession, but the

devils left the sick as soon as medical men were competent to examine them. He listens with becoming solemnity to the story of God spitting on clay to make a salve for the deaf or blind; or anathematizing a barren fig-tree; or turning devils into a remarkable herd of two thousand swine; or vowing terrible vengeance on the cities which will not bow down to his crude and illiterate disciples. He thinks it not unnatural that God's brothers and sisters in the flesh (who, presumably, played with him in the kitchen, or in the streets of Nazareth, for many years) should regard him as insane; or that God should not be quite sure when he would destroy the world, but tentatively put it about the year 70; or that God should ride into Jerusalem on a donkey over scattered palm branches, and then design a horrible vengeance on the whole Jewish race because their leaders inferred from this, and from his words, that he was a Messianic pretender. In fine, he is not in the least puzzled that, although God and man are united in a single personality in Christ, he can complain on the cross that God has "forsaken" him; and that he encourages childish views of the whereabouts of heaven by rising into the air at his final departure.

These things, and a hundred others in the Gospels, are as childlike and wildly incredible as the adventures of Krishna or Tammuz or Osiris, yet English lawyers and duchesses, to say nothing of less cultivated people, listen to them Sunday after Sunday with rapt attention, and learned divines talk about the "vivid and life-like narrative" of the inspired

writings. However, let us follow the faith of the ordinary Christian—of about 400,000,000 living Christians—in its next phase, the history of Christendom.

He believes that Christ, as God, foresaw the whole course of human history after his intervention, and has since complacently surveyed it from his throne. Knowing that it was regarded as an entirely moral and natural procedure in the East (so modern divines assure us) to make legends about the departed great and write another man's name on the title-page, God refrained from having a correct record of his earthly career and teaching drawn up, and left the work to the chances of oriental life. He then placidly contemplated the growth, during a century or two, of ambiguous, contradictory, and largely puerile gospels. When four of these were chosen as approaching nearest to credibility, and they proved as ambiguous as Delphic oracles, he looked down on the bitter and endless strifes, and (from the fourth century onward) the mutual butcheries, of orthodox and heretics. "The gentle Christ," who had turned water into wine for a group of marriage-roysterers, moved no finger when, in his name, pagans, Donatists, Manicheans, etc., were ruthlessly trampled out of existence; when, century after century, the innocent Jews were barbarously persecuted and robbed; when Albigenians and Waldensians were massacred in crowds; when the stake and rack and axe were busy all over Europe compelling men to profess what they did not believe; when Holy Inquisitions,

and religious wars, and witch-finders sprang up in his name.

This ordinary Christian, or nine-tenths of the whole body of Christians, believe that, when Christ departed, he did not desert his Church. He who marked the fall of a sparrow, and counted the hairs of the head, could hardly be indifferent to the working of the "leaven" he had left on earth—to the fortunes of the truth which he had conveyed to men in so stupendous a drama. He promised that the Holy Spirit (the wisdom of God) should watch the Church. Under the watchful eye of the Holy Spirit the Church at once proceeded to cover the land with temples and priests and formal ceremonies, and all that Christ himself had abolished. Under this superhuman guidance the Church rapidly evolved into the medieval abomination which the good Protestant (forgetting that there was no other Church of Christ on earth for a thousand years) calls "the whore of Babylon": with its central establishment, over which the Holy Spirit particularly watched, the butt of all the caustic writers in Europe for its rapacity and its almost continuous immorality; with its celibate clergy, and its vast network of monasteries and nunneries, notorious, century after century, for sexual licence and unnatural vice; with its appalling trade in indulgences, dispensations, and relics, sometimes of the grossest nature, and generally of the most sordid fraud; with its millions of followers sunk in the densest ignorance and superstition and grossness. Under this superhuman guidance the Church

lingered in its grossness until the better example of Mohammedan civilization and the rebirth of Greek letters prepared the way for a reform. And, if it be thought that at last the Holy Spirit intervened, under this superhuman guidance Protestants and Catholics tore out each other's entrails, reviled each other with a bitterness and mendacity which still linger in Liverpool and Belfast, and wrangled over the words of Christ until their hopeless ambiguity was established beyond the shadow of a doubt.

In fine, this average believer, reflecting that Christ's promise of Divine guidance was made for all time, conceives the Holy Spirit of God contemplating the religious chaos of our age. There is now a very general agreement that the burning of heretics, the extraction of coppers from the faithful for permission to kiss a gold vessel containing a little of the milk or a few hairs of the Virgin Mary, and the deliberate adoption of idleness and disease, were mistakes which, for some unknown reason, the Holy Spirit allowed to be considered high ideals for a thousand years. There is a growing feeling that the principles of Christ have some application to social problems, which the Holy Spirit permitted Europe to forget for fifteen centuries. There is a dawning feeling that, since each branch of Christendom maintains its strength, it would be better to overlook their contradictory interpretations of Christ's words and unite in face of a common enemy. But of the promise that the Spirit should teach Christ's followers "all truth" there is less trace than ever. The only thing they seem to learn, in increasing

measure—whether from the Holy Spirit or not—is that their Churches have taught a prodigious amount of untruth.

Take the position of a simple pious Protestant. He believes that the Holy Spirit, for reasons of its own, retired from Europe for a thousand years or so, and gave the Scarlet Woman a free run. Then the Spirit returned, and there was a Reformation; though he may have some qualms about the way in which the Reformers butchered Catholics and sided with the aristocracy against the people (until the people were enfranchised). But in the nineteenth century he begins to have a series of severe shocks. I imagine a simple-minded member of the Church of England. He learns, in succession, that the doctrine of eternal torment is assailed as barbarous from the pulpit of St. Paul's, and is an open question; that, since the notion of God condemning the whole race for the frailty of Adam (who probably never existed) is barbarous, the plan of redemption has to be reconsidered; that *Genesis* must, after all, accommodate itself to modern science; that Moses certainly did not write the Pentateuch, or David the Psalms; that, in fact, he must be careful not to confuse inspiration and "inerrancy," and must be prepared to find any number of mistakes in the Word of God. He is urged to cling to "the simple Bible story" and "the essentials of Christianity"—but without the Fall of Man, the Atonement, or Hell. When he accommodates his mind to this theory, that Christ really was God and really did send the Holy Spirit, yet somehow there has been a

colossal muddle in Christendom for fifteen hundred years, he will, if he be of an inquiring disposition, soon find the new ground heaving under his feet. He will learn that a considerable number of learned professors and dignitaries of his Church deny the miracles of Christ (the only evidence of divinity), smile at the fulfilled prophecies, regard the Gospels as rather late and unreliable compilations, and advise him to claim no more than that Christ was a very good man, who taught a very high morality and probably died on a cross because he could not help it.....And in the background the Holy Spirit smiles the eternal, silent smile of the Buddha.

There is not a word of caricature or exaggeration in this description of the situation of the ordinary Christian. He knows all these things, but he does not face them in this particular way; or, if he does, his mind is blurred by the rhetoric of the preacher. An old priest unfolded to me, a short time ago, an appalling story of corruption in the monastic body to which he belonged and in the Vatican. He knew that this corruption was habitual at Rome, yet saw in it an actual proof of the divinity of his Church! How? It was quite simple: "If the Catholic Church were not divine, the sins of its clergy would have destroyed it ages ago." So his ecclesiastical professor had taught him, and he sincerely believed. Possibly many a simple Christian believes that his Church could not have survived all its blunders unless the Holy Spirit had been there. Whatever his consolation, the man who takes the Gospels as

the earthly record of an incarnate God embraces all these monstrosities.

We may therefore assume that, with the growth of intellectual life and the spread of serious literature, the more liberal Christian theory will displace the older. We are passing through a phase like that of the Darwinian controversy. Popular preachers and writers first said that evolution was false and *Genesis* true; when evolution was proved, they observed that the evolutionary interpretation of *Genesis* made the action of the Creator far grander and more majestic. Within fifty years they will eloquently show that only when you conceive Christ as man will the true splendour of his life and teaching be seen; as God he was open to criticism, and at least he could hardly have done less for men.

But if any perplexed Christian imagines that a stretch of smooth water lies beyond the tempestuous period through which Christendom is passing, that the abandonment of the divinity of Christ will bring controversial peace, he is lamentably astray. To say nothing of the deeper and more ominous controversy about the existence of God and the immortality of man which occupies the modern mind, there is not the least prospect of agreement about the human Christ. Take the large body of divines who, in Europe and the United States, reject all the miraculous elements in the Gospels and regard, in particular, the stories of miraculous birth and resurrection as late and negligible interpolations. Have they any consistent and firm version of the character and career of Christ to offer us? Not in

the least. They are hopelessly divided as to what is historical or not historical, plausible or implausible; and they have no common constructive principles to encourage us. Many talk of the "graphic" and "concrete" narrative; and others retort that (as any person may read for himself) the description of the miracles, which they reject, is quite as graphic as the non-miraculous passages, that the older the Gospel the vaguer the narrative, and that, in short, the topography and other details which make a narrative "graphic" are in the Gospels blurred and generalized to an amazing extent. I will return to this later. Meantime it is enough to remark that any good piece of fiction outshines the Gospels in this respect.

If the inquirer will try the simple and interesting experiment of eliminating from the Gospel of *Mark* all the episodes which essentially involve miracle, he will find the remainder of the narrative amazingly paltry. It is, of course, difficult to exclude the miraculous legends altogether, as the ordinary movements of Christ are constantly related to them; he goes to a place or from a place, crowds follow him, and Pharisees send disputants to plague him, generally because of his miracles. Taking a generous view of the matter, however, we get a very slender, bloodless, and unattractive record of a year or so of preaching. He is baptized by John, and (it is stated with a bald simplicity which can hardly profess to be historical) he collects a few rough disciples (ch. i). He attracts notice by his discourse in the Synagogue and by dining with men

of poor repute, and begins to quarrel with the Pharisees (ii). He disowns his mother and brothers and sisters (iii), and is disdained in his native province (vi). He travels about with his disciples (vi-xiii), preaching and quibbling with the Pharisees, whom (and all who will not receive his teaching or his disciples) he curses with singular fluency, which is not recorded of any other great moralist. These vague movements about Palestine, accompanied by disciples whom he has previously sent away to preach apart from him, and these fiery disputes with the Pharisees, with whose real opinions he shows a very imperfect acquaintance (as I will show later), continue for a period which it is impossible to determine, and at last he goes to Jerusalem and, after enjoying a Messianic ovation from the crowd, violently disturbs the arrangements in the court of the Temple. After a painful scene in a garden (which is "graphically" described, though all were asleep but himself), he surrenders to the Jewish authorities, acknowledges that he claims to be the Son of God, and incurs the just sentence of death for blasphemy; which he endures with dignified silence.

Mark is generally acknowledged to be the earliest of the Gospels. *Matthew* and *Luke* obviously embody an early version of *Mark* and other documents, but they add very little to the portrait and adventures, though a great deal to the speeches, of Christ. What they add does not always make the narrative more convincing. *Luke*, for instance, only adds that Christ's first discourse in the Synagogue

at Nazareth was so very lofty (or so very vituperative) that the congregation attempted to lynch him (iv, 29); that he had two friends named Martha and Mary; that he fully approved of his disciples saluting him as "the King" (xix, 40) when he entered Jerusalem; and a few other small details. *Matthew* adds nothing of material interest that is not in *Luke*. I am, it must be understood, speaking of the *actions* of Christ alone, and only of those which are not an essential part of miraculous legends. St. Paul, who is understood to be an earlier witness, adds nothing. He knows only that Christ had a last supper with his disciples, and was crucified and raised from the dead.

It must not be supposed that I am overlooking Christ's sympathy with sufferers, his tenderness towards children and repentant sinners, and so on. This is best seen in his words, which will be exhaustively studied later. For the moment I wish to point out only that, once the miracles are rejected, the whole greatness of Christ turns on his moral teaching. We know very little of interest about his life apart from the legends of supernatural power. This is so inconvenient that many divines would retain the legends and explain away the element of miracle in them, much as Renan did. All these compromises are futile. If Christ did not believe in, and believe that he could expel, unclean spirits, heal the blind and ailing, multiply loaves, and raise the dead, four-fifths of the Gospel narrative is utterly meaningless. All the stories and all the enthusiasm are pointless unless the miracles took place. All

that we know of Christ, apart from these legends, is that he was a travelling religious teacher of great power, with a drastic hostility to the priests; Pharisees, and Sadducees of Judæa.

Hence the question has been raised more than once, and is more loudly raised in our time, whether this vague and slender biography may not refer to a purely fictitious personage. Professor Benjamin Smith and Professor Drews suggest that one of the obscure sects of the Jews had an ideal patron or deity which was converted, during the confusion of the first century, into an historical person. Mr. J. M. Robertson thinks that a religious drama may have come to be written out as an historical narrative. Pastor Kalthoff thinks that the nominal patron or deity of some of the semi-religious "trades unions" (*collegia*) of the Roman world may have passed in time for a real person.

This is not a proper place to examine such an issue. It is immaterial to my purpose in this book whether the moral doctrine expounded in the Gospels, which I study, was or was not preached by Christ. Therefore I will not discuss this issue at any length, but briefly state my position.

The Gospels are unreliable anonymous documents, plainly written outside Judæa, after the fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), and not certainly known to us in their present form until the middle of the second century. Historians are not accustomed to use such documents very seriously, especially if they arise in an age and race which are greatly addicted to romancing. But the hypothesis that a real life

is the nucleus round which the legends gathered seems to me more plausible and more consonant with the history of religions than any other hypothesis. The insistence of the Pauline letters on a crucified Jesus is not plausibly explained away; and the fact that the Jews always admitted the historicity of Christ, and know nothing of a drama or cult which might be the source of the Christian story, is very important. We can well believe that, as is stated, the compilers of the Talmud in the second and third centuries cut out references to Jesus; but a few references to him under other names ("Ben Stada," etc., or "a certain person") survive, and go back to the beginning of the second century.¹ These early Rabbis never question the historicity of Jesus. It would be singular if the historical Jesus had crystallized out of a Jewish myth in the first century, and not a single Rabbi in the fierce controversies of the second century knows anything about the myth, or cult, or drama of his own race which would make an end of the hated schism.

Therefore I find it easier to believe, or necessary to believe, that Christ was a religious teacher in Judæa in the early part of the first century, and not difficult to believe that the slender account I have extracted from the Synoptic Gospels is substantially true; that, in other words, he was an eloquent son of the people, impatient of the ceremonialism of the priests and Pharisees, orientally

¹ See Mr. R. T. Herford's *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (1903) for a thorough study of this point.

impetuous in his vituperation of them, and probably put to death at Jerusalem on a correct charge (from the Jewish point of view) of blasphemy. Whether he was really baptized in the Jordan (as thousands were), whether he had a few fishermen followers, or whether he entered Jerusalem on an ass, amid cries of "the King," does not seriously matter; and it is only such details that the sober parts of the Gospels give us. What *does* matter is, whether he is likely to have expressed the moral sentiments which are put into his mouth by the writers of the Gospels, and how those moral sentiments compare with the sentiments entertained by other religious preachers or teachers of the time.

And I propose to show that the moral principles and maxims and parables ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels were the common stock of the religious movements of the time; that many of them were certainly not spoken by Jesus; that it is probable that most, if not all, of them are merely fathered on him by later writers; and that, in any case, they are so very far from being original and distinctive that they do not of themselves in the least imply a "moral genius" or a prophet in advance of his age.

One cannot even suppose that Jesus made an admirable synthesis of the best moral sentiments of his time; for the simple reason that it would be quite easy and natural to do this in the cosmopolitan cities of Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece, where the Gospels first appear. One is not justified in assuming a miraculous moral insight in one man (a man

in the circumstances of Jesus of Nazareth) when a very normal moral sense in the men who actually produced the Gospels will suffice. It used to be said that, if Jesus never existed, the writers of the Gospels were more wonderful than Jesus. On the contrary, as biographers they are paltry; and as writers of moral compendiums they lived in an international religious atmosphere which contained every element that we find in the Gospels.

I have to show how this atmosphere was created; how the older civilizations raised up high moral ideals and bequeathed them to their successors; how the streams of moral tradition converge, from north and south and east, towards the eastern coast of the Mediterranean; how, ages before the time of Christ, the cry of repentance for sin wails through the cities of Egypt and Babylonia, of Persia and Judæa and Greece, until, by the first century of this era, there is hardly a city of the old world which has not one or more sects ardently inculcating that gospel of repentance, chastity, mercy, justice, sincerity, and likeness to an all-holy God, which we seem to hear from the lips of the Galilean prophet.

CHAPTER II

EGYPTIAN MORALS

WHILE every step in the modern reconstruction of early history has tended to lower the prestige of the Bible, no part of the work has had a deeper and more comprehensive effect than the restoration of the great empires which preceded the little civilization of Judæa. I do not refer to minute and comparatively unimportant questions of correspondence, or lack of correspondence, between the monuments and the historical books of the Old Testament. The survival of a few more or less correct names and memories in that dreary tissue of tribal legends has not a great significance. But the Old Testament had itself sounded a note of disdain of the older civilizations, and the absence of any other culture in Europe allowed it to triumph. It was of those older civilizations—Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia—that the Christian thought when he spoke of the great darkness which, save for a few prophetic gleams of light in Judæa, brooded over the world until Christ came. The sacred bulls and cats of Egypt, the dragons and demons and whores of Babylon, were the outstanding memories.

Christians generally forgot, and still generally forget, that the ancient Jewish writer was a prejudiced witness. More than once had the Egyptian

forces crossed his land like a vast flight of locusts ; while the power of Assyria and Babylonia had, no less than the power of Egypt, left on his forehead the brand of slavery. On those, above all nations of the earth, he invoked that fierce vengeance of Jahveh which the prophets promised. Christendom inherited his hatred and pictured Babylon as the incarnation of devilry ; and the remains of Babylon and Nineveh were buried under the desert-sands, so that there was none to gainsay. What little was known elsewhere, in the Greek historian Herodotus, did not redeem the virtue of Babylon. Of Egypt, indeed, some great monuments still towered above the desert, but they were symbols of the worship of devils, and the devil was an artist. In fact, the spread of the Arab and the Turk over the near east soon closed it to Christendom, and men could, in happy ignorance, hug the tradition that Christ had lit an inextinguishable candle in the night of the world.

Here, again, is disillusion. From the mounds and pits of Egypt and Mesopotamia we gather letters, contracts, grave-stones, moral treatises, fragments of law, and other documents which reflect the moral temper of a people with unalterable fidelity. And the standard of life they reflect is a high standard. It is now generally agreed that morality developed in the early races of men separately from religion, and it is largely agreed that, in some respects at least, its later alliance with religion was useful. When a human tradition is formulated in the terrible accents of a god, who can punish or

reward, it ought to secure greater respect. I will confine myself to that consideration here, and not discuss the fatal weakness of this association of ethic and religion which has wrought so much harm in the history of Europe. Egypt and Babylonia held that the mightiest gods were interested in the virtues or vices of men, and punished vicious conduct. To the Babylonian, as to the later Jew, the punishment came chiefly in this world; to the Egyptian it came after death. And in every temple of both civilizations was heard the shrill cry or the eager whisper of the penitent; and the constant dread of Divine anger shaped the conduct of men and women at least as strictly as it did in the later Christian Middle Ages.

That the Egyptians believed intensely in the immortality of the soul, and in the severe moral examination of each soul as it entered the underworld, is now known to all. It is the homes of the dead and of the gods which chiefly survive in the ruins of a nation: an instructive reminder of the immense energy that was at one time diverted from the constructive business of this life. In the case of Egypt, more than any other, we find this overshadowing concern about death, and the discovery of the key to the hieroglyphs which cover the sarcophagi and the scrolls of papyrus has made it intelligible to us. The Egyptian belief in immortality was as vivid, definite, and confident as the belief of the early Christians. While the absence of the belief in ancient Judæa, which was thought to have been, in religious matters, the most

enlightened nation of the Old Era, had led men to think that Christianity had first brought this revelation to men, we now know that the doctrine of heaven and judgment was a commonplace in a great civilization at a time when our fathers believed the earth to be yet a formless chaos.

It seems that something like ten thousand years ago rude tribes from east and west began to contend for the possession of the fertile valley of the Nile, which the river-waters had recently formed. For about two thousand years we dimly trace this conflict of Neolithic peoples until, about 6000 B.C., a primitive but stable civilization is established. Such settlements usually mean a religious compromise, and we are not surprised to find that the Egyptian religion, when we begin to learn its features, worships a number of incongruous deities and tries to reconcile their conflicting myths. Moreover, whatever finds its way into the compounded religion becomes sacred, and for ages we shall find barbaric elements mingled with lofty ideas in the monuments and literature of the great empire. Those who scoff at the cats and crocodiles of Egypt, or certain features of the Osiris myth, should recollect what childish and barbaric stories were consecrated even in the last revision of the Old Testament, and how the belief in diabolical possession and eternal torment stands in the Christian Scriptures to-day.

However, the outstanding religious belief of the ancient Egyptians, from the earliest years, is that, when the body has been wrapped in its spices and entombed, the soul has passed to another world.

Their idea of the composition of man is not so simple as this, but we need not disentangle the complex elements here. At death the spiritual part of the man survives, and it is conducted into the presence of the great god Osiris. There the good and evil deeds of the man are weighed in incorruptible scales, and the judge passes sentence. If the evil outweighs the good, the soul is at once committed to the Eater of the Dead. Egyptian belief had many defacing features, owing to the conservation of primitive elements; but it was not degraded by the conception that God would keep the souls of the morally weak in torment for all eternity. They were annihilated. If the good predominated, the soul was ushered into the everlasting peace and happiness of the domains of Osiris.

This prospect of eternal reward or annihilation was a vivid issue to the mind of every living Egyptian. The sacred book of his religion was chiefly occupied with it, and, when a mummy was exhibited to the guests at a banquet, it was not death, but after-death, that sobered them. We must, of course, not exaggerate the influence of the belief. The men of the Middle Ages, or the men of southern Italy to-day, believe just as strongly in a future beyond the grave, and in a far more terrible punishment of vice; but they are, to put it leniently, not ideal observers of their moral law. I have studied little Italian villages where every man and woman believed in hell as firmly as they believed in the fires of Vesuvius; yet, though unchastity was the chief vice denounced by their

Church, they were virtually colour-blind to moral distinctions in matters of sex. So it was generally in Europe until modern times. So, we must imagine, it was in some measure in ancient Egypt. Heaven is a cold and distant thing while the blood is yet warm, and—perhaps there will be time to do penance and appease the gods. What I am concerned to show here is that this incentive to virtue, which was long thought distinctive of Christianity, was a vital element of the Egyptian religion for thousands of years; that the standard of morals which it was used to enforce was as good as the Christian standard; and that the idea of a timely repentance before death was a very natural and familiar inference from their belief in that old civilization. And I propose to show this, not by quoting the impressions or opinions of Egyptologists, with their varying pre-conceptions, but by putting before the reader characteristic specimens of the literature and aspirations of the Egyptian people.

The great sacred book of the Egyptians is now known to all under the title of *The Book of the Dead*, which European scholars have given to it. The earliest manuscript of it which we have belongs to about 1800 B.C., but the inscriptions show us that it was known all through the historical period. Dr. Budge, from whose translation I borrow the following passages, says that it is "certain" that it was known in Egypt before the beginning of the first dynasty (about 6000 B.C.);¹ and it therefore reflects

¹ *The Book of the Dead*, translated by E. A. W. Budge, 1909.

that early compromise of religious beliefs which caused the retention of some barbaric elements. Crude myths and ridiculous speculations are found in it, explaining those grotesque figures which seem to us so incongruous in later Egyptian art. They are, as in the Hebrew sacred book, the prehistoric survivals; we are concerned with the living thought of historical Egypt. It should be borne in mind, too, that the civilization of Egypt developed in isolation for thousands of years, and it is the clash or critical contact of different cults and cultures that chiefly promotes progress.

Making allowance for these inevitable defects of the Egyptian religion, we find that, on the ethical, or what is sometimes called the spiritual, side, it reached a very high level at a very early age. There is said to be no word in the Egyptian language corresponding to our word "duty" (it is significant that there is a movement in modern European letters to abolish that word on account of its mystic—not its moral—implications), and there is no indication of any power or disposition to philosophize about morality. The simple practical code of conduct elaborated by the experience of earlier races has merely been fitted into the theological frame. A man must do certain things and avoid others; if he does not, the gods will punish him severely. So we have in Egyptian literature rather a collection of moral maxims than a philosophy; practical rules, approaching those of the early Chinese. But the standard is a high one, even in the ancient *Book of the Dead*, and we shall find the moral sentiment

attaining the Christian level, without the impracticable exaggerations of Christ's teaching, at a time when even the Jews were a barbaric tribe of the desert.

In ch. cxxv of *The Book of the Dead* the soul stands in the judgment hall of Osiris. The chapter opens with a hymn, and then the dead man makes his protestations or "confessions" before the judge. I abridge the passage slightly, but retain a little of the religious as well as the moral phraseology in order to show the whole attitude:—

Homage to thee, O great God, thou Lord of double Maati. I have come to thee, O my Lord, and I have brought myself hither that I may behold thy beauties.....I have not oppressed the members of my family; I have not wrought evil in the place of right and truth. I have had no knowledge of worthless men. I have not wrought evil. I have not made it the first consideration of each day that excessive labour should be performed for me. I have not brought forward my name for exaltation to honours. I have not ill-treated servants. I have not defrauded the oppressed one of his property. I have not caused misery. I have not caused affliction.....I have not caused pain. I have made no man suffer hunger. I have made no one weep. I have committed no murder. I have not given the order for murder to be done for me. I have not inflicted pain upon mankind.....I have not committed fornication.....I have not encroached upon the fields of others.....I have not carried away the milk from the mouths of children. I am pure. I am pure. I am pure. I am pure.....

Here is the whole code of Christian morals in a book which goes back to the dawn of civilization.

How far *The Book of the Dead* had been modified in the course of Egyptian history we cannot say, and certainly we cannot suppose that there was no appreciable moral evolution in thousands of years. But there is evidence enough that this practical and complete moral code goes back several thousand years in the story of Egypt, and it has been well said that, if the whole of the Christian literature had been extinguished in Europe, these Egyptian remains would provide for us a complete moral outfit. Notice, in particular, the emphasis on purity and the stigma on fornication, as a contrast to the old libel of pagan morality. Notice the concern about justice, especially in the treatment of employees; it seems that the gods of Egypt had a stern eye on injustice to the workers at a time when the Hebrew writers describe the Egyptians as soulless slave-drivers, as many probably were. But above all notice the repeated emphasis on the man's care not to inflict pain. "Hast thou made any man weep?" seems to have been the sternest question of Osiris. The Greeks had a similar ideal. Had Christianity retained that most profound and fundamental of moral laws—"Thou shalt make no man suffer"—in its proper position at the head of the decalogue, instead of making it secondary to correctness of belief and personal purity and respect for the Church, the history of Europe would be less repulsive a record and the civilization of to-day immeasurably higher.

The next illustration is from a moral manual of great but uncertain antiquity. The papyrus manu-

script (known as the "Prisse Papyrus") in which it is found has been put by some Egyptologists at about 5000 B.C., by others at 3500 B.C. or later, and by a few at about 1800 B.C. Professor E. Amélineau (Professor at the *École des Hautes Études*) has made a close study of it, and he is also the author of the most important and learned work on morality in ancient Egypt.¹ He is convinced that the papyrus is not later than 3500 B.C., but the date is not material for my purpose. Even if it belonged to the close of the Middle Empire, it would confirm our knowledge that the soundest moral principles were diffused in civilization two thousand years before the coming of Christ. But the inscriptions from tombs of the earlier date, which we shall see presently, show that, whatever the date of the papyrus, the sentiments it contains were familiar in Egypt in the fourth millennium of the Old Era, and the earlier date offers no difficulty on that ground.

The papyrus contains two moral treatises which throw an interesting light on the Egyptian culture of those early years. The first is a short collection of rules or maxims of conduct for the use of what we might call the Egyptian middle class. It provides judges, teachers, etc., with morally sound and practical rules of procedure. It is, however, the second treatise which best illustrates the moral literature of the time. It has the title of "Maxims

¹ *Essai sur l'évolution historique et philosophique des idées morales dans l'Égypte ancienne*, published by the *École des Hautes Études*, 1895.

of Ptah-hotep" (a king of the very ancient Fifth Dynasty), but we may regard this in the same way as we regard the ascription of "Wisdom" to Solomon in Hebrew literature. The little manual was a part of the large literature of unofficial moral direction which every high civilization has produced, and it is interesting to find it beginning at so remote an era. In all ages thoughtful men have observed the failure of priestly terrors and mythical morals, and appealed to their fellows with these direct and more or less utilitarian counsels. Once more we are reminded of the tone of Confucian ethics: it is well, on human grounds, to cultivate a high character.

The "Maxims of Ptah-hotep" know nothing of sin and repentance, and never rise to eloquence or glow with emotion. Tenderness, it is true, is not wanting. Of a man's duty to his wife—rather, of the line of conduct it is well to adopt towards his wife—it is said: "She will be doubly attached if the chain is sweet to her." To the uninformed reader the word "chain" may sound harsh, but every aspiring woman knows to-day that in old Egypt there was less "chain" than in any other civilization, past or present. Women enjoyed a liberty and respect which contrast superbly with their condition under Judaism and Christianity. It has been said that you may measure the height of a civilization by the position of its women. Though I should be one of the last either to assail the aspirations of women or belittle the older empires, I think that comparative ethnology and

history do not justify this canon. Early economic conditions, legends, and other causes influence the situation in this respect. But the splendid condition (comparatively to later ages) of its women, the concern for its children, and the ideal of justice to servants and employees, must be taken into account in judging the moral code of Egypt.

For the rest the "Maxims of Ptah-hotep" give admirable advice to all classes and in all relations of life. "Be not proud in thy science," the book impresses on the student; "speak equally with the ignorant and the learned, for the barriers of art are not yet known.....Wisdom is more difficult to find than the emerald." To the wealthy and the officials the writer says: "Harden not thy heart because of thy advancement, because thou hast become the steward of the things of God; forget not him who was once thy fellow, but be a companion to him." This kindly, sober, cheerful tone is maintained throughout. There is no emotional grandeur; and there are no emotional excesses. A man must be just, temperate, modest, sincere, even-natured, and kindly, in his intercourse with all. His relations with his inferiors are especially and admirably prescribed. Egypt had gone very far, six thousand years ago, beyond the idea that a crude series of prohibitions to murder and steal was a code of morals. Egyptian moralists left those things to the "police," and encouraged finer shades of character, much as an Emerson would.

Professor Amélineau contends, as I said, that this manuscript itself goes back to at least 3500 B.C., and

he quotes a number of epitaphs of that early date which (like the protestations in *The Book of the Dead*) show the maturity of moral ideas at that time. On a prince's tomb is the proud boast: "None was miserable in my time; none was oppressed in my days." A provincial governor's tomb has the inscription: "He lowered the shoulder of the proud; he shortened the hour of the cruel;he was the husband of the widow and the refuge of the orphan." These phrases, which show how petty is the contention that European civilization was the first to care for the destitute, are merely one or two lines in a lengthy panegyric, which, whether it is merited or not, evinces a high ideal of morality. Nor is this in the least exceptional. The Egyptians boast at death, it is true; but they boast of fine things. "He was the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow, the eye of the blind, the foot of the lame," says another inscription. "He gave bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked," says another; and in the middle of another long panegyric we read: "He was exempt from all vice, virtuous in all his thoughts; there was no guile in him."¹

The *steles* from which these inscriptions are copied belong, says Professor Amélineau, to the period between 4500 and 3000 B.C., and are in entire harmony with the other illustrations I have quoted. It need hardly be said that I am not for a moment suggesting that these glowing eulogies

¹ See these and other epitaphs in the work of Amélineau, quoted above, pp. 142-47.

must be accepted as accurate descriptions of the dead officials. The domestic virtue of an English village would be found phenomenal if one judged it by the memorials over the dead. We may assume that, in this regard, human nature was much the same six thousand years ago as in the Victorian period. What it is material to notice is that the standard of character was much the same, if not higher. These are not exceptional inscriptions; they are a few specimens of the large numbers which survive from the Egyptian Middle Empire, or down to the end of the twelfth dynasty. They show that a great philanthropic movement, inculcating a concern for the destitute and oppressed, had grown out of the older moral culture; and we may assume, as in all similar ages, that behind all the boasting and exhortation was a considerable measure of achievement. The mass of men and women never yet led high moral lives in any period of history. It is enough that the greater heights of sound idealism had been reached 5,000 years ago; and it is a thing to remember when one wanders among the collections of weird gods and grotesque figures which too often represent old Egypt to us. Among those collections you will, if you look closely, see man and wife sculptured in company as no other nation ever carved them; and those strange characters on their *steles* and sarcophagi tell that men and women had the high conceptions of social conduct to which we are now returning after our medieval wandering in the desert.

After the twelfth dynasty grave trouble fell on

Egypt: invasion, oppression under barbaric kings, and reaction. After a few centuries the vigour and splendour of the empire were restored, and the religious-moral culture approaches nearer to the Christian type. By the middle of the second millennium B.C., a thousand years before monotheism triumphs in Judæa, the Egyptian priests have attained a virtually monotheistic creed. From the hymns of the time I quote a few passages to illustrate this development. To many of us to-day it is a matter of indifference whether we find a high morality associated with monotheism, polytheism, or a virtual atheism. The Buddhist or the Confucian ethic, with no theistic base, has proved, perhaps, the most effective of all; and the polytheistic ethic of Egypt and Babylon was, as far as we can see, as effective as the Christian. The roots of morality are, in truth, always fed by human experience, and do not suffer with the changes or decay of creeds. But many insist that the Christian outlook was superior on account of its high monotheism—a monotheism which, until the last few years, conceived God as the tormentor of sinners for eternity—and it is instructive to compare the attitude of cultivated Egyptians.

One of the most notable documents of the period we have reached is the "Boulaq Hymn," or "Hymn to Amon-Rē." It is dated about the year 1350 B.C., and is therefore at least five hundred years earlier than the earliest book of the Old Testament. From Professor Steindorff's *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (1905) I borrow this interesting passage:—

Thou comely King, that art crowned with a white crown, thou Lord of Splendour that createst light, to whom the gods vouchsafe praise. Praise be to thee Rē, Lord of Right, whose holiness is hidden: thou Lord of the Gods: thou art Kheperi in the vessel: at thy command the gods arose: thou art Atum, that didst create mankind. Thou alone art he that created whatsoever is: men came forth from thine eye, and the gods from out of thy mouth. Thou art he that did create green herbs for the cattle and fruit-bearing trees for men: who giveth a livelihood to the fishes in the river and the birds under the heavens: who lendeth breath to the creature that is still within the egg, and nourisheth the son of the worm: that giveth life to the flies, as to the worms and the fleas. He provideth that whereof the mice have need in their holes.....Praised be thou that didst create all this. Thou king supreme among gods, we worship thee because thou didst make us: we extol thee because thou hast fashioned us: we bless thee because thou dwellest among us.

We do not wonder that the official cult imposes references to other gods on the priestly author of this hymn and those who chanted it. In ancient Rome the monotheistic dignitary had to salute Jupiter and Juno; in China and Japan the Agnostic official offers worship to the heavens; in Christian England learned bishops recite that he who does not believe what they do will be damned. But through these compromises we see plainly a monotheistic creed. Amon-Rē is the supreme god, the lord and maker of gods, the sole creator of the world and of man. He has triumphed, or his priests have triumphed—as Jahveh's priests will triumph a thousand years afterwards—over rivals. The remainder now are mere angels or archangels, good or evil.

The language is, in fact, not far removed from what is called the lofty spirituality of the New Testament. Rē is, of course, the sun; hence the reminder of the worms and fleas and flies. But to these studious priests the sun is only the great symbol of his power, as it would be later of Christ's power or Mithra's power. Rē is "the Lord of Right, whose holiness is hidden." Rē is the creator of men, dwelling among men; and his universal providence extends to the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air, as a certain Galilean prophet will announce on the hills of Judæa—fourteen centuries afterwards.

Many Egyptian hymns of the period, reproduced in Professor Steindorff's book, repeat this sentiment of fatherly providence. Rē is "the Lord of Life." "The lambs leap in the meadows; all insects and all things that fly are alive when thou shinest upon them." But the priestly writers made it clear that the physical sun is but a symbol: "Thou shinest in thine own likeness as the living ball of the sun." I will conclude, however, with a stanza from another hymn in which man's relation to Amon-Rē is expressed in even more Christian terms:—

O my God, Lord of the Gods, Amon-Rē of Thebes,
 Stretch out thy hand to me; save me;
 Rise up for me; revive me.
 Thou art the one God that hath no equal,
 The sun that riseth in the heavens,
 Atum, who created man,
 Thou hearest the prayer of him that calleth on thee,
 Thou deliverest man from the hand of the mighty.

These extracts will suffice to show the evolution

of the religious ethic of ancient Egypt, and we shall find a similar evolution in Babylonia. The conception of a supreme God and association with him of the idea of supreme holiness had not to wait for the appearance of the Jewish prophets, and certainly not for the coming of Jesus. But the priests of the older civilizations had to confront cults which were spread over mighty empires and rooted in the traditions of their peoples by thousands of years of worship. The Jewish priests or scribes or prophets, especially after the Captivity, had an exceedingly small nation to control, and no vast polytheistic literature and widespread culture to resist; hence they had a much easier task in imposing monotheism. But the idea was naturally evolved five hundred years at least before the time of Amos and Hosea. Thirteen or fourteen centuries before the time of Christ men were kneeling in the temples of Thebes and Memphis, adoring an invisible and all-holy God, imploring his providential aid, and repenting their transgressions; and women were mumbling their sins before the statues of Isis, as they would two thousand years later before the images of her successor, Mary.

The power of Egypt was gradually broken, and Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman moved among its ruins. This brings us to the last consideration of its moral culture: its relation to the Christian religion. Through the Greeks, especially, the Egyptian ideas spread in the neighbourhood of the eastern Mediterranean. Professor Amélineau sees in Egypt "the initiator of our civilization in

the paths of moral progress." It would, however, be unprofitable here to attempt to trace the influence of Egypt on Pythagoreans and Platonists; nor, since we do not know where the Gospels were written, is it possible to follow the Egyptian tradition until it joins the other streams which unite in Christianity. By the first century of our era the cult of Isis and the cult of Serapis, the two chief ethical religions of later Egypt, were established in all the Mediterranean ports, and had reached even Rome. Somewhere in the cities of that coast, between Alexandria and Corinth, the Gospels were written.

I will describe in a later chapter the features of the cult of Isis as it was known at Rome, and will conclude here with a last glance at the moral evolution of Egypt. One reads in ch. xxviii of Gibbon's superb survey of the Roman world how the new god Serapis won his way into Egypt, shared the honours of Osiris, and inspired the most wonderful monuments of the decaying nation. The Egyptian priest-historian Manetho describes for us the centre of this new religion, or the Serapeum, at Memphis towards the close of the Old Era. It is like a picture of medieval monasticism at its best. Numbers of priests were devoted to religious contemplation in the shelter of the Serapeum. Many of them never passed its doors, and, even when pious Egyptians came to consult them, would only speak to their visitors through the windows of their cells. Those who went abroad at all were distinguished by the sobriety of their conduct. They never laughed, and they passed along the

streets with the slow, absorbed gravity of really religious monks. All slept on the ground in their vast monastery, and none ever touched wine, or flesh, or fish.¹

Such was the ethical evolution of Egypt; such the work of that most enduring of empires in preparing the culture which Europe was to inherit. It is not my aim to institute comparisons and seek superiorities. I am examining the belief that something new, distinctive, markedly superior in the way of moral culture was introduced to the world in the Gospels; that until Christ came the nations lay "in the shadow of death," worshipping only stocks and stones, and having no high moral idealism. It is plain that such a belief indicates only the scanty knowledge, or the sectarian bias, of the early Christian writers. There was no serious element of moral teaching unknown to the Egyptians; but whether they responded to their beliefs more or even less faithfully than Christians we have not the means of determining. We have, however, sufficient illustrations of their ideals, and we see those ideals rising from level to level until, before the time of Christ, they inspire even monastic ascetics. I speak relatively. It must not be supposed that I have a personal esteem of a moral code which becomes more and more mystic and monotheistic, and transfers its stress from genial fellowship and sound public service to a narrowly personal cultivation of chastity and asceticism. But

¹ A fuller description will be found in Gaston Boissier's *La religion Romaine* (1874), i, 399-402.

it is the appearance of the ethic of the Gospels that I have to explain or illustrate, and, as far as Egypt is concerned, we see the natural course of moral evolution reaching that position some time before the birth of Christ.

CHAPTER III

MORALITY IN BABYLONIA AND PERSIA

IT is probably not Memphis or Thebes, but Babylon, which the average Christian will quote in justification of his belief that the older empires were the abodes of darkness and abomination. In his ears ring the fierce prophetic denunciations of her whoredom, the lurid references of *Revelation*, the age-long comparison of any great and vicious city to the capital of Babylonia. The Jews surely knew the rivers of Babylon and the life that overflowed on their quays, he will say; he forgets how much licence the Old Testament describes in Judæa itself, and how little cause its writers had to applaud Babylon. If he be of an inquiring mind, however, he may discover that the Greek historian Herodotus (*Historiæ*, I, 199) confirms the Jewish estimate: tells us that in the temples of Babylonia every woman of the land had to earn money for the treasury once by prostitution, and how the ill-favoured stood sometimes for years at the gate until some drunken or sordid stranger would embrace them and set them free. And if our inquiring Christian has a large acquaintance with French novels, he will have in mind, doubtless, a terrible picture of the dense groves round the temples of

Ishtar and the utterly unbridled life which they thinly concealed.

Another ancient legend must go; and, as it goes, the Old Era grows lighter and the superiority of the New Era less conspicuous. The worship of Ishtar (Astarte or Ashtaroth) was indeed accompanied by a system of sacred prostitution, a relic of dim superstitious ages; but we have clear evidence that Babylonian women did not follow such a law as that of which Herodotus speaks. We have, in fact, ample evidence that chastity in brides was treasured and demanded, and that the old Babylonian punishments of immorality were such that if they were proposed in any Christian city to-day there would be something like a panic. We have, in a word, apart from this survival in the cult of Ishtar, a moral evolution similar to that of Egypt, and we have even clearer proof that it contributed to the later Christian synthesis.

The civilization of Babylonia began much later than that of Egypt, and in recent years scholars have tended to shorten its chronology. Somewhere about 3000 B.C., at least, we find the great city on the Euphrates rising to its famous lordship of that part of the earth. During a long earlier period—some say as far back as 6000 B.C.—we dimly trace the passage of a people akin to the early Chinese (whose ancestors were at the time in western Asia) occupying the valley and contending with Semitic tribes from the hills. The story of Egypt is repeated. The Sumerians and Akkadians unite by about 3000 B.C., and the settled civilization begins. But

the fusion has meant compromise, and barbaric old laws (the ordeal, the law of retaliation, etc.) and myths and customs have been consecrated in the new religion and polity, and will long be found side by side with the better sentiments of the Babylonians. We must remember this in the case of all the older nations, as well as of the Hebrews. It is true of English law and religion to-day.

About the year 1958 B.C. the fusion of the different tribal elements and rival towns was still incomplete, when a powerful monarch, King Hammurabi, ascended the throne and consolidated the empire of Babylonia. His work may not ineptly be likened to that of Napoleon. As soon as he had fused the conflicting towns and provinces under his rule, he set out to frame a uniform code of laws from their varying codes and customs. Before he died, about the year 1916 B.C., the code was completed, and explorers were so fortunate as to discover a copy of the code, carved on stone, in the year 1901. Fragments and contract-tablets had already convinced Assyriologists of the existence of this code, and some had even conjectured that Hammurabi would prove to be the great legislator. The actual discovery greatly enlarged our knowledge of the Babylonian people, and from it we can gather with confidence that the statement of Herodotus, who often errs, is false.¹

¹ An excellent edition of the code in English is published by Mr. Chilperic Edwards, *The Hammurabi Code* (1904). See also Mr. S. A. Cook's *Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi* (1903). For a study of the indebtedness of Christianity and Judaism to Babylonia in other matters see *Babylonisches im Neuen Testament* (1905), by Dr. Alfred Jeremias (Pastor of the Luther-Church at Leipsic).

As I have opened the chapter with a reference to sex-morality, and this is probably the point of greatest interest in connection with ancient Babylon, I will at once extract from the code a few passages which show the prevailing sentiment and usage in this regard:—

110. If a priestess who has not remained in the sacred building shall open a wine-shop, or enter a wine-shop for drink, that woman shall be burned.

127. If a man has pointed the finger against a priestess or the wife of another man unjustifiably, that man shall be thrown before the judge and his brow shall be branded.

128. If a man takes a wife, and a contract is not concluded, then that woman is no wife.

129. If the wife of a man is found lying with another male, they shall be bound and thrown into the water; unless the husband lets his wife live, and the king lets his servant live.

130. If a man has forced the daughter of another man, who has not known the male, and who still resides in the house of her father, and has lain within her breasts, and he is found, that man shall be slain; that woman is guiltless.

132. If the finger is pointed against a man's wife because of another male, and she has not been found lying with another male; then she shall plunge for her husband into the holy river [ordeal].

133. If a man has been taken prisoner, and there is food in his house, and his wife forsakes his house and enters the house of another; then, because that woman has not preserved her home, but has entered another house, that woman shall be prosecuted, and shall be thrown into the water.

134. If a man has been taken prisoner, and there is no food in his house, and his wife enters the house of another; then that woman bears no blame.

135. If a man has been taken prisoner, and there is no food before her, and his wife has entered the house of another, and bears children, and afterwards her husband returns and regains his city; then that woman shall return to her spouse. The children shall follow their father.

137. If a man has set his face to divorce a concubine who has borne him children, or a wife who has presented him with children, then he shall give back to that woman her dowry, and he shall give her the usufruct of field, garden, and property.....

142. If a woman hate her husband, and says "Thou shalt not possess me," the reason for her dislike shall be inquired into. If she is careful, and has no fault, but her husband takes himself away and neglects her, then that woman is not to blame. She shall take her dowry, and go back to her father's house.

144. If a man has married a wife, and that wife has given to her husband a female slave who has children, then if that man has set his face to marry a concubine, he shall not be permitted; he shall not marry a concubine.

There follow laws protecting the position of the wife against a favourite concubine; protecting her from divorce in case of illness (probably leprosy—the husband may marry again, but must support and not divorce the invalid, or give back her dowry); giving sentence of banishment against a man for incest, or of death for intercourse with his daughter-in-law; sentencing to be burned a mother and son who transgress; making the children of a man's slave equal to the children of his wife in inheritance, if he has called them his children, or emancipating them in any case; securing the dowry of a woman

for herself and her children; allowing a wife to depart and marry again "if her children annoy her," taking her dowry (172 b), but leaving the marriage-settlement to the children.

These laws regulating the relations of husbands and wives form more than a fifth of the whole code. I need not comment here on the remarkable spirit of justice which is seen in them all. When we recall that Babylonia has only recently been consolidated from a number of petty principalities, often with barbaric traditions with which Hammurabi must compromise, the laws are singularly fine. Patriarchal in form, retaining some fierce sentences from earlier tribal days, these laws nevertheless put to shame the corresponding laws of all the Christian nations of Europe until recent years, and reach a height to which the reformed English law has not yet attained. The absolute settlement of the dowry on the wife, the protection of her in illness, the liberty of divorce on any serious human ground, the equality of punishment for adultery, the just regard for children engendered of a slave or servant, are things to be remembered by those who, like the Bishop of London, talk of Christianity as "woman's best friend." Compare with this code the law of England as it was half a century ago, after a thousand years of Christian influence!

But the concern for rigid and impartial justice, irrespective of sex, station, or age, distinguishes the whole of the Hammurabi Code; and a superficial reader, granting that the Babylonians certainly had

a supreme idea of justice, may imagine that this is the full extent of their morality. On the contrary, one finds an almost fierce superstition about chastity, and it is precisely from this Code that the "Mosaic" legislation borrowed much of its enactments. It is in no way an implication of justice that men and women shall be burned for incest. It may seem a question of property when a married woman is condemned to death for infringing her vow; but the contrary appears when we notice that her lover, whether married or unmarried, incurs the same penalty. The truth is that, although woman enjoyed almost (if not quite) as much liberty and prestige as in Egypt, and we usually find this leading to sexual liberty, there was the same concern, at least, about chastity in Babylonia as in any modern city. Here the law is richly illustrated by the marriage-contracts which have been found in large numbers among the ruins. The virginity of the bride is quite commonly attested, and was evidently a common requisite. The statement of Herodotus falls before these discoveries.

But there are references in the Code which make this even plainer. I have quoted a law (127) which sentences to be branded a man who slanders a priestess, and another (110) which sentences to be burned an ex-priestess who enters a loose wine-shop.¹ Here we have what would have seemed

¹ Lest any be shocked at the discovery that in Babylonia, as in the later Roman Empire, a wine-shop is at once assumed to be loose, let me add that I know cities in the British Empire in which a barmaid is generally, and flagrantly, a prostitute.

to earlier historians a singular concern about the purity of those priestesses who were thought to be so wildly abandoned. The truth is that the Babylonian priestesses were generally married women of blameless life, or else consecrated virgins. Laws 178 to 182 are concerned with them. Mr. Chilperic Edwards says that, of six names for the various castes of consecrated women, four are preceded by the determinative for a married woman; and we know (from their epitaphs) that Carthaginian priestesses were married. Two of the names have not this determinative. It is remarkable, however, that in all the laws (178-182) which regulate the inheritance of the property of these women, even the possibility of their having children is not contemplated. It is like a Christian prince legislating for nuns who retain property; their property goes to their brothers. In one law the *quadishtu* is expressly described as "a virgin consecrated to God," and in the next law another type is described as "wife of Marduk" (another class of virgin). There is only one kind of woman connected with the cult, the "devotee," who is contemplated in later laws (192 and 193) as having children. These, no doubt, are the sacred prostitutes of the old cult of Ishtar; but they are of little consequence, apparently, beside the great body of strict consecrated women. In fact, in a recent work which sets out to vindicate Herodotus, the authors confess that in this passage the historian is quite astray; that there was prostitution in a temple at Erech and in a few other places, but

even there it was "doubtless confined to the women who dwelt in the temple."¹

These things, and the marriage-tablets, and the fragments of ritual which we shall see presently, show that the Babylonian ideal in sex matters was much the same as in modern England or Germany. Whether Babylonians observed their Code more faithfully, or less faithfully, than Londoners or Parisians, we have no knowledge whatever. A rustic Jew would, apart from his prejudice, talk about the wickedness of Babylon much as a rustic Englishman talks about the wickedness of London; though there is more vice, in proportion to population, in rural districts. It is true that polygamy was still theoretically permitted in Babylon; but the law, and especially the tablets, show that in practice the wife prevented it. As to the "concubine," not only the Stoic morality, but to some extent the early Christian Church, permitted that institution. Even St. Augustine (*De Bono Conjugali*, c. xv) said that he could not condemn a man who took a concubine if his wife was sterile. It is, like polygamy, a matter of custom rather than moral principle.

The extracts I have given will sufficiently illustrate the zeal for justice and equity which distinguishes the whole Code, and I need not quote further. Business contracts are regulated with the strictest regard for justice. Inheritance and all other questions of property are minutely regulated.

¹ Dr. Tolman and Dr. Stevenson, *Herodotus and the Empires of the East* (1899), p. 90.

Assaults are treated with a singular mixture of humanity and ancient ferocity: if a man seriously injures another in a brawl, he shall pay the doctor (assuming that there was not intent to injure seriously); but if he injures a woman so that she miscarries and dies, his own daughter shall die. The new spirit of Babylon was struggling against ancient tribal custom. Doctors, veterinary surgeons, builders, sailors, farmers, employers, etc., all have their laws, with the same earnest effort to do justice. A minimum wage is enacted—4,000 years ago!—for each class of workers (laws 268 to 277). And Hammurabi, declaring very openly that, though he rules under favour of the gods, *he* made these laws, concludes with a repeated assurance that his purpose is to protect the widow, the orphan, the feeble, and the oppressed. Ancient Babylon, with its slavery, its ruthless sentences, its ordeals, and its devotees of Ishtar, was far from perfect. But to describe it as living in the shadow of death is provincial ignorance.

When we turn from the cold and formal language of the laws to the religious literature of Babylonia (with which in this regard we may associate Assyria) we find a higher and more emotional expression of the ideal which we gather from the Code. From the tablets which are found in the ruins of the temples we learn that, as with Rē in Egypt, Marduk at length becomes virtually the one god of the priests. What is more to our purpose, we find that the moral law was under the stern patronage of the gods and goddesses, and that the fear of their anger inspired in the Babylonians

a concern for purity of life and a deep remorse for sin which contrast strangely with the legendary idea of their levity.

I have already explained that, while the Egyptian feared the anger of the gods in the next world, the Babylonian, like the Jew, expected his punishment or his reward in this. There are indications that educated people were sceptical about immortality. On the whole, however, the Babylonians believed in the survival of the soul, but had a vague and unattractive conception of the underworld. There was no bright heaven for the good, or dark abode for the wicked: all passed into a gray, gloomy region which had no attraction for any. Hence the Babylonians and Assyrians implored their gods to give them long life on the earth, and the means to eat and drink merrily before the end came. In effect, they cultivated a genial materialism. But, instead of this creed degenerating into disorder of life, it essentially demanded the observance of moral law. For the good things of this world were in the hands of the gods, and nothing is clearer than that the gods of Babylonia demanded right conduct as a condition of favour. I may repeat that no people ever faithfully lives up to its creed as a body, and we do not suppose that the Babylonians did. But there was daily stress put on the need of right conduct and repentance for sin, and we may assume the same proportion of consistency there as in any other nation.

Dr. Morris Jastrow (*Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria*, 1911) has collected a good deal of the temple literature which

reflects this side of Mesopotamian life, and he gathers that there was a high standard of conduct in theory and reality. Each Babylonian had a favourite god or goddess, and used to approach his deity through the priests. But the priests were no less concerned with the conduct of the worshipper than with his zeal in offering (or paying for) sacrifices. We have numbers of tablets which show how they impressed on the worshipper the need of righteousness. He came to complain of the futility of the sacrifices, and, like a Roman priest at some shrine to which Catholics flock to-day, the Chaldæan priest asked if some secret sin had not vitiated the petition. Lists of sins were drawn up, and the worshipper was examined, as he would now be by a Catholic confessor. In some of the lists we find as many as a hundred moral transgressions enumerated. It was the same with the "incantation formulæ," or the ritual of exorcism; for Babylonia is the classic source of the belief in evil spirits, and in this respect the Gospels are Babylonian literature. Chastity was prominent in the Code. "Has he taught what was impure, or instructed in what was not proper? Has he approached his neighbour's wife?" Such questions are common. Illness was due to evil spirits, and unchastity, injustice, lying, causing dissension in families, disrespect to parents, etc., gave them a hold.

Positive exhortation to virtue, as a condition of divine favour, was another function of the priests. Here is the translation, by Dr. Jastrow, of a sacerdotal tablet:—

Thou shalt not slander : speak what is pure.
 Thou shalt not speak evil : speak kindly.
 He who slanders and speaks evil
 Shamash will visit recompense on his head.
 Let not thy mouth boast : guard thy lip.
 When thou art angry, do not speak at once.....
 Before thy god come with a pure heart.....

But men transgressed, as men have ever done and ever will until the law is reformed and the human mind elevated, and there came, as in Egypt, as in Christendom, the hour of repentance. The "penitential psalms" which the priests recited with the sinner on these occasions are, says Dr. Jastrow, "the flower of the religious literature of Babylonia." It is not surprising. The old idea of the gay-living Chaldæan curiously overlooked his philosophy of life. His world swarmed with "unclean spirits" who, like modern microbes (their successors), sought incessantly to penetrate his defences ; and above all were the great gods and goddesses whose favour meant health and prosperity. On one side and the other the essential thing to do was to cultivate virtue. But human blood is warm, and has its way in spite of devils and gods and hells, and the temples of Babylon listened to the constant wails of the penitent. It is particularly interesting to quote a few lines of one of these psalms or hymns :—

I, thy servant, full of sighs, call upon thee :
 The fervent prayer of him who has sinned do thou
 accept :
 If thou lookest upon a man, that man lives.
 O all-powerful Mistress of mankind,
 Merciful one, to whom it is good to turn, who
 hears sighs.

There is nothing new under the sun. One imagines a fervent Catholic murmuring these words before the altar of Mary in Brompton Oratory or in the Lady Chapel of some Italian cathedral. Such a figure, in just such attitude, Ovid describes standing before the altar of Isis in ancient Rome two thousand years ago. And here is the same voice, with the same prayer, in a Babylonian temple four thousand years ago; and the most piquant feature of the situation is that the goddess to whom he confesses his sins, and whose aid he implores, is Ishtar, or Astarte, who, to the Brompton Oratory, is the quintessence of sexual devilry!

Time has its revenges. Twenty years ago I was a Catholic priest, eliciting the sins of penitents, reciting penitential psalms, begging the aid of Mary, and reflecting on this spiritual dispensation which had, at the word of Christ, succeeded the licentious cult of Astarte and all the abominations of Babylon. And when I read these fragments of Chaldæan literature, and imagine the priest kneeling with the penitent before the altar of the beautiful and divine woman who has compassion on sinners, it is like a faded picture of the life in which I once took part.

When we pass from Babylon to Persia, from ancient days to the few centuries before Christ, the stress on righteousness increases. I have not attempted to measure the influence of Babylonia on Judaism and, through it, on Christianity. It is now familiar how the legends of Babylon reappear, slightly modified, in the legendary books of the Old Testament; nor can one imagine the presence of

50,000 Jews in Babylon and a constant intercourse with Judæa without some deep influence of its high culture. To this we may return in the next chapter. My chief purpose is to show that those older empires, which bequeath their cultures to the cosmopolitan world in which Christianity arises, had a high moral idealism.

The Medes and Persians emerge from obscurity at the time when Egypt and Babylonia have completed their evolution. Of their earlier condition we have little confident knowledge; but the Hebrew writers themselves have commended the generous and righteous attitude of their great monarch. In point of fact, the Persians already had a fine religious and moral system, and, although we cannot disentangle the more and the less ancient elements with complete success in their sacred writings, we gather that before the end of the seventh century of the Old Era they possessed a high native religion and ethic. The Avesta, their sacred book, was compiled in the time of the Sassanidæ, in the Christian Era, and, as in all other sacred works, the old and the new are mingled together in a perplexing confusion. The authorities are, however, fairly agreed that certain parts—especially the hymns called the Gathas—belong, substantially, to the seventh or sixth century before Christ, and they show an advanced thought in Persia long before Cyrus conquered the Babylonians.

Persian tradition attributes the reform of their ancient Aryan religion to a great prophet, Zarathustra, whom they elevated to the position which Jesus

occupies in Christendom, and adorned or defaced with similar legends. It has become an open question in modern history whether there ever was such an historical person as Zarathustra; but the general opinion is in favour of historicity, and a recent authority has made a learned and spirited defence of it.¹ He is believed to have lived between 660 and 583 B.C., and to have greatly improved the old religion and ethic, though his reform was only partially accepted. It is, in fact, poles asunder from the effeminate and licentious luxury which we find surrounding Persian monarchs when they come into contact with the Greeks. But the Persian religion easily lent itself to such a reform, and the ideas of Zarathustra spread among the more sober and entered the sacred writings.

Persian religion had resolutely faced the almost equal balance of good and evil, light and darkness, in the world, and given a characteristic solution. While the Babylonians had ascribed the evil to legions of demons, the Persians, observing that such demons might at any time be crushed by the gods, imagined that there was a supreme, eternal, uncreated source of evil as well as of good. Ahura Mazda (commonly known as Ormuzd), who is saluted in the Avesta as "the Holy Spirit," was the creator of light, beauty, truth, and goodness. Angro Mainyush (commonly called Ahriman) was the source of darkness, ugliness, untruth, and vice. Life is a struggle of the two powers for the souls of men, and

¹ See Prof. A. V. W. Jackson's *Zoroaster* (1899).

of men to escape the evil power. As in Egypt, men believed intensely in the immortality of the soul, and expected a judgment of their conduct after death; but Persia brings us much nearer to Christianity than Egypt did. The alternative of the soul after the judgment was punishment in the realm of Angro Mainyush or happiness in the home of Ahura Mazda. In the fullness of time, moreover, Ahura Mazda would triumph. Then his angels would summon all the dead to a general judgment or ordeal by fire, and from the flames the righteous would pass to the possession of a renovated earth. This, "the kingdom," as they called it, was the supreme hope of every Persian.

If such a religion made moral conduct a condition of the favour of Ahura Mazda, we have at once the ingredients of an intensely ethical religion. This was the actual complexion of the Persian religion, especially in the Zoroastrian reform. "No religion in the world," says one of the authorities, "has so clearly grasped the ideas of guilt and merit." Zarathustra, like Jesus and Paul, thought that the end of the world was near; that Ahura Mazda could not long delay the humiliation of the evil and triumph of the righteous. To ensure entrance into "the kingdom," therefore—for the majority of the dead, neither very black nor very white, remain in a dim Babylonian underworld until the general resurrection—one must be pure in body and mind and heart. Purity is the transcendent note of the Persian ethic. Chastity is the supreme virtue, asceticism the supreme counsel: men must be as pure as the sun,

in which they saw a symbol of Ahura Mazda, or as the water which they used for their baptisms and lustrations.

The Gathas are translated in volume xxxi of *The Sacred Books of the East*, and, amid the inevitable crudities of all ancient sacred writings, contain the same passionate zeal for righteousness and for the downfall of the wicked which (in a more familiar speech) we read in the Hebrew psalms and prophets. Ahura Mazda is addressed throughout as "the Divine Righteousness," and his aid is eloquently invoked in the struggle against sin. A few extracts will give some idea of the sentiments, though it is a pity that a more poetic and resonant rendering of the Zend has not been attempted, and we are less attracted than by the music of the Old Testament. I have slightly modified the translation in this sense, but hesitate to do more than change a few words.

Ahura Mazda will grant happiness and everlasting life to all in the fullness of His righteous counsels ; from him, as head of His kingdom, will the gift come. And to him who in spirit and deed is His friend, and with faith fulfils His vows, he will vouchsafe the mighty power of the Good Mind.—*Yasna*, xxxi, 21.

Bless Thou our life, in body and mind, and give it salvation, through Thy Good Mind, Thy Sovereign Power, and Thy Sanctity.—xxxiii, 10.

Teach us the paths through Righteousness, those paths which Thy Good Mind, living within Thy saints, verily trod.—xxxiv, 12.

The way which Thou dost mark for me as the path of the Good Mind, O Ahura, is the way of the religious commands and laws of the Saviours,

wherein the good man prospers because he is righteous.—xxxiv, 13.

In that holy Realm which shines with splendour as the sun let there be Piety; and may she, through the indwelling of the Good Mind, pour blessings on us for our deeds.—xliii, 16.

These extracts illustrate the attitude and tone of the devout Persian, which are in no substantial sense different from those of the devout Christian. God, the one supreme God, is all-holy, and demands righteousness in his worshippers. He is accessible to mortals, but chiefly through the prophet whom he sent to reform the world. The standard of virtue is implicit, but it is only necessary to say that it laid as much stress as any Christian writing on chastity.

It was at first the belief of this ancient Persian creed that the evil deed could not be undone or atoned during life, and therefore the strictest care must be taken to have few evil deeds written against one's name in the scrolls of Ahura Mazda. But this hard saying was gradually modified, and, as in all religions, the priests devised ways of atonement. Fines were a popular means of erasing the evil deed, as one buys indulgences in Spain to-day and once did all over Europe; but confession and remorse were in time, as at Babylon, considered efficacious, and bathing in sacred water was a symbol and instrument of purification.

So the two great elements of the later Christian Gospel—a strict moral code and a spirit of repentance for transgressing it—to say nothing of the

powerful spirit of evil, the particular and general judgments, the final resurrection and renovation of the earth, the imminence of "the kingdom," the efficacy of confession, remorse, baptism, and money-payments, spread over the eastern world with the triumph of Persia. The bitter antagonism of the Jews—those remaining in Judæa, for their transported companions nearly all clung to Babylon—to the Chaldæan power gave place to a genial admiration of Persia. We find, however, no immediate influence of Persian thought on the Jews. The new movement among them is to be intensely nationalistic and Jahvistic. But in the later Hebrew books we discern the influence of Persia as well as Greece, and in the New Testament we easily recognize *Angro Mainyush*, and the fiery lake, and the judgment, and "the kingdom" that draws nigh, and a hundred other reminiscences of Persia.

Before I approach the Jews, however, I would add a word on the great ethical religion of India. The similarity of language led scholars long ago to connect the Hindus and the Persians, and of late years documents have been found which show that they were still united, in Mesopotamia, about 1300 B.C. The division seems to have occurred soon afterwards, and one branch of the Aryan race moved towards India, with its Sanscrit tongue and Vedic religion. There, about the year 600 B.C., was born the Buddha who was to do for India even more than Zarathustra did for Persia.

We cannot yet say to what extent Buddhism penetrated Europe. Its influence is suspected in

early Greek philosophy and in the Essenian sect of the Jews, which, we shall see, held many of the principles of the Gospel-ethic. Our great authority, Dr. Rhys Davids, regards it as certain that Pythagoras was influenced by Hindu thought, and his philosophy and ethic remained an attraction to mystics in the Græco-Christian world. In any event, it is useful to glance at the character of Buddha's teaching; but, as its nobility is well known, I will be brief.

Dr. Rhys Davids¹ thinks we may discern among the legends that Gotama was the son of a high-caste Hindu, and that, in his twenty-ninth year, he abandoned his home and family to become a seeker of truth and then a wandering teacher. After six years of study and austerity, he attracted a few disciples and began his forty-five years' apostolate. Living on scanty alms, wandering from province to province, ever gentle and austere, he tried to lay "the Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness." This was to be done by his disciples following "the Noble Eightfold Path," which is described in his first discourse; and, as Dr. Rhys Davids thinks we may recognize in it the words of Buddha himself, I reproduce the scheme of it:—

- Right Views (free from superstition or delusion).
- Right Aspirations (high, and worthy of the intelligent, worthy man).
- Right Speech (kindly, open, truthful).
- Right Conduct (peaceful, honest, pure).

¹ See his *Buddhism* (1896) for a succinct account.

Right Livelihood (bringing hurt or danger to no living thing).

Right Effort (in self-training and in self-control).

Right Mindfulness (the active, watchful mind).

Right Rapture (in deep meditation on the realities of life).

In the explanation of these points Buddha shows how he seeks to eliminate ignorance, sensuality, ill-will, and pride. His ideal is placidly and evenly intellectual, not emotional, life. Ignorance and the holding of false views are among the greatest of evils. But he never reviles or curses the recalcitrant. The maxim of his followers is: "The whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he [the follower of Buddha] continue to flush with heart of love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure.....there is not one that he passes by or leaves aside, but he regards them all with mind set free and deep-felt love" (*Maha Sudassana Sutta*, ii, 8).

In a word, active mind and all-embracing love are the supreme recommendations, and every virtue in the Christian code is included. Christian moralists invariably decry all other systems in comparison with theirs, and they have complained that the lofty Buddhist morality lacks "incentive" for the ordinary man. In this they really touch its greatest superiority over any other, except the Confucian. Buddha so far opposed the doctrine of a reward after death that he came to deny personal immortality altogether; and he so neglected the gods, and opposed ceremonies, that punctilious scholars still dispute whether he was or was not a theist. His

incentives to virtue are found in this world; and, while Christians academically argue that a man cannot be righteous without the stimulus of their doctrine of a future life, we have the Japanese Government, after sending an official mission to Europe, assuring us that Buddhism has been more efficacious in Asia than Christianity in Europe, and will remain, blended with Confucianism, the ethic of further Asia. What India lost by the banishment of Buddhism no man can measure. The extremer shades of mysticism and asceticism (though Buddha had more lenient rules for laymen) were bound to confine his doctrine, in the strict sense, to a few. The deification of Buddha by priests, moreover, has encrusted his doctrine with the myths and ceremonies he despised. But his central teaching of active mind, straight conduct, and universal benevolence produces its fruit in Burma, China, and Japan to-day. And from 600 B.C. until now, wherever Buddhism has prevailed, we have, says Rhys Davids (p. 116), "not a single instance of one of those religious persecutions which loom so largely in the history of the Christian Church."

CHAPTER IV

THE EVOLUTION OF JEWISH MORALITY

IT must be somewhat disconcerting to the religious inquirer to find that, as soon as we approach the study of his own sacred books, we find ourselves in a region of mist, uncertainty, and speculation. No man of moderate culture to-day entertains the view of Hebrew development which the Christian Church taught, as an inspired truth, for fifteen centuries: the appearance of man a few thousand years before Christ, the legend of Paradise and the Fall, the childish story of Noah and the Deluge, the vagaries of the patriarchs, the communication of a mass of legislation and ritual to Moses, the might of David and splendour of Solomon, the story of the kingdoms as it is unfolded in the Old Testament. Only in the Church of Rome to-day dare a scholar even profess to believe these things. In other Churches he affects a genial superiority to the traditional view; though, as a rule, he makes no protest when his Church still imposes it on the millions of its more ignorant followers. Here and there a peculiar type of scholar may zealously contend that the first chapter of *Genesis* is in accord with science; forgetting that not the subtlest ingenuity could bring the subsequent chapters into such accord.

Here and there a learned archæologist like Professor Sayce will find crumbs of consolation for the old believer; and in the same book afflict him with an assurance that *Genesis* is full of Babylonian legend and Egyptian romance, *Daniel* a crude forgery, and so on. These things do not alter the fact that the Old Testament is a very human document.

But when we have come to regard the Old Testament as a human, not a sacred, document—to substitute scholarship for that religious sense which was once so sure of the inspiration of the book—we are still in a world of endless controversy and perplexity. It really does not matter two pins to any serious person whether there ever was an Abraham or not—Adam and Noah are, of course, beyond the range of decent discussion; but were the Israelites ever in Egypt? Joseph is pretty plainly the hero borrowed from an old Egyptian novel; but was there a Moses? The “Mosaic” legislation is partly as old as Hammurabi, and partly as new as Esdras; but did something of tribal importance take place in the desert round Sinai? Joshua is a naked myth, the legendary bones sticking out of the flesh; but did the Israelites invade and conquer Canaan? The peculiar adventures of harlots and the sons of harlots do not gravely trouble us; but is there anything in the story of Solomon? And did the prophets utter as much as they profess to have done before the Captivity? And what was the cultural condition of the Israelites before they found a more comfortable home in Babylon?

On these chief stages of Hebrew history there is no agreement. We console the old believer, when he finds that the Old Testament is not "the Word of God," by telling him that it is even more valuable because it is a record of a tribe rising from barbarism to civilization—or is the word of barbarians. Its oldest fragments are the most valuable, and the least civilized. Fifty generations of divines have proved that they could be, and are, the Word of God; now the precise measure of their departure from the standards of civilized man enables us to set them in the order of their antiquity.

Yet even the new criterion of truth has its limits, and our divines are at each other's throats, like so many ordinary scholars. The "sojourn" in Egypt, of which the copious Egyptian remains yield not the faintest trace, is saved only by a desperate speculation. Moses *may* have been the leader of the supposed returning tribes as well as any other. Jahveh probably did dwell on Horeb, as the crude mountain-god of an uncivilized tribe, and possibly he was accepted as the price of tribal alliance. No doubt the story of the invasion of Canaan contains a truth, since our first confident glimpse of the Israelites discovers them as a small tribe of very sanguinary Bedouins marauding among the more or less civilized Palestinians. No doubt Solomon's grandeur is as true as the unique grandeur of a new picture palace in a large modern village. And so on. I do not suggest that lay historians would be much more successful with the task of reconstructing

the history of the Hebrews, as the mendacity of the old Hebrew writers was a most accomplished and elusive faculty, and the civilized world seems to have been unaware of the existence of the Hebrews until a few centuries before Christ. But the work may proceed more satisfactorily when the historian is not in danger of being denounced to ecclesiastical headquarters or the next Congress, and has not a few million ignorant followers to conciliate.

As things are, one can do little more than summarize the conclusions of the majority of the more impartial scholars. Fortunately, the early history interests us little. We have already found so much high morality in the world long before the Israelites learned to spell their names that it does not surprise us that they, living between the two great civilizations, at last get a tincture of civilization. We are more concerned with the Hebrew literature which appears in the properly historical period, and most concerned with Hebrew ideas just before and at the time of Jesus.

It is supposed that a migration from Arabia in the third millennium before Christ took the Canaanites and Phœnicians to Palestine, where they displaced the ruder peoples and founded a fair civilization.¹ About the year 1300 B.C. a second invasion, from Mesopotamia, brought the Ammonites,

¹ For the earlier period I would recommend to the English reader Professor Fowler's *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel* (1912) and Professor Budde's *Religion of Israel to the Exile* (1899), and for the later period Dr. Cheyne's *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile* (1898). For a more critical view, by a layman, see Dujardin's *Sources of the Christian Tradition* (1911).

Moabites, Edomites, Israelites, etc., to the frontiers of this civilization. Edom and Moab settled beyond the Jordan; the others scattered over the rough country to the south of Palestine, as far as the borders of Egypt. If we suppose that one or two tribes of the Israelites entered the outlying Egyptian pasture-lands in the Delta (as nomads seem to have done at times), and were compelled to do work for the Egyptians (as was usual enough), we allow for the deep-rooted Hebrew tradition of a sojourn in Egypt; and such traditions are apt to preserve a real memory. If we suppose—we have no evidence whatever—that they escaped to the desert, joined other tribes there, and formed the Hebrew people, we have again a plausible explanation of their tradition. It is equally plausible that from the Midianites, who entered the alliance, Jahveh, the mountain-god of Horeb or Sinai, was adopted by the whole band of marauders; and, under his leadership, they fell on Moab and Edom, and entered Palestine some time before 1100 B.C., nearly a hundred years after leaving Egypt. Other deities were by no means entirely out of fashion, but the priests of Jahveh would plausibly attribute the successful journey and raid to Jahveh, and his place as national god would be strengthened.

We know from the Egyptian remains (especially those discovered at Tel el Amarna) that the Canaanites were a cultured people, and may assume that the Israelites began to learn letters. They were, however, mightier with the sword than the pen, and contrived to hold their little territory against

their neighbours, to the greater glory of Jahveh. If we may regard the song of Deborah (*Judges*, v) as one of the oldest fragments of the Old Testament, we have a vivid picture of the warring, the primitive ethic, and the fine primitive poetry of those early days. But the historical books are a wild medley of fiction and possible fact. All that linguistic scholars—for sober historians are silent—can gather is that the early Saul stories were probably written before 900 B.C., and the Saul-David stories soon afterwards; and that the southern Hebrews gathered their fragments and myths into a history of Israel before the end of the ninth century, and the northern Hebrews composed a different history in the first half of the eighth century. As far as we can dissect these documents from the later amalgamated and improved version which we have to-day, the ethic and intelligence are lower than those of the Goths and Vandals.

It is generally (though Dujardin and a few others differ) agreed that the prophetic literature, which inaugurates a better phase of Hebrew evolution, begins with Amos (about 750) and Hosea (about 740) in the eighth century. They quite bear out the general opinion that the "prophets" were a wild wandering band of enthusiasts, cursing the rich, invoking terrible vengeance on the enemies of Israel, and fanatically urging fidelity to the chief tribal god. Their conception of Jahveh is atrocious, and they reflect the savagery and polytheism of the time. But they begin the call to righteousness, justice, and concern for the oppressed. There is in

this no inspiration, no "genius for morality," and not even a borrowing from older civilizations. They are sons of the people; many to-day would call them "Socialist agitators." One of the finest moral inspirations, in all ages, is to be treated unjustly. You feel an ardour for justice, charity, and integrity which makes the peasant eloquent. And the angry references to "ivory houses" and "summer houses" and "white asses" in these books tell us that the division of classes has set in, and the spokesmen of the poor, the prophets, are imploring Jahveh to punish the rich and their bribed judges as savagely as he punishes all who are not Jews. The zeal for righteousness is born in Judæa. But, apart from the self-interested virtues, the ethic is still very primitive.

We learn plainly from Hosea that prophets were numerous in his time, and the idea of a few men being singled out in Judæa for inspiration is absurd. Comparing the customs of primitive races, we may assume that these nervous and fierce critics were little modified from the semi-barbaric days, and the rise of a wealthy priesthood, in alliance with the wealthy and oppressive landowners, made them more or less outcasts, depending on the charity of the poor. Several prosperous reigns in succession had made the rich richer, and, as often happens, the poor more conspicuously poor. There were corruption, oppression, ostentatious luxury, and harlotry in Zion. The priests were content if men offered, through them, the prescribed sacrifices. So the prophets denounced the priests and their sacrifices—

“I will have mercy, and not sacrifices”—the bribed judges, the pride and injustice of the wealthy, and the general worship of more genial gods and goddesses than Jahveh. They do not lay stress on purity as a fine grace of character; they are inflamed because “whoredom” and adultery are so rampant. It is the corruption of Judæa that explains their inspiration. But it is important to notice that it is chiefly the form of corruption which weighs heavily on the class they represent. We found a proper zeal for justice and mercy in Egypt and Babylonia. The significant difference is not that the Jewish moralists are more eloquent; it is that in Egypt and Babylonia it was the kings, governors, and priests (the middle or upper class) which taught justice and care of the destitute, whereas in Judæa it is the poor. The balance of virtue is really on the side of the former, and the greater eloquence of the latter is not unnatural.

Micah and Isaiah are the next of the prophets to be committed to parchment. No doubt there was a long tradition of the use of this ruggedly poetical speech among the wandering prophets, but culture was now spreading and the finer utterances were written down. Micah and Isaiah, writing about 720 and later, have the same fierce denunciation of the sins of the rich, the general looseness of morals, and the widespread idolatry. Jahveh will not tolerate this sort of thing long, they say in their grand language. There is going to be a chastisement such as one might expect of an oriental potentate, and then a golden age for the poor. The poor are, it

seems, morally not much better than the rich, with their gross superstitions and ways, but they may repent; Jahveh "retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy," and "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." That is to say, the sins of "the remnant of his people," the poor oppressed proletariat; the others shall see their children dashed to the ground, their wives "ripped open," and so on.

When the shadow of the Assyrian falls on the land, Isaiah returns to his grim prophecies, with more pointed language. The fierce exultation over the fall or impending fall of Babylon, in the form of a prediction, in chapters xiii and xiv, is obviously a later interpolation, but otherwise the chant or dirge of Isaiah seems to be genuine as far as chapter xl. It is one prolonged and, in places, magnificently expressed threat of vengeance for sin; and the great sin is the unjust treatment of the poor. The most horrible treatment is promised to the rich. It is amazing how the middle class of modern England insists on its children being taught morality from such pages. To the student, of course, they are deeply interesting, from the ethical no less than the poetical point of view. They show us the growth of the Hebrew conception of righteousness in the plainest terms of natural development.

Then there is, after 680, a long silence, which suggests a grim slaughter of these hated agitators and triumph of their opponents. With Josiah, in 625, the prophets reappear, and the priests foist *Deuteronomy* on the nation. Zephaniah and

Jeremiah renew the fiery warnings, and the fall of Nineveh calls out the savage exultation of Nahum; it is a fresh reminder of the power and terror of Jahveh. Still Judæa trembles between the power of Egypt and the might of Babylon, and men know that the heavy hand of Jahveh, which the prophets promise, is a practical political contingency. The policy of the leaders fails, and in 597 Jerusalem falls before the Babylonians. In a few years they refuse the prescribed tribute, and the most appalling disaster falls on the people. Death and ruin brood over the land; Zion is a mockery. Many fly to Egypt, and, it is thought, about 50,000 are carried off to Babylon.

One can imagine the dour triumph of the prophets, the facile "We told you so," amid this desolation. Every horrible threat of Amos and Hosea and Isaiah and Jeremiah had been realized; and it was the easiest thing in the world for an oriental people to gather the further conclusion that this disaster had come because of unrighteousness and idolatry. It was the second mighty lesson of the Hebrews in ethics and monotheism. In their hands was a history showing how Jahveh had wrought wonderful things for their fathers, under a covenant; in their hands, too, were the vivid assurances of the prophets that they were breaking the covenant and would be punished. Something less than an oriental imagination, much less a prophetic imagination, could draw the moral. So Ezekiel and Haggai press it, and, while the transported Jews brood over their scrolls by the

rivers of Babylon and chant their sorrows, a great unknown poet adds fresh chapters to the prophecy of Isaiah.

The second Isaiah, as he is misleadingly called, or the anonymous continuer of *Isaiah*, seems to have written nine chapters (xl–xlviii) a few years before the fall of Babylon, when Cyrus was advancing at the head of the Persians. It is the beginning of the vindication of Jahveh; he moves the armies of the world to deliver Judæa. "The fury of his anger," which was quite just, is over. Now the blind shall see, and the deaf hear, and the lame walk—there will be a general amnesty for offenders, and a chance to recover grace. God is the God of pity, mercy, tenderness, concern for the down-trodden. The sentiments are relative; it is tenderness after righteous anger, and a tenderness for Israel only. But a later age will forget the historical setting, the relative application, and make Jahveh and his prophet the teachers of mercy and gentleness to the whole world. The time came, of course, when men conceived "Isaiah" as foreseeing Jesus of Nazareth literally healing the blind and deaf; but we are beyond that stage. The important point is that Jahveh is recovering, or even showing in vaster form, his power, and is becoming a tender, comforting father. There is still no question of a reward beyond the grave. The Jew knows nothing of it, or looks upon the future like the Chaldæan, as a misty and repulsive region. Mercy and generosity on this earth are to be the signs of the restoration to favour.

Babylon falls, but the prophetic message has not a great effect. The survivors in Judæa are stupefied, weary, overworked, and they hardly listen to the summons of Haggai and Ezekiel and Malachi. More chapters (xlix-lv) of *Isaiah* are written, apparently in Babylon, and the Persians permit the Jews to return. A few zealots do so, but the vast majority are too comfortable in Babylon under the rule of Persia. The inhabitants of Judæa fall into their old ways. The rich rob and despise the poor, and all classes run after the gods and goddesses who prove such formidable rivals to Jahveh. The "holy one of Israel," the "servant of Jahveh," is still an outcast, preaching a beneficent virtue and repentance to his oppressors, binding the cult of righteousness more and more firmly to the cult of Jahveh. We must not be misled by the translation of such terms in the English Bible. Down to its last revision the editors have not scrupled to improve and omit, when a word or a phrase did not edify sufficiently. The "holy one" of Israel does not mean a saint on the Christian model; "righteousness" is not what St. Augustine or Emerson would mean by that word; and even "justice" is a narrower thing than our ideal. Still, the Hebrew conception advances. God is a god of mercy, justice, tenderness for the destitute, and he presses these virtues above others. It was a lucky accident for Judæa that its moralists were democrats, as well as poets. If this seems cynical, reflect on this unknown poet saying, with deliberate mendacity, that *he* wrote the early chapter of *Isaiah* (xlvi),

3-5); on the pious trickery of the Esdras school; and on the appalling sentiments of some of the psalms, which begin to be written about this time.

By the beginning of the fifth century before Christ this ethical and monotheistic conception of Jahveh was familiar in the most treasured literature of the Jews, and, as is now well known, a group of priestly writers associated with Esdras recast the whole Hebrew history in accordance with it; forging what is known to scholars as the Priestly Code, and correcting the earlier historical books. Modern writers resent the term "forgery" in connection with the Hebrew and Christian sacred books which appear constantly, under borrowed names, after the sixth century. They protest that writers of those ages thought it quite justifiable to act thus. They rarely notice the matter from the point of view of the reader of those times. He was deliberately deceived in every case, and the world has lain under the deception until modern times. The Esdras compilation, in particular, was—as it is conceived by modern divines—a deliberate and gigantic deception, still deluding tens of millions of Jews and Christians.

But this reconstruction of the Hebrew books does not so much concern us. We have merely to remember that it put even into *Deuteronomy* sentiments which were unknown in the days to which the legends of the book refer. When we afterwards find parallels to the New Testament in the Pentateuch, this fifth-century revision must be borne in

mind. I am concerned with works which clearly reflect the moral temper of particular ages.

Corruption had begotten a zeal for righteousness, and injustice a zeal for justice. Jahveh was to punish the evil, but he punished the good just as severely; and even after the fall of Babylon the "humble ones" were no better off, and fresh calamities threatened. The plea of the prophet for Jahveh becomes difficult again, and he begins to suggest (in the later part of *Isaiah* and interpolated passages) that the Jews must be scattered in order to convert the unbelieving dogs, and Jahveh will in the end recall and glorify his people. The idea of the Messiah, the anointed envoy of Jahveh, and of the final kingdom is growing. It is natural to suspect Persian influence, but there is as yet none of the intense spirituality of Persia, or the belief in immortality. From that time onward, however, foreign influence—at first Persian, then Greek—is noticeable. In *Ruth* and *Jonah* we have a liberal spirit protesting against the narrow nationalism which the followers of Esdras have imposed; in *Job* (latter part of the fourth century) a very free treatment of the problem of evil on heterodox lines. The Psalms, or the hymns composed for congregational singing from the sixth century to the second, reflect every shade of feeling during that long period of trial and religious development.

When the Greeks in turn conquered Judæa (332 B.C.), and Jahveh was still silent, the Jews underwent their last development. Messiahism,

the expectation that Jahveh would send a prince to restore them, became the generally-accepted interpretation of the prophetic promises. It was also generally accepted that the coming of the Messiah must be merited by righteous conduct, or the observance of Jahveh's law. But the increased scattering of the Jews over the Mediterranean and Egypt, the isolation of so many from the temple and its narrow creed, the contact with more learned and powerful civilizations, induced a measure of scepticism. Someone in the third century wrote *Ecclesiastes*, and, with a few orthodox and contradictory interpolations, that genial manual of scepticism entered the canon. *Proverbs* seems to be a compilation of similar papers, and *Ecclesiasticus* (which is in the Roman Catholic Bible) appeared in the second century. Even that beautiful and extremely sensuous poem, or collection of bridal poems, *The Song of Solomon*, which so incongruously precedes *Isaiah* in the English Bible, must have had powerful admirers, who persuaded the more orthodox that it was an allegory of the embraces of God and Israel. Christian divines read into its language, which outglows the "Songs and Ballads" of Swinburne, the marriage of Christ and his Church; others think that the lady described was Mary, the mother of Christ; but the minute description is disturbing to the monk who chants the rich verses.

Against this tendency to infidelity the Pharisees set their lips. The coming of the Messiah was to be hastened by the strict observance of the Mosaic

law and the moral law. *Daniel* is a forgery, in this sense, of the second century. We shall see later that the Pharisees, the backbone of the nation, are calumniated in the Gospels. They by no means obscured or slighted moral culture in their zeal to interpret the fabrications of the Ezraists. They were the most consistent and unadulterated of the Jews. The covenant with Jahveh was that they should observe the law, and it was important to determine it accurately. That they wasted much good effort and discovered many absurdities may be granted; medieval theologians did just the same with the New Testament. But their teachers continued to develop the ethical message of the prophets, and at the very time when Christ is supposed to have been pitting his humane teaching against their arid ceremonialism we find that they were saying precisely those things, in precisely the same form (parable), which we are asked to take as the wonderful inventions of Jesus.

In order to prepare the reader for the parallel which I will afterwards draw up in this regard, I must describe the later Jewish development and the origin of the Talmud.¹ The Ezraist "reform" was, as I said, followed by a division into zealots for the law and critics. These schools are most familiar to us in the later Pharisees and Sadducees, and for a long time the Sadducees united with the Samaritans in plaguing the zealots. But with the

¹ The best account in English is probably M. L. Rodkinson's *History of the Talmud* (1903), though it sadly lacks order and attractiveness.

conquest of Samaria (129 B.C.) the Sadducees lost their allies, and the Pharisees controlled the schools. The Scribes, or members of the Great Assembly instituted by Ezra, had been the chief transmitters of tradition until the second century, when the Sanhedrim was set up and its president and vice-president became the chief teachers. From that time there was a great development of schools. The Jews in Babylonia, especially, and in Egypt had schools for the study of the law; but the chief school was that at Jerusalem, to which students came from all regions. In the last decade of the Old Era, when the antagonistic doctrines of Hillel and Shamai divided the school into a more lenient and a more rigorous body of interpreters, the ordained teachers began to be entitled Rabbi.

By this time the incessant disputes of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (a more austere and semi-monastic body, to which I will return presently) and the sedulous activity of the schools had produced an enormous volume of traditional learning. The stricter Pharisees believed that Moses had transmitted a large body of teaching which was not included even in the Ezraist compilation. There had, at all events, been a vast growth of commentaries on the law, and this supplementary matter, known as the Mishna ("repetition," or teaching), was the theme of the schools, and was regarded as sacred and authoritative. As the canon of the sacred writings was rigorously closed, it was forbidden to commit the later teaching to parchment. There is proof in Jewish writers of the

time that some teachers did assist their memories by having written notes as early as the first century before Christ; but there was a strong and general feeling that the tradition must remain oral. The method is obviously dangerous, and we detect many historical inaccuracies in the Mishna when it is eventually written. But we have ample proof in many ages of the extraordinary power of memory when it is thus exercised; and the plurality of schools, the constant intercourse between them (even between Palestine and Babylonia), and the sacred character with which the Mishna was invested, enable us to regard it with a large measure of confidence.

This was the situation when, we believe, Jesus began his public career. The schools of Shamai and Hillel still wrangled over liberal and rigorous interpretations; the Sadducees made light of the new growth of laws and the new doctrine of immortality; the white-robed austere Essenes moved from city to city, exhorting men to purity and sobriety of life, and frowning on the animal sacrifices at the Temple. The Gospels, which are so little Jewish that they have to explain Jewish (or Aramaic) words and Jewish customs to their readers, faithfully reflect the zeal for the law of the Pharisees, but represent Jesus as holding dialogues with them that are at times ludicrously impossible. The Essenes and their lofty standard of morals they entirely ignore. As a result, Jesus is depicted as bringing a new, more tender, and more human spirit into a world that is swathed in ceremonial observances and content with

the letter of a ritual law. This is entirely inaccurate, and we have to see what knowledge we gain from other sources of the living morality of Judæa at the time.

The few years of Christ's activity left, as the Gospels show, no trace on the life of the one land to which he conceived his mission to be addressed. A small "Christian" community was formed at Jerusalem, though it observed the law and regarded Paul with aversion; but the life of Judæa generally flowed on in entire indifference to the memory of the man who is said to have awakened its dead and fed thousands of people on a few loaves. No distinguished moralist who is known to history ever failed so completely in his aim. Why Christianity spread with some success in the Greek and Roman world beyond does not concern us in this work. One need only remark that other oriental cults were equally successful until Christianity won imperial favour and used it to repress and persecute its rivals.

In the year 70 A.D. Titus took Jerusalem and scattered Judaism over the earth. The rabbinical school was permitted to open its doors again at Jabneh, in Palestine; and the succession of oral tradition was preserved by the most heroic efforts during the incessant disasters of the next few generations. When Jabneh was closed, schools sprang up in more obscure parts of Syria and Palestine, and the Babylonian school flourished in peace. The whole line of Rabbis from Hillel to Jehuda the Nasi, in the third century, is enumerated by Rodkinson. But the scattering of the Jews, the

growth of tradition, and—it is said—the efforts of Christians to adulterate it, convinced the Rabbis of the need to codify or systematize the Mishna. The work was begun by the learned Rabbi Akiba, in the time of Hadrian, continued by his pupil R. Meir, and brought to a successful conclusion, about the year 220, by Jehuda the Nasi. The Mishna was not yet written, though it was systematically arranged and virtually closed. Learned teachers in Palestine and Babylon then began to comment on the Mishna, and this body of commentation became known as the Gemara.

The Talmud is the combination of the Mishna and Gemara. As the Gemara was distinct in Palestine and Babylonia, each country has its Talmud. The Babylonian is the larger, and the one usually quoted as “the Talmud,” though the Palestinian (or Jerusalem Talmud, as it is inaccurately called), is said to be more reliable, and is more sober. The Palestinian Talmud was committed to writing in the fourth century; the Babylonian about the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth.

But, as the Mishna will chiefly be quoted in our later parallels, we are not concerned with the work done after the third century. The only question of importance, in fact, is how far we may regard the Mishna as a faithful reproduction of the teaching of the Rabbis at or before the time of Christ. In view of the plurality of schools, the constant intercourse between them, and the rigorous custom of learning only from accredited teachers, we can have little

hesitation in regarding the substantial teaching and the more remarkable aphorisms of the Rabbis as faithfully preserved. The fact that the tradition was oral is not without advantages. The copying of manuscripts in old times led (as in the case of the New Testament) to an enormous amount of inaccuracy, interpolation, and alteration. A man could, as the Gospels of Matthew and Mark clearly show, take one or more existing manuscripts and blend or enlarge them with impunity. It is difficult to conceive this in the case of traditions that are jealously guarded in schools, where each pupil's success is measured solely by the accuracy of his memory, and where no new teacher is installed until he gives proof to the older men of a most accurate knowledge of the whole tradition. Inaccuracies in matters of fact will enter when a Rabbi speaks from memory of a remote experience or saying of his own teacher or friends; but it cannot be reasonably doubted that the general picture of rabbinical life and the characters of individual eminent Rabbis are faithfully preserved. I need only add that Jehuda the Nasi, before completing the Mishna, wandered for years from school to school in his efforts to secure a perfectly accurate tradition, and that R. Ashe, with ten secretaries and a crowd of pupils, spent thirty years in a similar task before writing the Babylonian Talmud.

I will describe later the division of the Talmud, and consider the specific suggestion that the rabbinical schools might (in the century of bitter strife between Jew and Christian!) have borrowed

Christian phrases and imputed them to their own teachers. For the moment it suffices to indicate how zealously the teaching of the Rabbis was preserved, and give a general idea of its nature.

The Talmud is apt to repel the modern reader by its endless pages of trivialities, hair-splitting over dead laws, and its occasional absurdities. It does not correspond to the Gospels; it must be compared with the medieval commentators on the Gospels. Like the Schoolmen, the Rabbis were confined to speculating on a written code, and wasted their time on what are to us absurdities. Comparatively, the New Testament has the freshness of revolt, of personal expression, of emancipation from an oppressive code of laws. But the common notion that there is in the Gospels a higher or different morality than that of the Rabbis is merely founded on ignorance. Jewish writers have for a hundred years disproved this notion, but hardly a single divine or preacher who talks about the unique teaching of Jesus will trouble to learn, in the Talmud, what the Jewish moralists of the time really taught. The overwhelming majority of Christians are under the impression that the parable was a charming invention of Jesus for the purpose of conveying instruction to the common people, whom the Rabbis ignored. They do not even reflect when the oldest Gospel (*Mark*) represents Jesus as choosing the form of parable precisely to hide his meaning from the common folk and reserve it to the disciples. They are quite unaware that, as any Jew could tell them, the parable was a familiar

vehicle of instruction of the Rabbis, and that many of the chief Gospel parables, and scores of others, are found in the Talmud.

I will devote a chapter later to this interesting point. Here it is enough to premise that there is not a moral or humane sentiment in the Gospels which was not familiar to the Rabbis and their pupils. Love of neighbours, and even love of enemies; tenderness to children and help of the helpless; purity of thought and intention as well as of conduct; respect for parents and humanity to all; the golden rule; even the counsel to turn the other cheek to the smiter—all are familiar elements of the rabbinical exhortation. The description of the Jewish teachers in the Gospels is false in spirit and detail. One does not need to be a Jew to recognize this. For my part, I admire the Christian rebellion against the Mosaic legalism and sacrifices. It was not the fault of Christ or the early Christians that this rebellion itself soon became the base of a towering structure of ritual and superstition and law in comparison with which the Jewish religion is almost a graceful simplicity. In its inception Christianity was a great improvement and purification of religion. But on the moral side it was a mere continuation of the development which we have found beginning in the early prophets, broadening in the later prophets and wisdom-writers, and faithfully elaborated by the Scribes and Pharisees of the first century of the Christian Era.

There is, however, a last and most significant development of the prophetic morality to be noted,

The sect or school of the Essenes (or Essæans) first enters Jewish history in the time of the Maccabean wars, but its real antiquity is unknown. It is either an early offshoot from the Pharisees, or a separate development from the earlier "Pietists." There are, moreover, distinct traces of Persian, if not Babylonian, influence in it, and even Greek and Buddhistic influence is suspected by many scholars. The Essenes never took oaths—in which, however, in spite of the Gospels, they did not differ from the Pharisees—never offered animals for sacrifice at the Temple (though otherwise they insisted on the Mosaic law), had a very firm and definite belief in reward and punishment after death, and advocated baptism, or bathing, for the purpose of cleansing from sin. The influence of Persia is clear in the points on which the Essene coincides with the Christian teaching, but there is no need here to attempt to trace all the sources of their tenets. We need only consider how they lived, and what they taught, in the time of Christ.

The Jewish writer Philo refers to them in his work *That Every Good Man is Free*, fragments of which are preserved in Eusebius. A fuller account is given by the historian Josephus, both in his *Antiquity of the Jews* and *History of the Jewish War*. Josephus was born at Jerusalem in the year 37 A.D., and seems in his youth to have joined the Essenes and left them to join the Pharisees. I condense the lengthy account of them which will be found in his *Jewish War*, bk. ii, ch. viii, §§ 2-14 (Whiston's edition):—

These Essenians reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence and the conquest over our passions to be virtue. They neglect wedlock.....They do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage and the succession of mankind thereby continued.....These men are despisers of riches, nor is there one to be found among them who hath more than another.They have no one certain city, but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own.....For which reason they carry nothing at all with them when they travel into remote parts, though they have weapons with them for fear of thieves. [Philo denies that they bear weapons.].....Nor do they allow of the change of garments or of shoes till they be first entirely torn to pieces, or worn out by time. Nor do they either buy or sell anything to one another, but every one of them gives what he hath to him who wanteth it..... [There follows a long description of their common frugal meals, their frequent bathings, and their daily labours and prayers.] Only these two things are done among them at everyone's own free will, which are to assist those that want and to show mercy.....They are eminent for fidelity, and are the ministers of peace; whatsoever they say is firmer than an oath, but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury..... [Follows an account of the two years' noviceship, then baptism; and then, after two years' further trial, the neophyte is initiated.] And before he is allowed to touch their common food he is obliged to take tremendous oaths; that, in the first place, he will exercise piety towards God; and then that he will observe justice towards men; and that he will do no harm to anyone, either of his own accord or by the command of others; that he will always hate the wicked and assist the righteous; that he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority, because no one

obtains the government without God's assistance; and that, if he be in authority, he will at no time whatever abuse his authority, nor endeavour to outshine his subjects, either in his garments or in any other finery; that he will be perpetually a lover of truth, and propose to himself to reprove those that tell lies; that he will keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains.

To this graphic and authentic account—remember that Josephus knew them well in Judæa before the year 70 A.D., and that the Pharisees to whom he belonged were unfriendly to them—little need be added from the other sources. The Christian writer Hippolytus says (in his *Refutation of all Heresies*, ix, 18) that in their journeys “they possess neither two cloaks nor two pairs of shoes.” Eusebius adds that a steward bought the winter cloaks and the summer mantles, and the frugal food, from their common fund, and each chose what he needed. All agree that they were, as Josephus says, “the most virtuous men on earth.” In the Roman war they endured torture heroically rather than betray secrets, yet they were by no means Stoic recluses. The idea that they lived in a secluded part of Judæa is taken from a very much disputed work (*On the Happy Life*, ascribed to Philo, but regarded by many authorities as a description of a later Christian community); both Josephus and Eusebius describe them as living among the rest of the Jews, hastening to the relief of all misery that came to their knowledge, and exhorting men to repentance and virtue, after cleansing themselves of sin in pure streams. They numbered about 4,000 before the fall of Jerusalem.

Most of them spent the day in cultivating their fields, but they travelled much, in white garments which were often worn to rags, and without money. In the various towns they had houses at which the travellers entered the common life, and from which they dispensed mercy. Love of God, love of man, and love of virtue were their first principles. Their name signifies "the modest" or "lowly," and no monastic order was ever so consistent. They were the first community of the world to abolish slavery and condemn war, and their aversion from pleasure and sexual intercourse was such that they forbade marriage and recruited their fraternity from the families of the ordinary Jews.

The derivation of this singular body is an interesting historical problem. Jewish writers claim that they were merely the extreme wing of the Pharisees; but the Pharisee regarded the Essene as "a fool who would destroy the world," and some of their doctrines point clearly to Persia and, perhaps, Greece. They believed that their austere virtue would induce God to hasten the coming of the Messiah and the final restoration; but they believed, also, in the pre-existence of souls in ether, and that the souls of the just would pass beyond the ocean to something like the Blessed Islands of the Greek.

Their relation to Christianity is a much more interesting problem. The New Testament is wholly silent about them; though from this I would gather only that the writers of the Gospels knew little about Judæa (as they often prove), and nothing about the Essenes, who were almost annihilated

after the disasters of the Roman War. John the Baptist, on the other hand, seems to have been an Essene, and it may be that "the followers of John" are the Essenes, or a branch of them; and the Epistle of James is now described by many writers as an Essene document. Indeed, there could not be a more impressive illustration of the similarity between Essene and Judæo-Christian faith than the fact that this Epistle is in perfect harmony with the principles of both. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (i, 27). So taught the Essenes; and they, too, healed the sick, and were said to work miracles in virtue of the Holy Name.

It was therefore suggested long ago, by De Quincey, that the first Christians were identical with the Essenes, and it is possible that at least Christ borrowed much of his teaching from that sect. Where was Jesus between the years when he is described as a carpenter in Nazareth and the year of his baptism? It is tempting to imagine that he was among the Essenes. Like them, he is baptized in the living stream; like them, he wanders over the country helping the afflicted and exhorting to virtue; like them, he refuses marriage and pleasure; like them, he gathers disciples and enjoins them not to take two coats on their journey; like them, he anticipates the speedy coming of the Persian "kingdom," in which he will drink wine with his apostles; like them, he teaches rigorous chastity, meekness,

austerity, brotherly love, the avoidance of oaths, voluntary poverty, prayer instead of sacrifice, and the eternal punishment of the wicked. Is it either reason or scholarship to demand genius, originality, or inspiration in Jesus for things which any Essene house could have taught him, when we know that such houses and such teachers were all over Judæa? On a few other points he differs from the Essenes; but the very broad agreement has not been sufficiently appreciated.

But this identification is not necessary for my purpose. I have merely to meet the claim that the teaching of the Gospels is in advance of the morality of the age. Evidently, it is not. The ethical germs which sprout in the earliest prophecies have grown, naturally, into Essene ideas and rabbinical parables. To them is added the moral culture of Babylonia, Persia, and Egypt, in their last stage. Syria and Asia Minor have become a cosmopolitan deposit of the older cultures, and new religions—intensely spiritual, ethical, and penitential—spring up on every side. The sentiments of the Gospels are known all over the East. But we have yet to see how Greece, which succeeds Persia in the lordship of the East, adds its ethical contribution, and how Rome accepts the brotherhood of man and the Greek ethic and Eastern religions which inculcate it.

CHAPTER V

GREEK MORALISTS

THE substantial task which I have before me is to compare the moral teaching of the Gospels with the moral teaching of earlier religions or thinkers. I have not set out to prove that there is no feature of the Christian ethic which is not shared by other moral systems, nor is it my primary intention to detect that the morality of the Gospels has all been borrowed. These conclusions may or may not be forced on us when my work is done. But my chief and direct aim is to examine the contention of the overwhelming majority of Christians, learned and unlearned, that the Gospels present a moral message so distinctive and superior that a genius for morality, at least, must be admitted in their founder and a great service to men in the establishment of their Church.

We have already seen that the notion of a flood of moral light entering a dark world when Christ opened his lips on the hills of Galilee is only possible to those who make comparisons after having studied only one term of the comparison; and their name is legion. No one who believes that the life of mankind is a progressive advance in ideas and ideals will be so stupid as to expect equal wisdom before Christ and after Christ. The difference is not that Christ

appeared; it is that man, in the New Era, is so many thousand years older, and may be presumed to be some degrees wiser. If history has its lessons, the longer the stretch of history on which you look back, the wiser you should be; nor can the decay and crash of the older civilizations be without a moral for the new. Therefore one will expect the moral code of two thousand years ago to be superior to the code of three or four thousand years ago, and inferior to that of to-day. Hence, especially, in that stirring time from about 600 B.C. to the beginning of the present era, when ancient empires fall with successive reverberations and scatter their seed over vigorous new soil, each later culture should improve on its predecessor. This plain law is, of course, modified by local circumstances; one thousand years ago, for instance, civilization was far lower than it had been two or three or four thousand years ago. But it is a general law, and it seems to be lost sight of by the many who proclaim it a miracle if Christianity improves on Judaism, and Judaism on Babylonia and Egypt. The serious student quite expects growth from period to period; he is merely concerned to trace its natural course.

But let me repeat that I am here making a relative, not an absolute, study of moral development. I am studying moral cultures from the point of view of their approach to Christianity, not from the point of view of what seems to me their absolute value. The genuine Christian way of conceiving moral life seems to me a perverse way, in many respects, which the world is discarding. But as we are studying the supposed

distinctiveness, not the correctness, of the Christian ethic, I confine myself to the historical view. We saw that ages before Christ men and women regarded impurity of act and of thought, injustice to the poor and helpless, inhumanity, cruelty, lying, etc., as "sin," which provoked the anger of the gods; and they prostrated themselves before the gods with cries of remorse and penitence. We saw how in the two great branches of early Aryan civilization—India and Persia—the moral ideal was still further refined, and how the circumstances of the moralists of Judæa brought about a special cultivation of mercy, brotherliness, and asceticism. But the later Jewish idealism was touched by Greek as well as Persian thought, and the next task is to glance at the development of morality in Greece.

The older empires had, when they expanded, been forced by geographical conditions to move northward and westward. Hence the early cultivation of Canaan, where the Hebrews learned letters. Still further north there was a Hittite civilization, and we find the light slowly spreading over Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean until, about 2500 B.C., the Greek islands had a civilization, and a thousand years later it reached the mainland. These early Greek civilizations were, of course, not mere reflections of Egypt or Babylonia; the impulse had led to a native development. Between 1500 and 1000 B.C. the Hellenic branch of the Aryans descended into the Greek peninsula and destroyed the older cultures. As they settled, however, and spread over the coast of Asia Minor, and encountered

Egyptian and Phœnician traders, they in turn were stimulated, and the historic civilization of the Greek cities began.

Again, we have no need to trace the early ethical evolution, as it is reflected in Homer and Hesiod. It is the higher stages reached before the time of Christ which interest us. As is well known, the civilization of Greece was distinguished by the rise of a body of thinkers or philosophers apart from the priests, and, although at first they seem to have speculated chiefly on natural philosophy, it was not long before ethics became the absorbing object of their study. In the system of Pythagoras (sixth century) we have a very mystical, spiritualistic, and ascetic morality. No writing of Pythagoras has been preserved, but his views had a deep influence on later Greek, if not Hebrew, thought; and the general outlines of them, of which we can be sure, suggest a standard of life approaching the Christian or the Essene. There seems to have been a strong religious revival in the Greek world during the sixth century, possibly due to the rise to power of the uneducated democracy over the cultured aristocracy of the cities, and it is reflected and refined in the Pythagorean system. Pythagoras at least held an intense belief in the spirituality and immortality of the soul, the duty of man to struggle with the light and the good against darkness and evil, and the ideal of retiring from the world into austere communities for the greater cultivation of virtue.

A century later the moral idealism of Greece culminated in the teaching of Socrates (469-399);

but, as we know his views or tendencies only from the works of his pupil Plato, it will suffice to refer to Plato's writings. The calm, dignified manner in which Socrates met the death to which he was condemned by religious bigots has prompted an occasional comparison with Jesus of Nazareth, but the comparison is strained. Between a supremely cultivated, intensely intellectual, matter-of-fact Aryan and a mystic, emotional, unintellectual, Messianic Jew it is impossible to draw any parallel. Both taught a high standard of morality, and both—if the evidence be taken with equal generosity on both sides—refused to fly from their enemies and met the sentence of death with serene resignation. If we assign to Christ a more direct appeal to the masses (which, however, leaves no impression after three years) and a simpler and more eloquent address, we must grant Socrates a far more practical and searching treatment of living problems, and a most profound influence, through his immortal pupils, on later Greek, and ultimately European, thought. It is, however, the nature of the Athenian standard of conduct that concerns us, and this is easily gathered from the voluminous writings of Plato.

Plato (427-347) not only studied under Socrates, but he travelled in Egypt and conversed with the Pythagorean communities in Southern Italy. Of the altitude of the moral code which he came to embody in his teaching and writing it is superfluous to speak. The more cultivated of the early Christians regarded his works as an introduction to the Gospels,

and in all ages—except the Middle Age, when they were unknown to Europe—his dialogues have been part of the moral classics of thoughtful men and women. At a time when the Jews were beginning to entertain the doctrine of immortality as a promising novelty, curiously overlooked by Jahveh in his revelations to Moses, and were still restricting their new ethical monotheism somewhat barbarously to their own race, Plato taught the most refined theism the world has ever known, the most definite theory of the soul and its immortality, and a complete ethic of universal application. In language of singular beauty and simplicity, yet with profound philosophic insight, he first formulates a religious theory of life. Man is a spiritual being. His soul comes from a world apart from the material world, and is only for a time imprisoned in the fleshly body. In the spirit-world to which it belongs are the living sources of all truth, beauty, and goodness, and God is the infinite embodiment of them. By coercing the flesh and keeping the spirit untainted man must merit his return to the spirit-world.

But Plato does not dream of an isolation from the world and absorption in an egoistic zeal for virtue. The characteristic note which distinguishes the teaching of Christ (and of Zarathustra) from that of Plato and other eminent moralists is due to a circumstance which admiring writers singularly overlook. Whoever composed those passionate exhortations to virtue and repentance which we have in the Gospels—whether they be of Christ or are put together by some early Christian—

believed that the end of the world was near and the Persian "kingdom" was at hand. It was desperately important to prepare for the purgation or ordeal in the lake of fire. This explains a note of emotional intensity, and explains, too, why, when people found that the Gospels (or Christ) were mistaken, the Christian exhortation proved so ineffective in every age for the mass of men. Moralists like Plato breathed a different atmosphere. Human society was to go on indefinitely, and the morally minded man must pervade and capture it, and turn it to the good of the majority. Plato, in his *Republic*, covers the whole ground of social life, and, however unreliable he may be politically and economically, applies moral principle to every problem and institution. Three centuries before Christ he censured slavery, which neither Christ nor any other Christian discovered to be immoral until twelve centuries later; and he vindicated the equality of woman more than two thousand years before any Christian perceived it. These things are of more value, in the end, than lofty counsels to turn the other cheek to the smiter, which we admire only on condition that they be not adopted in our social life.

The dialogues of Plato are now so easily available in English translations that this description of his moral system hardly needs confirmation; but I will, as usual, add a few extracts from the originals (Jowett's translation) for the convenience of readers of little leisure:—

"I am not angry with my condemners, or with

my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them" (*Apology*, giving the last words of Socrates before execution, 41).

"We ought not to retaliate, or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him" (*Crito*, 49).

"Think not of life and of children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below" (*Crito*, 54).

"In this present life I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body, and are not surfeited with the bodily nature, but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us" (*Phædo*, 67).

"Wherefore I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul who, having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him and working harm rather than good, has sought after the pleasures of knowledge; and has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth—in these adorned she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her hour comes" (*Phædo*, 115).

"The divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and the like; and by these the wing of the soul is nourished and grows apace" (*Phædrus*, 246).

"The followers of Zeus desire that their beloved should have a soul like him" (*Phædrus*, 252).

"To do injustice is more to be avoided than to suffer injustice" (*Gorgias*, 527).

"There are two patterns eternally set before men: the one blessed and divine, the other godless and wretched; but they do not see them, or perceive that in their utter folly and infatuation they are growing like the one and unlike the other, by reason of their evil deeds; and the penalty is that they

lead a life answering to the pattern that they are growing like. And if we tell them that, unless they depart from their cunning, the place of innocence will not receive them after death, and that here on earth they will live ever in the likeness of their own selves, and with evil friends—when they hear this they, in their superior cunning, will seem to be listening to the talk of idiots" (*Theætetus*, 171).

"God is never in any way unrighteous—he is perfect righteousness: and he of us who is the most righteous is most like him" (*Theætetus*, 176).

"Virtue is the health and beauty and well-being of the soul, and vice the disease and weakness and deformity of the same" (*Republic*, 444).

"These principles will comprehend all those corrupt natures whom we call inferior to themselves, and who form but one class, and will compel them not to transgress. The principle of piety, the love of honour, and the desire of beauty, not in the body, but in the soul. These are, perhaps, romantic aspirations; but they are the noblest of aspirations" (*Laws*, viii, 842).

"Communion and friendship and temperance and justice bind together heaven and earth and gods and men" (*Gorgias*, 508).

When we pass from Plato to Aristotle, we seem to leave an atmosphere of poetry, of romance (as Plato says), and of warm human exhortation for one of cold and arid metaphysic. In point of fact, as Mr. A. W. Benn observes (in his *History of Ancient Philosophy*, p. 79), Aristotle "had no small poetic talent," and, if his dialogues had been preserved as well as his more severe philosophical works, we might have a different impression of him. As it is, however, his intellectual analysis of ethical principles has a use as distinct and great as that of

popular exhortations to virtue. Against the moral sceptics of Greece he (in the *Nicomachean Ethics*) elaborates a massive and severe code of conduct. He slights Plato's poetical conception of the imprisoned soul beating against the bars of the body, and dispenses with religious motives; though he has supplied "proofs" of the existence of God on which Christian philosophy thrives to this day, and it is notable that he finds in "love" the all-embracing power by which God moves the world. To him a moral standard of conduct is an essential human requirement, without any regard to religious ideas. Man is a social being, and for our collective welfare or (in the broadest sense) happiness in this world we need to observe moral law. Pleasure, to which he is philosophically indifferent, is not the end of life, though it rewards or accompanies a sound activity; sober, intellectual, and disciplined life is the ideal life.

Aristotle's code of conduct is, therefore, just the same as that of any philosophical moralist of our own time. Indeed, no person is likely to be unaware to-day that an educated Athenian of the fourth century before Christ had the same standard of conduct as we have to-day. Virtue was the golden mean between excesses; temperance, for instance, the mean between early Jewish passion and later Christian asceticism. Gentleness, magnanimity, justice, liberality, and every other familiar virtue enter Aristotle's scheme. On friendship he enlarges with quite a human glow, devoting a fifth of his work to its recommendation. In short,

Aristotle is the complete philosophical moralist three centuries before Christ; and it is worthy of reflection that, when the intensely Christian poet Dante came to classify sinners in his *Inferno*, he followed Aristotle in preference to the Christian moralists.

A moral system is very largely an expression of an individual temperament, in spite of the claim that it applies to all. We may, therefore, notice two other conceptions of the Greek moralists which had their share in shaping the life of Athens. Religious scepticism was as prevalent in Athens as in any other high civilization, and the Platonic system was impossible to many on account of its religious foundations, while the severely logical form of Aristotle's ethics confined it to a narrow circle. To meet the scepticism which succeeded the Socratic thinkers, therefore, two new schools arose—the Stoic and the Epicurean.

On the Stoic I will not enlarge here. Its founder, Zeno (336–264), almost raised the universal nature of which man forms a part to the position of a divinity, and laid supreme stress on “natural law.” Since, then, the clearest and highest “law” of nature was the moral law, it was the first duty of man to obey it without ulterior consideration. The Stoics did not condemn belief in gods—possibly because it was a dangerous practice in ancient Greece—but removed them from all practical relation to man. In the human mind was a high standard of conduct, and it commanded allegiance by its own majesty. This system would

seem too academic and uninspiring for practical life; but we shall see in the next chapter that in the Roman world it inspired one of the finest moral and philanthropical movements, and some of the greatest ethical teachers, which the world has known until modern times.

Lastly, of this line of distinguished moralists Epicurus merits a more precise definition. Christian moralists have so calumniated this able and genial teacher that Epicureanism has, in modern literature, become almost synonymous with immorality. He is vaguely conceived as "the apostle of pleasure," and is therefore understood to be the patron of the sensual orgies in which certain types of wealthy men have indulged from those days to ours. This is a grotesque misrepresentation of a particularly sober moralist. We have not the writings of Epicurus, and cannot reproduce his words; but later writers, like Diogenes Laertius and the Latin Epicurean poet Lucretius, enable us to correct this libel. Epicurus gave a subordinate and reasonable position to pleasure of the senses. He almost escaped that ascetic disdain of sense-pleasure which enfeebles nearly every other system of morality; but the pleasure he advocated was the charm of study, of conversation with cultured friends, of genial comradeship. For physics and metaphysics he had little commendation, and political life he disdained. His ideal was his life. In his garden on the outskirts of Athens he welcomed men and women of fine nature to converse with him, not over cups of wine and rich banquets, not on rose-

strewn couches and with Syrian dancing-girls, but over the simple cakes and water which he regarded as the ideal diet. It is a pity that his numerous works are lost. The little we know embodies only a sober and admirable ideal for men of leisure and culture, who abounded at Athens. It is possible that in his works he took a broader view of life. His principle, at all events, is the principle to which we are returning after dallying for two thousand years with futile theologies and aristocratic systems of philosophy.

Before I proceed to describe the sentiments of later philosophers, however, it is necessary to take a more general view of Greek life and morals. It is often objected that the discovery of a few fine moral passages in the select works of the philosophers of any nation may be quite consistent with a general moral depravity and need of a "redeemer." Now, I am concerned only with the higher ethical culture of the nations I pass in review. If we take up the question of the *practice* of morality, we shall have to consider the very dark record in this respect of Christendom, instead of merely admiring the fine sentiments of the Gospels. Yet in the case of Greece it is advisable to go beyond the consideration of its philosophers and pay some attention to its general life and literature. I have given prominence to the philosophers because their works have survived, and they afford us the surest indication of the heights reached by Greek thought; and, if we are to appreciate a Christian age by its saints and its finest works, we must apply the same measure to

Greece. In fact, the philosophers of Greece had more influence than the uninformed are apt to suppose. Even at Athens a philosopher meant something more than the academic professor to whom we give that title to-day; and, when we come to deal with Roman life, we shall find that the fine sentiments of a Seneca, an Epictetus, or a Marcus Aurelius, were not the luxury of a few cultured men and women, but had a remarkable influence over a wide area of Roman life.

It is, however, a foolish and ignorant idea that Greece knew or practised no respectable rules of conduct outside its schools of philosophy. Its historians—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon—show a moral standard which was for ages unknown in the more religious east. Its most characteristic and stimulating religious forces (in the “mysteries”) impressed the need of right conduct. Its legislation was inspired by a deep concern for justice long before Plato existed. Its political system was based, not on ancient superstitions, but on the moral principle of equal rights. Its great tragedians—Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—thrilled the audiences in its theatres with their profoundly moral treatment of their ancient themes. Its lyric poets very largely informed their verses with fine sentiment and admirable standards. And, if we are tempted to judge the Athenians by the gross exaggerations and scurrilities of the comedian Aristophanes, we may recall the great popularity of the other comedian Menander, who was as fine as Aristophanes was coarse. Those zealous monks of

a later day, to whom we are supposed to owe so much, preserved the scurrilities of Aristophanes, but have left us only fragments of the hundred comedies of Menander. Yet in those fragments there repeatedly occur sentiments akin to those of the Gospels, such as: "Prefer to be injured rather than to injure, for (in so doing) you will blame others, and you will escape censure."¹

In fact, one has only to read with discretion such a work as that from which I have just taken the lines of Menander to see how admirably moral evolution was tending in Europe before the advent of Christianity. Its author, a clergyman, is a master of Greek letters and a candid scholar; yet one gathers that his purpose is to accentuate the shades of Greek life in order to show the superiority of Christianity. Insofar as he attains his end by contrasting the religion of Christ with the old popular cults of the Greeks (instead of their higher culture), or by claiming that Christianity abolished the slavery which the Greeks tolerated (which any history of slavery will show to be false), we do not admire his procedure. But he is no more successful in his fine and generally candid presentment of Greek life as it is reflected in Greek letters. Instead of moral impotence, we find a sound and effective

¹ Quoted in Professor Mahaffy's *Social Life in Greece* (8th ed., 1894), p. 6. Mr. Mahaffy says that these words of "the gentle Menander" (as he calls him) only just fail to be "thoroughly Christian" because the poet "promises us the luxury of blaming others." But Menander obviously means that our act will silently rebuke them; and it is not without humour to pretend that Christ never enjoyed the luxury of blaming others. For a more vigorous vindication of Greece see Mr. Benn's *Revaluations* (1909).

moral culture influencing the community far more rapidly than the Gospels influenced Europe.

He acknowledges that "Socrates and Plato are far superior to the Jewish moralist, and far superior to the average Christian moralist," and then professes an ingenuous surprise at "the smallness of the advance in public morality which has been attained" since their time (p. 6). Even in the writers who precede Plato—the more popular writers who reflect daily life in Athens—he finds that they indicate "a moral attitude which is about the same as that of average society in our day" (p. 106), and that "the Greeks never sank to the stupidity of our day, when wealth is eagerly sought by people who can never enjoy it" (p. 118). He discovers, in the pre-Socratic period, some barbaric incidents in connection with war, and a lamentable use of torture in connection with justice; these, however, he fairly ascribes to the barbaric usages which linger in early civilizations, and to the demoralization caused by the civil war. Later (p. 270), he acknowledges that the worse features of war entirely disappeared in the Socratic age and gave way to a feeling of humanity; and (p. 264) that the penal customs of that age show a "refined culture" at Athens which shames "the most cultivated and humane European nation in the nineteenth century."

I must press this generous admission a step further. The civilization of Greece was very short-lived. Within one hundred years of the teaching of Socrates, within three hundred years of its real initiation to civilization, Athens was crushed into

helplessness. Yet it accomplished these great reforms, and seriously raised the question of other reforms (as in the position of woman) in so short a time from the appearance of its great moralists; while in later Europe barbarity in war, the torture of prisoners, horrible executions, and profound injustice to women, were rampant more than a thousand years after the triumph of Christianity, and were not opposed by it. It is quite true that, if you compare the life of Greece with English life at the end of the nineteenth century, you will discover disadvantages in it. But our progress in the nineteenth century was not due to religion, and our condition before that century—that is, after eleven hundred years of Christian influence—would not stand comparison with the life of Athens two thousand years before.

Mr. Mahaffy endeavours to redeem us at the expense of Athens by straining a few particular cases of brutality. The misdeeds of Alcibiades and a few other young men of the "smart set" are well known. In recounting them, however, Mr. Mahaffy asks: "Is it not an index of the manners of Athenian aristocrats?" It is not. The very writers who tell us these excesses explicitly describe them as exceptional and as regarded with general indignation. While, as to the mass of the people, Mr. Mahaffy finds a condition which outshines us to-day, to say nothing of the intervening two thousand years. He contrasts the masses in their entertainments with our "brutalized" masses, and observes that there were "no Seven Dials at Athens.....no hells, or

low music-halls, or low dancing saloons" (p. 255). In the more intellectual circles, reflected in Plato's dialogues and the better comedians, he finds "a life not inferior to the best society of our own day" (p. 261). The theatre alone would vindicate Athens. "Such immorality as that of the modern French stage was never tolerated among the Greeks, in spite of all their license" (p. 155). Great audiences, on the other hand, applauded the work of the famous tragedians, and "no modern theology has taught higher and purer moral notions than those of Æschylus and his school" (p. 154).

There were strains of moral weakness, or customs which any system of sound morality would condemn, at Athens, and which their new moral culture had not time to improve. Mr. Mahaffy instances want of respect for the aged, exposure of infants, and untruthfulness, which the moralists condemned. Slavery is a greater stain, but the learned Hellenist is not happy in mentioning Christianity in this connection. While Christian moralists contemplated slavery for eight hundred years without a word of censure, Stoic moralists and lawyers denounced it repeatedly in the first and second centuries.

On one point, the relation of the sexes, I will dwell a little more closely, as it is customary for clerical writers to represent that the Greeks were so lax on this principle of morals that we may disregard their other virtues. Still following, however, a more or less hostile writer like Mr. Mahaffy, we shall find that this common opinion is entirely

unjust. I need not examine the broad question of social justice to women. Mr. Mahaffy generously explains how the political development at Athens and the influence of Persia led to the comparative disdain and oppression of women in the Golden Age. Moreover, it is now well known that the women at once found an illustrious champion in Plato, and Athens was evidently reconsidering the position of its women when it fell from power. Again I cannot resist the temptation to add (since we are comparing pagan and Christian morals) that when Roman Stoics took up the issue three hundred years later they solved it as women demanded, whereas Christendom thrust the women back into subjection and kept them there for sixteen centuries.

But it is the question of sexual morality which chiefly concerns us. One must remember that a nation may differ in its moral code from us without forthwith being denounced as inferior to us. Modern Japan might be quoted. Moral opinions on the relations of the sexes have never been as fixed as on other points. Polygamy, for instance, offends against no moral principle where it is legally established. Concubinage was tolerated by St. Augustine (see p. 53) in circumstances in which any modern divine would emphatically denounce it as immoral, and was permitted by the Provincial Council of Toledo of the early Church. To-day there are many brilliant European writers, of high moral character, who dissent from the Christian standard. However, the Greek moralists, especially the later writers, held the same rigorous view as the Christian, and it

cannot be claimed that the Greeks needed a new teacher in that respect.

On the practical side, also, we must bear in mind that no age has ever been faithful to its moral code in this regard. The history of prostitution during the Christian Era is an extraordinary story, and the moral history of priests, monks, nuns, and popes even worse. Yet it is a fact that the current idea of Greek immorality goes far beyond the evidence. Mr. Mahaffy finds a remarkably good moral tone even in the earlier lyric poets (106-113), and tells us that "almost every play of Menander ended with a happy marriage" (288). In regard to Aspasia, who is so often represented as a type of Athenian immorality, he says that "there is no absolute proof of her want of dignity and morality" (214), and he suggests that the *hetairai*, who are too easily regarded as courtesans, and certainly were in the ports, were not necessarily such. The word *hetaire* is innocent in its origin, and long remained ambiguous in its use (284). He concludes that the distance of Athens from its port, the Peiræus, was "of great importance in keeping the society of Athens pure and refined," though he believes that "the great and primary cause" was "the refinement of the people themselves" (256). He reminds us that at Athens adultery was punished with death—a fact which will surprise many who talk glibly of pagan morals—and only laments that this was because the adulterer "broke in upon the mutual attachment of married people," not out of a transcendental regard for chastity. This is one

of the "limitations" of Athenian morality! One would like to hear of a Christian community setting up such a law on *any* ground.

In regard to what every moralist will regard as a more repugnant vice, pæderasty, he again virtually clears the Greek. There was in ancient Greece a fashion of loving boys, which is strange to the modern mind, and is generally interpreted as vicious. Mr. Mahaffy generously shows that this love of men for beautiful youths and men is due to the higher and intellectual taste of the Greek, and is, in itself, not open to misconstruction. Mr. Edward Carpenter (*Iolæus*, 1902), who has collected the finest passages in Greek literature referring to this love of youths, takes the same view. No one will doubt that there were abuses, but the writers who decry the ancient world in this regard are singularly ill informed on the subject. A distinguished Christian apologist, Mr. Brace (*Gesta Christi*, p. 299), actually records it as one of the great triumphs of his Church that it has suppressed "unnatural vices" in Europe, though "they still exist among peoples outside of Christianity." I have myself met clergymen with that belief. Yet the prevalence of unnatural vice in the Middle Ages, especially among the clergy, is described by a cardinal of the Church (*Liber Gomorrhianus*, by Peter Damian) as appalling, and it is as prevalent in Europe to-day, even in England, as we know it to have been at any period of paganism except under certain emperors at Rome.

We must conclude that not only did the philo-

sophers and many of the other writers of Athens—for to that city our Greek literature is generally confined—inculcate a standard of morals as high as that of Christianity, but the general conduct of the people corresponded to it as closely as a people usually lives up to its ideals; that, in spite of an immoral mythology and other hurtful legacies of recent barbarism, the moral sense of Athens made remarkable progress during its brief civilization in uplifting the character of the people. Greater moral progress in one hundred and fifty years no nation has ever made since those days until the nineteenth century. We have, therefore, in this case, where we have more documentary evidence than in the case of Egypt and Babylonia, proof of the efficacy, as well as the excellence, of the moral culture. But it is the moral idealism itself which chiefly concerns us. This stream of Greek culture joins the streams from the east, the last contribution to that cosmopolitan idealism in the midst of which the Gospels arise. But before I approach those Gospels, and show the parallel of other moral cultures more closely, I must describe how this international ferment produced other ethical religions besides Christianity, and how later Greek and Roman thinkers, independently of Christianity, further developed the ascetic or the philanthropic elements of the heritage from the Old Era.

CHAPTER VI

MORALITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

I WOULD press the reader to bear in mind, or recall to mind by glancing at a map, the geography of the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Civilization began in Egypt, and four, if not five or six, thousand years ago Egyptian traders spread over the sea to the adjacent coasts and islands. A little later the culture of Babylonia spreads as far as the Syrian shore of the Mediterranean, and its armies and merchants pass over Asia Minor. In time Syria is civilized, and Phœnician traders carry the uniform of civilization as far as remote Albion. Then Persia spreads over the old limits and extends its high culture as far as Greece; then Greece rolls back the tide, and sends the influence of its own culture as far as Jerusalem; and, finally, Rome extends its dominion over Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.

If the geographical position be clear before the reader's eye, it will be apparent that in the first century of the present era there was a cosmopolitan life in the cities of north Egypt, Syria, and the coast of Asia Minor far beyond the international variety which one sees in such cities as Smyrna or Alexandria to-day. From Alexandria to Corinth, all

round the Mediterranean coast, there was a babel of tongues and creeds and moral codes. Roman soldiers, Greek traders, Syrian panders and charlatans, Egyptian priests, Persian devotees, Jewish zealots—every shade of vice and virtue, the lowest ministers of sensuality and the sternest fanatics of spirituality, sacred prostitutes and sacred virgins and gay dancing-girls and emasculated priests and austere ascetics, were found in the crowd in every large city.

Vice is the father of virtue; affliction is its mother. Whenever a nation sinks low in the practice of vice, the gospel of virtue is born by a healthy and natural reaction; and some of those older nations, unbalanced by the shock and ruin of mythologies, still uncivilized when they became part of great empires, sank very low. Sober men and emotional women went to the opposite extreme, and called all sense-pleasure devilry. We have seen, too, how in every civilization the moral law was connected with the will of the gods, and priests insisted that the petitioner for their favour must be clean, or must murmur abject sorrow for his transgressions; and in that age of successive mighty world-powers the Jews were not the only people to find their nationality riven and cry to their god for pardon. In the end, we saw, the last great imperial expansion from the east brought the Persian idea of a speedily coming kingdom from on high, when the proud would be humbled and the virtuous exalted; and the Jews, spread all over that cosmopolitan region, talked of "an anointed one" (a "Messiah," or, in

Greek, "Christ") whose restoration of the lowly must be merited by righteous living. It was a world of hoary afflictions and intense pleasures, especially the cheap pleasures of sex; a world of crushed national aspirations, of slavery, of vast wealth and fearful poverty, of harsh despotism and helpless suffering.

In that world the more characteristic elements of the older ethical religions which appealed to the afflicted or the ascetic found a large following. At Babylon and Nineveh, Memphis and Thebes, Ecbatana and Persepolis, the priests had long taught people the need of chastity and integrity and repentance for sin. Now those priests, or the priests of new sects which Egypt and Persia had begotten, were scattered over the eastern world, as far as Rome, and in thousands of little temples they performed dramatic ceremonies for the purification of sinners, the confirming of the righteous, and the triumph of the light over the darkness. Baptism, by water or blood, holy suppers of bread and wine, secret initiations, vows of virginity, white-robed priests, blaze of candles and clouds of incense, holy mothers of gods and saviours, penitential chants and prayers for aid—these things could be found in any large town between Rome and Alexandria as easily as one could find the veiled door where the naked courtesan rattled the rings of the curtain to win your attention. Some went one way, some went the other; as they do to-day.

And many went neither way. It is a sad defect of culture that history has still to be written in

apparently contradictory sections. The facts of history are an argument, for or against Christianity. Even a non-Christian historian like Lecky felt this so much that his *History of European Morals* is painfully inconsistent; the facts would be so unpleasant to his Christian readers that he inserted flattering generalizations and parentheses, in opposition to the facts, to conciliate them. Generally you have the unpleasant facts in one work and the pleasant (or favourable to Christianity) in another. So, while one set of educated Europeans believe that the older nations were pathetically ignorant and inferior to us, another set believe that we are pathetically ignorant and inferior to them. General rules are made with the utmost levity out of particular instances. The fact is that in that Roman world, in which Christianity slowly grew, neither the exotic vice nor the exotic virtue (of the Christian, Mithraist, Neo-Platonist, etc.) was the rule. The bulk of the uncultivated—I will not say uneducated, for education was far more widely spread than it is in some countries of Europe to-day—avoided both extremes, and the majority of the cultivated (who were many) continued to live on the sober patriarchal code of national morals improved by the philosophers. We will follow the development of this philosophic culture before describing the ascetic religions which rivalled Christianity.

Three moralists of the first century of the Christian era indicate the vitality and development of Stoicism in the Græco-Roman world. One ought, perhaps, to deal first with the orator Cicero, whose

De Officiis (*On Duties*) is the first complete Roman manual of morality ; but it will suffice here to recall his name. The first flush of expansive prosperity shook the sober old ideals of the Romans, and brought to the eternal city the parasites of vice with which the east abounded. Cicero's letters show us that cultivated men and women of his circle retained the old ideals, fitted to their larger life ; and, as Greek philosophy was imported into Italy, they found in the Stoic system a foundation which the Roman religion did not afford. Cicero's code of morals is not only severe and rational—on that and on Aristotle's *Ethics* Dante based his classification of sins—but in places he anticipates the humanitarianism of modern times. He speaks (i, 14), in a fine chapter on benevolence, of “the universal fellowship of the human race,” and says that “nature ordains that we should wish the good of every man, whoever he may be, for this very reason that he is a man” ; and he condemned the use of torture in the administration of justice.

This fine and practical tendency of the Stoic morality becomes clearer in the three moralists of the first century to whom I have referred. The first and best known is Seneca, who was born in Spain in the year following that of the supposed birth of Christ, and became a lawyer at Rome, the tutor of Nero, and a very industrious ethical counsellor of the upper class. The first emperor, Octavian, had made a vigorous and partly successful effort to combat the corruption that had crept into Rome ; but the clumsy system of accession

to the throne enabled some worthless characters to occupy it, and the good and bad elements of Rome were successively drawn out according to the nature of the ruling monarch. It is, of course, usual to conceive the emperors before Constantine as generally a perverse lot, encouraging a vicious people; but an hour's study of Roman history will inform the candid inquirer that during the first two hundred and fifty years of the Empire it was ruled by good emperors for two hundred years and by bad emperors for only fifty years. In the year 70 A.D., in fact, a great reform began, and the Roman system was cleansed by a free admission of healthy provincials to office. From the year 96 to 180 there was a succession of monarchs to whom no other national history can show a parallel.

But a general consideration of Roman morals may be attempted later. Here we may make a few extracts from the works of Seneca, to show the standard of conduct which was received among cultivated Romans. Seneca, it must be remembered, was an accomplished rhetorician, and it was an age of rhetoric. But among his many pages of well-turned platitude, and in spite of the occasional rhetorical exaggeration, we find innumerable passages which show equal elevation of standard and penetrating insight into human nature. We must remember, too, that Seneca was not a moralist in the same sense as a religious preacher or the founder of a school is. He desired only to give counsel and consolation to people of his acquaintance, and did

not seek to convert the world at large. I take the following passages without any prolonged search into his writings:—

“ I have heard a good deal from those that come from thee, that thou livest familiarly with thy slaves ; this becometh thy prudence, this is answerable to thy wisdom. Are they slaves ? nay, they are men. Are they slaves ? nay, they are members of the same household. Are they slaves ? nay, rather, humble friends, if not fellow-servants, if thou thinkest that fortune has as much power over thee as over them ” (*Letter to Lucilius*).

“ We have our eyes on the vices of others : our own are behind us ” (*On Anger*, ii).

“ Punishment is not for past offences, but for those which are to come, because it is not ordained to entertain anger, but to prevent it ” (*On Anger*, vii).

“ Why art thou angry with thy slave, thy master, thy king, or thy dependent ? Wait but a little, and death will make you equal ” (*On Anger*, xlii).

“ Let us despise injury, hurt, abuse, and revilement, and let us bear lesser troubles with magnanimity ; while we look round or turn back, immortality will be upon us ” (*On Anger*, xlii).

“ Learn to appraise a lost son by his virtues, not his years ” (*On Consolation*, xxiv).

“ As the body itself is rather a necessary than a great thing, so the comforts of it are but temporary and vain ; whereas a peaceful conscience, honest thoughts, virtuous actions, and an indifference to casual events are blessings without end, satiety, or measure ” (*On the Happy Life*, i).

“ If sensuality were happiness, beasts were happier than men ” (*On the Happy Life*, xi).

“ Dost thou wonder that God, who so loveth good men, assigneth them a fate which shall try them ? I wonder not ” (*On Providence*, ii, 7).

“ What could be richer than if there were not a

poor man to be found in the world?" (*On the Happy Life*, xv).

"You must live for others if you would live for yourself" (*Letter* xlvii).

"Misfortune is the opportunity of virtue" (*On Providence*, iv, 6).

But we shall find the moral sentiments of the Gospels so richly paralleled from the writings of Seneca, in a later chapter, that I need quote no further here. It would almost be possible to find a corresponding sentiment in Seneca for every moral text in the Gospels. Early Christian writers recognized this so clearly that they pretended that Seneca had borrowed of Paul, and even such scholars as Jerome and Augustine accepted the correspondence which was forged in their names. Modern Christians see the absurdity of tracing Christian influence in Seneca, and, as they cannot venture to impugn his doctrine, they sneer at his person. Seneca often reflects that he is not an ideal observer of the virtues he recommends, nor would many teachers of virtue pass such a test. But the grosser charges which are lightly repeated from hostile Roman gossipers cannot be sustained. That he was a man of most sober life, and that he faced with nobility a cruel and unjust sentence of death, all admit; and it is no slight tribute to his personal conduct that his wife insisted on dying with him.¹

¹ I ignore the suggestion that it was a weakness of the Stoic system to permit suicide in such cases, or in other cases where no living person was injured. Suicide in those circumstances is an act of courage and dignity, only forbidden by disputable religious speculations.

Hence, to repeat as a serious suggestion a charge of adultery with the Emperor Caligula's sister, Julia Livilla, when we merely find it put forward as a pretext of that utterly unscrupulous and depraved empress, Messalina, and there was no trial, is very far from honest; yet clerical writers habitually do this, and suppress the circumstances.

There is at least an historical ground for argument when it is urged that Seneca ought to have retired from the court when Nero murdered Britannicus and later had his mother murdered. In the former case, we must remember, the murder is still disputed (though I accept it); in any case, Seneca was right not to retire at that time, and hand Nero over entirely to his vicious counsellors. In the second case, one is disposed to conceive him as dreading the brutal vengeance of Nero, or persuading himself by casuistic reasoning, to which moralists in all ages have been inclined, that it was his duty to remain by Nero and exercise what influence he could. He remained, together with Nero's other good counsellor, Burrus, in office for seven years, in spite of Nero's abominable conduct, and only retired after the death of Burrus in 62. How far his conduct was due to timidity, casuistry, or a vain hope of doing good, it would be difficult to say.

But the charge that is most persistently brought against him, that he amassed a prodigious fortune by doing so, needs to be treated with discrimination. When he retired, in the year 62, malicious advisers prompted Nero to look to this fortune. Tacitus tells us (*Annals*, xiv, 53) that Seneca went to Nero

and begged him to take the whole of the wealth back which he had forced on him. In his reply, which is given, Nero acknowledged that Seneca's wealth was all bestowed by himself, and was an inadequate reward for his services; and he embraced and dismissed the philosopher, and refused to take back the gift. We may, therefore, disregard malicious suggestions of corruption on Seneca's part, and clerical sneers at his writing the praises of poverty with a golden pen. He lived soberly amid his wealth, and, as Dr. Dill observes, the horrible and paralysing situation of good men in Nero's reign gives a note of sincerity to his exhortations, and must soften our judgment of his conduct.

Yet Seneca is the only one of the Stoic moralists for whose conduct we must ask such consideration of circumstances. While Seneca directed aristocratic consciences from his palace, other Stoics maintained public schools of moral philosophy, and in one of these schools (that of Musonius) a young Phrygian slave named Epictetus listened to the Stoic doctrines, in the time of Nero. Epictetus wrote no treatises when he afterwards became a teacher, but his discourses have been preserved for us by a devoted pupil. As shorthand was well known in the Roman Empire, we need not hesitate to accept these *Discourses* and the *Enchiridion*, or manual of the teaching of Epictetus. Like Seneca, he united a firm monotheism to the Stoic regard for natural law, though he had no belief in immortality or a reward for virtue after death. His teaching was at once practical and ascetic—anti-Epicurean, yet

commending marriage and civic and political activity—and its high morality has won the admiration of all subsequent ages. Again I choose a few sentences after glancing casually over the pages of the *Discourses*, the *Enchiridion*, and the unclassified fragments appended to his works (Higginson's translation, 1897):—

“When you do anything from a clear judgment that it ought to be done, never shrink from being seen to do it, though the world should misunderstand it. For, if you are not doing rightly, shun the action itself; if you are, why fear those who wrongly censure you?” (*Enchiridion*, xxxv).

“When any person does ill by you, or speaks ill of you, remember that he acts or speaks from an impression that it is right for him to do so. Now it is not possible that he should follow what appears right to you, but only what appears so to himself. Setting out, then, from these opinions, you will meekly bear with a person who reviles you; for you will say on every occasion, It seemed so to him” (*Enchiridion*, xlii).

“Everything has two handles: one by which it may be borne, another by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold on the affair by the handle of his injustice, for by that it cannot be borne; but rather by the opposite, that he is your brother” (*Enchiridion*, xliii).

“If anyone tell you that such a person speaks ill of you. answer: He was ignorant of my other faults, else he would not have mentioned these alone” (*Enchiridion*, xxxiii).

“Chastise your passions, that they may not chastise you” (*Fragments*, iv).

“If you would be well spoken of, learn to speak well of others” (*Fragments*, vi).

“He whose body is unbound, and whose soul is chained, is a slave” (*Fragments*, vii).

“ It is difficult for a rich person to be modest, or a modest person to be rich ” (*Fragments*, xviii).

“ Take care at your meals that the attendants be not more in number than those whom they are to attend ” (*Fragments*, xxix).

“ What you would avoid suffering yourself, seek not to impose on others. You avoid slavery, for instance: take care not to enslave. For if you can bear to exact slavery from others, you appear to have been yourself a slave. For vice has nothing in common with virtue, nor freedom with slavery ” (*Fragments*, xxxviii).

“ It is the character of the most mean-spirited and foolish men to suppose that they will be despised by others unless they somehow strike the first blow at their enemies ” (*Fragments*, lxv).

“ If you have a mind to adorn your city with consecrated monuments, first consecrate in yourself the most beautiful monument—gentleness and justice and benevolence ” (*Fragments*, lxxv).

“ You will confer the greatest benefits on your city, not by raising its roofs, but exalting its souls. For it is better that great souls should live in small habitations than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses ” (*Fragments*, lxxvi).

Repeatedly, when we read the words of the gentle Epictetus—gentle to all but himself—we seem to hear the voice of the Gospel Christ in his better moods. What has come to be known as “ the Golden Rule ” was a favourite maxim of Epictetus. If it be objected that he expresses it in a negative form, we must remember that the most practical application of it was negative; that it would have seemed to Epictetus unworthy to exhort men positively to do good deeds with an expectation of return (in this or any other world); and that, unlike Epic-

tetus and other Stoics, neither Christ nor any of his followers for many centuries drew from it the conclusion, so profoundly important in the ancient world, that if you abhor slavery you ought not to keep slaves. Let none retort that this is a natural sentiment in an ex-slave. It was the common teaching of the later Stoics, and it was in virtue of that teaching that the pagan emperors passed so many decrees to improve the condition of the slave, as I have related in my *Bible in Europe*.

The same practical and social application of moral principle which raises the Stoic ethic above the Christian appears even more prominently in Plutarch, who was almost a contemporary of Epictetus. Although a priest of Apollo, he was (like most cultivated Romans) a convinced monotheist, and his religious-ethical language often coincides (as Dr. Oakesmith shows in his *Religion of Plutarch*, 1902) with that of the Gospels. But the passages from his many moral treatises which, in a later chapter, I put side by side with the supposed words of Christ will suffice to illustrate his teaching.

In the first century, too, falls that strange and elusive moralist who has more than once been quoted as the counterpart of Jesus—Apollonius of Tyana. He is said to have been born in the year 1 A.D., but this may be a legendary attempt, by some who were unaware that Christ was *not* born in that year, to make the parallel closer. As, in fact, the earliest biography of him which we have belongs to the third century, and is full of obvious legends, many writers despair of attaining any knowledge

of him. Legend gave him a divine father and crowded his life with miracles, as in the case of Jesus; and, although Philostratus affirms that he has authoritative documents before him in writing the life, we read him with grave reserve. Dr. Groves Campbell has in recent years (1908) made a careful study of the subject, and his *Apollonius of Tyana* attempts to restore in some degree "the beauty and spirituality of the life of one whose heart was with the hearts of men, and whose mind moved among celestial things."

The honour that was paid to his memory in his native city of Tyana (in Cappadocia), and by the better emperors of the second century—Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and Alexander Severus—bears witness to his great repute for sanctity. The mingled doctrines of Pythagoras and of oriental religion filled him with a contempt of the world, and he wandered in many lands in search of wisdom before he settled in Greece as a teacher. All over that cosmopolitan region which I have described—from Babylonia and Egypt to Italy—he gathered the finer ideals of the old religions, and left behind him a profound impression of personal integrity and helpfulness to men. More than this we cannot say. He is, however, exceedingly interesting as an illustration of the same tendency all over that ancient world to inspire the fervent wandering preacher and reformer, and, quite apart from his supposed miracles, it is not unprofitable to associate his figure with that of Christ.

In the second century Marcus Aurelius is the

great spokesman of the Stoic philosophy, but it would be superfluous here to give quotations from his familiar reflections. It is more material to observe that by that time the doctrine of the Stoics had passed the doors of the schools, and was deeply incorporated in the life of the Roman Empire. When preachers hail the universal charity taught by Jesus they forget many things. They forget that such a doctrine only seems great because of the appalling contrast, in parts of the Old Testament, of the barbaric exclusivism of the early Jews; they forget that in later Judaism itself the dispersion was inspiring broader views and men were developing universalism; they forget that Jesus, in the extant Gospels, commands his followers to confine their teaching to the Jews, and we have the strongest ground to regard the later texts, the precept to go forth to "all nations," as interpolations; they forget that all the Apostles save Paul, who had never known Jesus, did confine themselves to Judæa, and resented Paul's universalism.

And, while we have thus the gravest reason to think that Jesus never rose above the petty exclusivism of the provincial Jew, we find the ideal of a "charity of the whole human race" pressed by Cicero long before Jesus was born, recognized by the later Roman moralists, and appearing as an essential element of the new religions which spread through the Empire. Nor was this exhortation so much "sounding brass" in the Roman world. From Cicero's exhortation to deal humanely with

slaves the later Stoics had gone on to denounce slavery itself as a crime against natural law and a source of weakness to the Empire. Seneca tells us that in his time—the period, remember, when, on the discredited authority of Juvenal, clerical writers describe the slaves of Rome as treated with appalling brutality—a cruel master would see fingers pointed at him in the street; and inscriptions on the tombs show a singular mutual affection of many masters and slaves.¹ Cruel masters were checked by an admirable series of imperial decrees. There were, moreover, at this time throughout the Roman world certain associations of workers (*Collegia*) which more or less resembled the medieval guild (without its exclusivism) or the modern Trade Union (but with a religious element). In the halls of these *Collegia* the slave and the free worker mingled, and at times some wealthier man presided and subsidized; and in the Mithraic and other temples, as in the Christian Church, all classes met on an equal footing.

The philanthropic spirit spread, in particular, over the whole of Italy. I will not adduce the free feeding, daily, of about five hundred thousand of the poorer citizens of Rome, as in this there was a mixture of philanthropy and ambition, and the effect was disastrous. But under the Stoic emperors

¹ See G. Boissier's *La Religion Romaine* (1874) for details, vol. ii, pp. 362-77. Also, on the whole question, Sir S. Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (1904). In these critical and most authoritative studies—the finest in French and English literature—the reader will find a vindication of Roman morals and philanthropy.

there was a remarkable movement for assisting the helpless. From Nerva to Marcus Aurelius the emperors set the example of founding orphanages and homes for the aged, and the wealthier citizens generously followed it.¹ Civic festivals, civic baths and theatres and aqueducts, were established by the wealthier Romans. The municipalities were compelled to provide schools at which every free Roman child could obtain gratuitous education, and poorer youths were assisted to pass to the higher schools. No one who is acquainted with the mass of evidence we have of Roman charity and mercy in the first and second centuries is likely to listen to ignorant complaints of the "sterility" of Stoic morality. There has been no such humanitarian movement in Europe since those days until the nineteenth century.

Our age is disposed to attach more importance to social morality of this kind than to personal conduct which does not affect the well-being of others; sound morality is, in fact, a consideration of the effect of your action on others and on the general healthiness of the social atmosphere. And there is now no dispute about the social morality of the Stoic age. Woman's position was relieved of all the old injustice; slavery was so consistently censured

¹ See the inscriptions, etc., in Boissier (ii, 206-14) and Dill (190-95). It is sometimes said by writers who are unacquainted with the Roman world that hospitals for the sick poor were not founded until later Christian times. Every temple of Æsculapius was in reality a hospital for the poor, and at Rome there was a service of municipal doctors. The doctors of the wealthy also attended to their slaves and dependent friends or clients.

that, if paganism had continued, it could not have survived as long as it did; war was eloquently denounced by Lucan and others; the gladiatorial displays were heavily condemned by Plutarch and Seneca; and even in the satirist Juvenal and the historian Tacitus it is the stern standard of right rather than the condemnation of earlier and not well-authenticated abuses which mostly impresses the candid reader. This widespread feeling for justice and brotherhood, which can no longer be questioned, has moved some Christian writers to wonder whether Christianity itself had not a wider influence than their predecessors, who thought the Roman world very dark and cruel, imagined. There is no room for such a suggestion. Every writer, Christian or pagan, of the second century shows us how isolated the Christian communities were. The obvious and only just interpretation of the situation is that Christianity taught brotherhood and mercy *because* brotherhood and mercy were familiar doctrines of the age.

But a word must be added on personal morality. It cannot be repeated too often that it is one of the most difficult things in the world to estimate the general character of one of these ancient peoples. We have none of those varied groups of statistics which it is the fashion of modern times to collect. It is only with great hesitation that any sincere historian, who has handled the original documents, will pen a general statement as to the character of ancient Rome or of any other earlier civilization. The common practice of indicting the Roman people

on the ground of a few stories (about an earlier generation) which are told in Juvenal, or because of the gross character of the courts of Caligula, Nero, or Elagabalus, is now thoroughly discredited. Yet there is still much injustice. Even Sir S. Dill says that, while the cultivated Romans cherished a high standard of conduct in the Stoic age, the masses were unaffected. For this he adduces no evidence—and there is no evidence. Indeed, insofar as there is evidence at all (inscriptions on the tombs of common citizens), it indicates, as Boissier shows, a widespread regard for virtue.

Most of the specific evidence in regard to Roman morals which we have naturally refers to the wealthier people. Now this evidence is very far from showing that general prevalence of vice which many suppose it shows. Wherever we find the character of a cultivated or official circle ingenuously reflected in their correspondence (for instance, in the letters of Cicero, Pliny, or Symmachus), it is a high and refined character. Seneca gives darker hints at the nature of the class to which he belonged, but it must be remembered that he lived in the days of Messalina, and then of Nero, when corruption was encouraged and virtue prosecuted. Even in those dark ages, however, we have numerous proofs of high character in all classes. The wife of one of Messalina's victims, urging her shrinking husband to avoid by suicide an ignominious execution, thrust the dagger into her own breast and handed it to him wet with her blood, saying: "It does not hurt." When Nero tortured the servants of his gentle and

virtuous wife, in order to make them belie their mistress, the women spat in the face of their tormentors. Scores of such experiences in the worst ages are recorded.

These darker periods, moreover, were brief and infrequent. This is one of the most grossly overlooked facts in the history of Imperial Rome. From the year 27 B.C. to 14 A.D. the Empire was controlled by Octavian and Livia—that is to say, a man who punished adultery and unnatural vice with death (a man who condemned his own beloved daughter to a harsh imprisonment for life for lack of virtue), and a woman of faultless character who encouraged virtue with all her power. Tiberius, in turn, held the reins firmly. In a word, during the first two centuries of the Empire vice was encouraged at Rome only during the very brief reign of the insane Caligula (four years), the nine years of the influence of Messalina, and the reign of Nero (54–68)—twenty-seven years out of more than two hundred. It is of those corrupt periods that the heavier censors write, and it is mere prejudice to judge the whole character of Rome by exceptional periods.

Of the mass of the people one must speak with reserve. It is true that there were plenty of brothels (*lupanaria*) at Rome; but we have no indication whatever of the proportion to the population, and we cannot say whether there were even as many loose women as there were in London at the beginning of the nineteenth century—60,000, according to the head of the police, Colquhoun

—with an equal population (about a million). There were gladiatorial combats; but a future moralist may find the exulting of a modern crowd over a victory in war quite as repellent. There were ribald songs and gestures in the theatre; but Roman authority never permitted the semi-public obscenity which you may witness to-day on the Continent. There is a looseness in the popular comedians Terentius and Plautus, but it is hardly worse than was long permitted in England. There were wild scenes at the festivals of “the mother of the gods,” but the Roman authorities sternly forbade the grosser features of the cult. In a word, we have no reason to suppose that the mass of the people were worse than the mass of the people were in any country of Europe until recent times.

The last point on which I would enlarge, in preparation of the examination of the Gospels, will confirm this estimate of Roman life, as well as help to remove much of the claimed distinction from Christianity. It is to show how those ideas and sentiments, of which we have traced the gradual evolution towards the Christian character, found a similar embodiment in other religions besides Christianity; that, in the first and second centuries of the present era, there were several religions urging upon the Roman world a high standard of morals, an intensely spiritual creed, and a doctrine of repentance for sin and regeneration.

One ought, in the first place, to trace the later development of the Platonic philosophy. Already we have found it, in Plutarch's case, mingled with

oriental religious ideas and inspiring almost modern sentiments in regard to conduct. In Philo we have another notable example; and in the third and fourth centuries we have a well-known school of Neo-Platonism, with a series of brilliant representatives, exerting an influence even on the ablest Fathers of the Church, until Alexandrian philosophy is extinguished by Christian violence. The works of Plotinus, in particular, abound in language which might have been written by a Christian mystic. Mythological absurdities are found, as in Christian writers, but such passages as the following show the general trend of the Neo-Platonic teaching:—

The soul, when in a condition conformable to nature, loves God, wishing to be united to him, being as it were the desire of a beautiful virgin to be conjoined with a beautiful love. When, however, the soul descends into generation, then, being as it were deceived by her nuptials, and associating herself with another and a mortal love, she becomes petulant and insolent through being absent from her Father. But when she again hates terrene wantonness and injustice, and becomes purified from the defilements which are here, and again returns to her Father, then she is affected in the most felicitous manner” (*Of the Good*, ix).

But we will do better to leave philosophies and examine the religions which appealed to all classes in the Roman world, and for two hundred years were serious rivals of Christianity. Of these two, the cults of Isis and Serapis brought the best elements of the old Egyptian culture into Roman life. I have already shown how, before the appearance of Christ, the religion of Serapis inspired the

kind of monastic life which Christianity would later inspire. By that time the two religions had absorbed a great deal of Greek culture, and had spread from Alexandria to Greece, and Greece to Italy. By the reign of Tiberius, when Christ was still unknown, the worship of Isis was popular at Rome, and before the end of that century, and in the reign of the Stoic Emperors, it had a vast influence.

Owing to our controversial methods of writing history, and the low ethic of so much of our controversy, the religion of Isis is known to many only by one or two scandals which are alleged in connection with it. Many a traveller who gazes on the beautiful temple of Isis in restored Pompeii thinks that it was a hypocritical establishment in which Roman ladies made assignations. It is not impossible that, since Isis was at first identified with Io, the mistress of Jupiter, looser Romans may have been attracted to it; and there are Latin poets who lament that the ascetic preparations for the festivals of Isis keep their mistresses from their arms. But a glance at Ovid (*Ex Ponto*, II, i, 51) will show that already before the time of Christ the altar of Isis attracted the penitent, and she was conceived as the virtuous Queen of Heaven. Every morning and every evening her devotees gathered to follow her white-robed, shaven priests, and be sprinkled with the holy water of the Nile. It was a part of their teaching that the eyes of Isis were ever on her worshippers, and she was concerned for the purity of their conduct; and for her chief

festivals they had to prepare by fasts and coercion of the senses. Hers was pre-eminently a religion of purity, and the inscriptions no less than the surviving literature inform us that some of the finest Romans, men and women, were enlisted in her cult down to the fall of Rome. Slaves, poor workers, and nobles met in equality at her services; and, apart from the ancient language of the ritual and the golden symbols, the long processions of Isis through the Roman cities, with maidens scattering flowers and white-robed initiates and shaven priests, aptly foreshadowed the later processions in honour of Mary.¹

Still more widespread, and equally austere and spiritual, was the Mithraic religion. In this, an offshoot of the Persian religion gathered up Greek elements and spread over the east. It reached Rome before the time of Christ, and, after a period of struggle and obscurity, it spread over Europe with great rapidity during the second century. It had been for more than a hundred years, like Christianity, the religion of the slaves and the poorer workers and traders, who were largely Asiatics. Towards the end of the second century it spread through the army in all provinces, and the favour of the court induced the highest nobles and functionaries to join it. Its emphasis on courage rather than gentleness, its militant conception of the duty of its devotees in the world, its combative language, and possibly its

¹ The reader who cannot consult the Latin authors and inscriptions will find sympathetic accounts in the works of Dill and Boissier which I have quoted.

semi-barbaric baptisms by blood, recommended it to soldiers. Its conciliatory attitude to the Roman gods and its pretentious cosmogony attracted the thoughtful. Its elaborate ritual and stress on purification and mystic initiations to an inner circle attracted the devout and ascetic. While its thoroughly democratic character and promise of a high reward beyond the grave won the poor and the suffering. Historians are fairly agreed that by the middle of the third century it outnumbered Christianity and promised to succeed the old paganism.

It must not be supposed that, in thus enumerating the better or more Christian features of these old religions, I overlook the worse and think them superior to Christianity. As it is set forth in the Gospels, Christianity is superior to the cults of Isis and of Mithra. The mythology of these cults was cumbrous and antiquated, and the ritual, at least of Mithraism, repellent in parts. Although Christianity had already departed far from its primitive model, it is not at all clear that Europe would have gained by the prevalence of one of those other eastern religions, though it could hardly have degenerated more than it did. It is, however, useless and irrelevant to discuss such a question. All that need be said here is that Mithraism contained some of the most characteristic elements of Christianity. It sternly insisted on purity and counselled continence; it enjoined repentance for sin and purification; it had its sacred virgins, and its priests were "fathers"; it taught that Mithra was the saviour and the intermediary between God

and man, the "Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world"; it celebrated his birth on December 25, when its (generally) underground temples blazed with tapers, and his death and resurrection in the spring; it stirred men to fight against evil, to avoid sensuality, and to expect a glorious reward in a life hereafter.¹

The jealousy and concern of the Christians, who declared that this "imitation" of their doctrines and rites was due to the devil, led them to use against Mithraism with particular zeal the influence which they obtained at court in the fourth century. Mithraism waned, and Manichæism took its place. St. Jerome testifies to the severity of this later Persian cult; but, as its founder deliberately incorporated Christian elements in it, we are not concerned with it. I have reached a point where another volume on Christianity ought to start: the age of its triumph in Europe. Here I can only state that that triumph was political, not spiritual; that by religious weapons it had, during three centuries, made no more progress than the rival religions, and its final substitution for them was due to coercive legislation and drastic persecution. But it was material to show that the Christianity of the first century was not the only spiritual, ethical, and monotheistic religion to issue out of the ruins of the older civilizations, and that one then heard all over the Roman world the familiar doctrines of chastity, continence, abstinence, penitence, brotherliness, mediation, purification, and expectation of the kingdom of God.

¹ See, especially, F. Cumont's *Mysteries of Mithra* (1903).

CHAPTER VII

THE GOSPELS

THE research we have so far pursued compels us to say that, by the first century of the present era, a moral code of what has come to be regarded as a Christian character was diffused throughout the Græco-Roman world. Many attempts have been made to discover that one or other virtue in the Christian tradition is peculiar to that tradition and gives it some superiority over contemporary or earlier moralities. These attempts invariably fail; their authors are, as a rule, very imperfectly acquainted with non-Christian literature. That the flesh should be coerced; that the things of this world are little in comparison with the world to come; that the inner intention is as important as the outward act; that the violent should not be resisted; that one ought to love one's enemies; that impurity is one of the worst sins; that God is, alternately, a merciful Father and a fierce punisher; that humility has great merit; that repentance disarms the divine anger—these, and every other maxim that has been thought distinctive of the Christian message, were commonplaces of that old religious world and the most natural development of the religions of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia.

This will appear more clearly in the ninth chapter, when I will give a series of parallels to the moral sentiments ascribed to Christ in the Gospels. For the moment it is important to have established that these sentiments were common in the religious atmosphere of the time. Preparation for a future life (or kingdom) by the avoidance of sin, especially sexual sin, and repentance for sin committed, were the two chief notes in the cosmopolitan chorus of religious teaching which filled the cities of the Roman-Greek-Syrian world. You had not to seek these doctrines, and all the ascetic principles which followed from them, in obscure conventicles. In every large town, and many small ones, between Alexandria and Rome, they had hundreds of enthusiastic apostles, whose picturesque processions and quaint robes and impressive ritual attracted the attention of all but the most sensual.

Somewhere in this Roman-Greek-Syrian world the Christian Gospels arose; and, when Christianity came to political power and scattered its rivals, these Gospels became the only familiar memorials of that old world, and the fable was initiated that they contained some new and unique message. We are already aware that this is false, and we have now to attempt to determine more closely the relation of the Gospels to the moral culture of the time. Here again the enthusiastic and ill-informed believer will be disposed to dismiss the point impatiently. The stricter believer will ask why a God should need to know the tenets of Jewish rabbis and Greek philosophers and Egyptian priests; which we might

meet with the counter-questions: How it was that a God could not rise higher in his teaching than the maxims of Greek philosophers and Egyptian priests? How it was that he did not anticipate the higher social morality of our time? But such resolute believers are not likely to dip into these pages. The more liberal and better-informed Christian will ask how a provincial, if highly-gifted, Jew would be likely to know what Greeks and Romans, and priests of Isis and Serapis, were saying?

Let me premise that, even if we were convinced that the Gospels contained the very words of Christ, we should still have to hesitate to ascribe to him an original and inventive moral faculty. Whatever difficulty we may entertain in regard to his personal relation to Greek, Roman, Persian, and Egyptian culture, he at least knew the Old Testament and, presumably, the moral teaching of the rabbis; and in these sources alone, as we shall see, one finds all the sentiments ascribed to Christ. The later Jewish books, in particular—which are not well known to the general Christian public, as, though they are more Christ-like than the older books, they have been excluded from the canon of inspired writings—will supply parallels to all the fine sentiments of the Gospels; and the Scribes and Pharisees who brooded over these books were fully imbued with their Christ-like sentiments. But it was Persian and Greek influence which elevated the morality of the Jews, just as it had once been the influence of Egypt and Babylon which lifted them above the barbarous sentiments that linger in their older

literature. Our survey of moral evolution has, therefore, been pertinent and instructive, even if we suppose that the Gospels do give us the words of Christ, or Christ's personal expression of the finer Jewish sentiments of his age.

But it is worth inquiring whether we may really regard the speeches and phrases recorded in the Gospels as the personal utterances of Jesus. If there be some doubt on this point, we perceive at once the possibility that these speeches and phrases may be, in part, due to men who might know more about the religious and moral culture of the time than we can reasonably expect a Galilean carpenter to have known. It is not essential for us to make this inquiry, since the Jewish parallels amply suffice; but assuredly the morality of the Gospels will prove more intelligible than ever if we find that they cannot be strictly relied on to give us the words of Christ, and that they arose in a world and an age where men were familiar with the teaching of Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians, as well as of Jews. On this question of the date and origin of our Gospels much has been written by modern liberal theologians, to whose courage and scholarship we are greatly indebted, and I do not propose to repeat here an inquiry which may be studied in a dozen excellent works.¹ It will not, however, be expected

¹ The English reader with little leisure may consult Prof. B. W. Bacon's little work, *The Making of the New Testament* ("Home University Library," 1913), or his larger *Introduction to the New Testament* (1900). More candid is Dr. Estlin Carpenter's *First Three Gospels* (4th edition, 1906, 1s.), and still more candid and critical is Dr. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic, and Morals* (1909).

that theologians have discussed so delicate an issue with complete impartiality, and a few relevant points may be profitably examined.

The best evidence in such inquiries is the witness of contemporary writers. If we find writers of an early and known date quoting the Gospels, we have a clear proof that the Gospels existed at that date—at least to the extent of the passages quoted, and presumably to a larger extent. It is, of course, obvious that a Christian writer would not be likely to quote more than an occasional text from the Gospels, especially in an age when they were not regarded as sacred or inspired books; and it would be foolish to conclude or suspect that the texts he does quote were alone in existence at the time. But it is hardly less foolish or more honest to conclude, as so many do, that, if Ignatius or Polycarp quotes a few phrases from a Gospel, this Gospel must have existed at the time in much the same form as that in which we have it to-day. There is ample evidence that our Gospels, or the Christian tradition, grew steadily in the century after Christ's death. We must, therefore, use great discretion in arguing from a single quotation that some other passage, or the whole Gospel, existed at the time, especially if the words of Christ are quoted in a form different from that in which we find them in our Gospels.

St. Paul is the first Christian writer, but, as it is generally agreed that he wrote before the Gospels existed, we need not discuss his epistles. We learn from them only that Christ had a human birth,

died on the cross after a last supper with his disciples, and "appeared" to them after death. The other early Christian writers who follow Paul before the year 130 have been searched diligently for witness to the existence of the Gospels. The Oxford Society of Historical Theology, in particular, appointed a committee to collect and appraise all possible or plausible quotations from the Gospels in these writings, and the reader who is familiar with the Greek tongue—the general public is not admitted to the inquiry by a translation of the extracts—will find all such references conveniently collected in the volume issued by the Society.¹ As, however, I differ very slightly from the findings of the committee, as far as the Gospels are concerned, it will almost suffice to quote their verdict.

Their verdict is, in a word, that there is not a single reference to the Gospels themselves, and not a single indisputable quotation from them, in any Christian document written within a century of the death of Christ. First is an anonymous (or pseudonymous) *Epistle of Barnabas*, which is put at various dates between 70 and 130 A.D.; and with it may be taken the first and earlier part of a document known as the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Apostles*, since this first part is generally referred to the first century. But the first part of the *Didache* is barren, and in the *Epistle of Barnabas* even the most zealous student can find only half-a-dozen words or short phrases which

¹ *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (1905).

more or less correspond to so many words or phrases actually embodied in our Gospels. As no one disputes that whatever is contained in our Gospels was previously current in oral tradition, this proves nothing; or, indeed, the absence of any references to, or clear quotations from, our Gospels in this early literature may be held to point to their non-existence. The only remaining first-century writer is Clement of Rome, whose surviving letter is usually dated about 96 A.D. But here again there is no reference to Gospels, and no clear quotation from them. Certain sentences in Clement which are often described as quotations from the Gospels are—I think rightly—rejected by the committee and regarded as quotations from some early catechetical document.

Of the first third of the second century we have the second part of the *Didache*, the *Pastor* of "Hermas," a letter forged in the name of Clement, and letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. The exact date of each is unknown and disputed; they are put at various dates between 110 and 130. We need not examine the question closely, because again there is no reference to, or any indisputable quotation from, one of our Gospels. The *Pastor*, the second part of the *Didache*, and the pseudo-Clement are, in this connection, given up by the Oxford committee. They claim only that Ignatius "probably" knew the Gospel of Matthew "in something like its present form," and that Polycarp probably knew *Luke* and *John*. To be quite accurate, there are a few sentences in Polycarp

and Ignatius which more or less faithfully correspond to sentences in our Gospels, and *might* be quotations from memory. The result is so meagre and uninspiring that it may seem ungracious to attenuate it further. But since no one doubts that these things were orally communicated throughout the Church before they were put on parchment, and were written in many other documents besides our Gospels (see *Luke* i, 1), we have really no right to infer that these bishops even "probably" had our Gospels, or Gospels "something like" them. On the other hand, to quote "Barnabas" and Clement as witnesses to the existence of the Gospels in the first century, as even liberal theologians like Professor Bacon sometimes do, is unintelligible. The Oxford inquiry makes it plain that until the middle of the second century—until the time of Marcion and Papias and Justin—there is no reference to the Gospels in any Christian work or letter, and no indisputable quotation from them. Incidentally, it is important to notice that the Oxford committee does not find a single plausible quotation from *Mark*, which is almost universally regarded as the first Gospel, and is frequently said by theologians to have been written at Rome, the city of Clement, about thirty years before Clement ruled there.

This is very grave evidence against the reliability of the Gospels. Dr. Conybeare reminds us that, if we deny the existence of any book until we find it quoted, our literary history will be singularly confused. But the circumstances here are unusual.

It is the express business of these early Christian writers to talk about Christ and his message, and it would be extraordinary if they had full and authentic records of his life and words, yet made no use of them. We do but apply ordinary historical canons to this particular case when we say that, so far as this evidence is concerned, there is grave reason to suspect that the Gospels did not yet exist ninety years after the death of Christ. It remains to see how far other evidence may modify this conclusion.

In 1897 Grenfell and Hunt discovered and published (under the title *Sayings of Our Lord*) an old manuscript giving, or purporting to give, certain sayings (or *Logia*) of Jesus. Of the seven sayings—the eighth is merely one word—four are not found in the Gospels; one roughly corresponds to a Gospel text; and two entirely correspond. Three more sayings were found afterwards, and they more or less correspond with sayings given in *Matthew*. The general discrepancy from the Gospels compels us to refer them to an earlier oral or written source. The manuscript, which seems to belong to some period of the second century, confirms the impression we receive from the works of the writers before the year 130.

At a later date in the second century, about the year 140 or later, we find an interesting statement about the origin of the Gospels by Bishop Papias, of Hierapolis. His work is lost, but the fragments of it which survive in the later historian Eusebius affirm that Mark wrote a life of Christ from the

speeches of Peter, and that Matthew wrote in Hebrew (or Aramaic) the sayings of Christ; and Papias assures us that he was most diligent in making inquiries of elderly Christians who had been in touch with the apostolic generation. As Papias expressly says that Mark did not write the events of Christ's life "in order," our *Mark* does not in the least correspond with this description, in any reasonable sense of the word "order"; and as he implies that Matthew's Aramaic collection of sayings had already disappeared, and our *Matthew* is much more than a collection of sayings, he is certainly not thinking of our first Gospel. But the suggestion that the original Gospel sources were a narrative written by Mark and a collection of teachings by some other follower agrees very well with the general trend of internal criticism of the Gospels.

Papias himself, it must be said, was a credulous and uncritical man. It is not exactly in accordance with the ways of ordinary historical research to accept at once his account of what Mark did at Rome, and contemptuously reject his account of the marvellous things that Peter did there. However, we need not press the point. The fact is that, if we admit this early narrative by Mark, we have no idea what it contained and what was added to it in the following half century; we have no idea how far the early collection of sayings corresponded with the speeches ascribed to Christ in our *Matthew*, or whether it was not merely such a list as, though possibly longer than, the one found by Grenfell and

Hunt at Oxyrhyncus. It is especially on this most important point that theological works mislead.

We turn, therefore, to the internal evidence, and ask on what grounds theologians generally claim that *Mark*, which is clearly not quoted before about 150, was written before or about the year 70, and the first and third Gospels between 90 and 100. As is well known, nearly every theologian has his own date for the Gospels, and thus the important question of their reliability, which is closely connected with the question of the date of their appearance, is entangled in an almost inextricable confusion. The early followers of Christ, relying on his explicit assurance, believed that the end of the world was near. Why, in such circumstances, should they trouble to put on parchment an exact account of his words and deeds? It was quite enough that they should remember and teach the simple moral conditions he laid down for them to share his "kingdom" when he returned on the clouds of heaven; and, as late as the time of Papias, many Christians still slighted written records and clung to the oral tradition. But oral tradition grew like a snowball in the ancient east (and even, as the story of the Persian Bab shows, in the modern east), and it is most material to know for how many decades the tradition had been rolling through the credulous east before it was embodied in a written record.

In thus supposing that the tradition about Christ would grow from decade to decade, and would uncritically annex any new story that tended to

glorify him, we are not merely appealing to the known character of eastern peoples. We do not even need to study the story of the Persian founder of Behaism in the nineteenth century ; though that story is remarkably instructive in connection with the life of Christ, as it shows how a mass of supernatural legends grows up about the memory of a very natural religious reformer, who was put to death by the orthodox, in the space of forty years. These things cannot be ignored, and, if there had been only thirty years (the least interval which any theologian supposes to have elapsed between the death of Christ and the writing of the first Gospel) for the growth of the oral tradition, it is ample time in such an atmosphere for considerable expansion.

But we shall see that there is no serious proof of the existence of any written record fifty years after the death of Christ ; and, even when written records begin, the process of growth is not checked. The Gospels themselves, and a comparison of the Gospels with other early Christian writings, show that the expansion, modification, and supplementing of the original tradition still goes on. The purpose of the writers is not in the least to give an exact record of what they read or hear. The first and third evangelists take considerable liberties with *Mark*, and the fourth Gospel modifies the whole story in accordance with a doctrinal view ; and there are still later interpolations in the finished Gospels. We have actual evidence of the process of growth, the conversion of a partly natural into a wholly supernatural story. This very interesting

work of modern theologians cannot be reproduced at any length here, and I would therefore prefer to send the reader to the excellent account of it in Dr. Estlin Carpenter's *First Three Gospels* and Dr. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic, and Morals*. In view of this well-established growth of tradition, it is important to have some idea how long it was after the death of Christ before our Gospels appeared, and it is hardly less important to remember that theologians will inevitably seek to make the interval as little lengthy as possible.

External testimony to the existence of the Gospels before the year 130, at least, being entirely lacking, the whole burden has been thrown on internal evidence, which is notoriously less precise and substantial. The hopeless divergences of the experts after a century of this "higher criticism" of the Gospels are proof enough of the faintness of the evidence. There is, however, as I said, a fair agreement to place *Mark* somewhere about the year 70, and *Matthew* and *Luke* in the last decade of the first century. Certain results of the analysis which leads to these figures may be regarded as established. The Gospel which bears the name of John is very late and unreliable, and it will be left out of account here. The three earlier, or the Synoptic, Gospels reveal, on comparison, that *Mark* is the earlier and more fundamental; *Luke* and *Matthew* seem to be a combination of it (or an earlier form of it), with some independent collection of Christ's teachings and parables. It is natural to see in this some

corroboration of the statement of Papias, that Mark wrote the narrative and Matthew the sayings. Why they should, without consultation, adopt this very singular division of labour we cannot imagine; but it is needless to discuss the point. What we want to know is when *our* Gospels appeared. When a theologian says that what appeared about the year 70 was not our second Gospel, but an *Ur-Mark* (or "Primitive Mark"), we are not much advanced. Can we say of any particular passage of our *Mark* that it was in the primitive *Mark*? A very brief examination of a few points will suffice to show how very unsatisfactory these attempts to date the Gospels are.

In the three Synoptic Gospels Christ is made to foretell the ruin of Jerusalem. In *Matthew* and *Luke* the description of the troubles of the year 70 is so vivid that liberal theologians do not hesitate to say that it is a prophecy after the event; it is an early Christian composition written at least forty years after the death of Christ. Some of these theologians, however, persuade themselves that the "prophecy" in *Mark* (ch. xiii) is so little circumstantial that it may pass as a shrewd human forecast. That is to say, they imagine that Jesus, who had just impressed Judæa as it had not been impressed for ages, and had a few days previously enjoyed what must have seemed to him a princely reception into Jerusalem, suddenly foresees the complete failure of his work in the height of its success. He tells his jubilant followers, in sombre language, to prepare for bitter persecution; he

assures these fervent Jews that their glorious temple, the sacredness of which he has just vindicated, will be levelled to the ground; he draws a harrowing picture of approaching wars, and famine, and distracted flight to the mountains. This unworldly religious teacher, who takes no interest in politics, sees, nearly forty years ahead, the tragic clash with Rome and the triumph of Vespasian; and this man who has shortly before restricted the mission of his followers to the Jews says that before these things happen "the gospel must first be published among all nations"! Some of us prefer the simpler hypothesis, that all this was written long after the terrible year 70.

And if this thirteenth chapter is reluctantly said to be a later addition to the "Primitive Mark," what about the eighth chapter, in which there is a similar prediction of hardship and persecution? and the ninth chapter, in which (38-39) rival Christian miracle-workers are mentioned, and (42-44) grave scandals among the brethren are hinted? and the tenth chapter, with its renewed predictions of sacrifice and persecution? What are we to make of the passage (v. 28) in the second chapter, where the reformer, who does not yet even claim to be the Messiah, and does respect the Mosaic law, suddenly claims co-partnership with Jahveh, and describes himself as "Lord of the Sabbath"? And how far do we not seem to be from Judæa when we find the writer needing to explain to his readers that the Pharisees—he talks of them as of a remote and unknown people—are accustomed to fast (ii, 18),

and to wash their hands before meals (vii, 3)? It may be suggested that all these are later additions, and that, if you strike out all that seems to belong to a later age, you have the "Primitive Mark." That would be a naïve way of writing history. The fact is that we find twenty reasons for putting our second Gospel long after the year 70, and not one reason for putting it earlier. Others may argue that *Luke* presupposes *Mark*, and *Luke* was written by the author of *Acts*. The philological grounds for this subtle deduction cannot be discussed here. It is enough to say that even theologians are very far from agreement about it.

It is, however, with *Matthew* that we are chiefly concerned; we are studying the words, not the actions of Christ. *Mark* is very meagre and unimpressive in regard to Christ's teaching. It contains only two parables (one of which is an anti-Jewish allegory, based on the execution of Christ, and was clearly not composed until after that execution) and a very few passages of elementary moral teaching. It is in *Matthew* that the greater part of the teaching ascribed to Christ is found, and we must see how far we can suppose that this document is historically reliable.

The first four chapters are (apart from the baptism and the calling of the apostles) usually set aside as late and legendary. It is, moreover, not the opinion of theologians generally that the "Sermon on the Mount," which occupies the next three chapters and includes the far greater part of Christ's moral teaching, really represents a single discourse. It would

be ingenuous to suppose that one lengthy discourse was remembered in full, and so little was remembered of all the discourses that followed; or that any preacher ever delivered such a rambling address, in such highly romantic circumstances. The general belief is that the evangelist has gathered into one discourse the greater part of the fragments of Christ's discourses which reached him. But a very short examination of this supposed collection of reminiscences will show us at once that it is merely a literary compilation which, whether or no it includes any actual words of Christ, certainly includes very many that are not his.

From the start we find the familiar warning about persecution; and here, at the very beginning of Christ's ministry, it is particularly anachronistic. Then, forgetting that Christ is supposed (vii, 28) to be addressing the multitudes, not the apostles, the writer makes him say that his hearers are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." After this Christ is described as saying that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled," and immediately passing on to denounce the old law (which he knows so little that he describes it as enjoining the Jew to hate his enemy) and substitute a higher code for it. If it be suggested that he is not slighting the Mosaic law, but the rabbinical interpreters of it—in spite of his quoting the words of the Old Testament and repeating that he is differing from "them of old time"—the answer is easy. These supposed new commandments of his were, as we shall see, the

current teaching of rabbis and Essenes at the time, as every Jew in the supposed audience must have known. When, moreover, we find that this very lengthy and unjust tirade against the Pharisees includes such an anachronism as the reference to a man bringing a gift to the altar (v, 24), we can have little doubt that the whole diatribe—extending to more than half the “sermon”—is an outcome of the later conflict of Jew and Christian. Whether or no it includes any genuine words of Christ, we have no means whatever of determining; there are no sentences shining with a light brighter than the context, nor is there any difference of literary style. We can only say that, if Christ taught anything like the things here attributed to him, he must have been singularly ignorant of the teaching of the two great rabbis, Hillel and Shammai, whose teachings were at that time on the lips of every Pharisee in Judæa.

Indeed, it may be well to anticipate a little, and show that the whole evangelistic conception of the Pharisees is absurd and inaccurate. It is not at all impossible that Jesus had quarrels with the Pharisees—they quarrelled with each other—but what actually occurred is hopelessly obscured for us by the later Christian writers, who have filled the Gospels with impossible speeches and trivial arguments and fierce indictments which are as faulty from the ethical as from the historical point of view. On one page (xxiii, 3) the Jesus of *Matthew* tells the Jews to do whatever the Pharisees enjoin, and on ten other pages they are urged to scorn these “blind leaders of the blind.” That any well-informed Jew about

the year 30 could have spoken of the Pharisees as Jesus is supposed to have done is impossible. No one will question that there were hypocrites among the Pharisees. One would like to hear of a nation or a sect that had none among its members. But the whole impression conveyed by the writers of the Gospels is false, and their knowledge of the current sentiments of the Pharisees is remote and defective.

The Christian reader who knows the Pharisees only from the Gospels imagines them to have been a small, exclusive, pompous, and well-to-do caste within the Jewish nation of the time, led by a few learned rabbis who cut the dry chaff of a dead law and kept aloof from the people. He imagines that the mass of the Jewish nation were isolated from this caste and devoid of spiritual food until Jesus appeared. On the contrary, as Mr. Montefiore shows, the Pharisees were, at the time of Christ, about five-sixths of the entire Jewish people, including the very poorest. These rabbis, who are denounced for their arrogance and the spiritual poverty of their teaching, were often children of the people, living in great poverty on their own labour. The way in which Christian writers, even of distinction, describe the environment of Jesus solely in the language of these anonymous, late, and biassed Gospels, and seem never to have read a page of authoritative Jewish works, is little short of scandalous. Hardly any virtue was more sternly enjoined by the leaders of the Pharisees than humility, and, as we shall see, they taught familiarly every shade of moral idealism which the evangelists

suppose Jesus to have put forward in opposition to them. They were men of lofty character, rising to heroic heights during the terrible struggle with Rome. We cannot think that it was Jesus, who presumably knew the real teaching of the rabbis, but the later Christian compilers of the Gospels, far away from Jerusalem and in an age of harsh conflict, who are responsible for the greater part of the Sermon on the Mount.

After this lengthy and inaccurate dissertation on the Pharisees, we have counsels not to take thought of the morrow and not to resist thieves. These ascetic exaggerations were not uncommon at the time, but the modern world is not interested in them; nor, if we desired, could we determine whether they were or were not part of the teaching of Jesus. Some excellent, if not novel, moral counsels follow, and we should be disposed to hear in them the voice of the Galilean teacher, but even these are interrupted by warnings to "beware of false prophets," and to avoid casting pearls before swine, which quite clearly belong to the latter part of the century. In fine, the sermon closes with the reformer, who claims to be "meek and lowly of heart," identifying himself with the judge of the world and dismissing unbelievers to hell: another patent anachronism. We must conclude that, if there are any words of Jesus recorded in these chapters of *Matthew*, they are unrecognizably lost in the dissertations which his later followers have put into his mouth.

It is much the same with the remainder of the

supposed discourses of Jesus in *Matthew* (and *Luke*). In some places we plainly detect the writers of the Gospels enlarging on scanty earlier statements, or making little speeches or incidents in order to fulfil supposed prophecies in the Old Testament; in other places we find interpolations so late that the differences between early copies of the same Gospel (or texts quoted in Christian works) betray them. A very large proportion of the whole is given to the struggle against the Scribes and Pharisees (which is put on false grounds), and to warnings about false prophets and persecutions, which any candid historian must assign to a later date; and the whole narrative is interwoven with stories of miracles which liberal theologians make the most desperate efforts to explain away without impairing the reliability of the Gospel. No doubt we make sufficient allowance for these things if, as so many theologians do, we place the appearance of our *Matthew* in the last decade of the first century. In that case, however, what guarantee have we that it gives a reliable record of any part of the teaching of Christ? If so much of it is not the teaching of Christ, how shall we determine that some other particular text was not due to the same later writer? It is not historical procedure to assume that all the speeches are of Christ which do not contain anachronisms.

Nor shall we make greater progress by looking for what theologians are wont to call the stamp of a great personality. I will discuss this familiar consideration more fully in a later chapter, and will

here suggest in few words how it entirely fails. Consider this beautiful passage in *Matthew* (xxiii, 37):—

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Surely one of the finest apostrophes put into the mouth of Christ! Yet every sober canon of historical construction compels us to say that it *was* put into the mouth of Christ, and was never uttered by him. It occurs at the most prosperous moment of his mission, just after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem: it comes at the close of one of those prolonged and bitter indictments of the Pharisees, on fictitious grounds, in which we recognize the hand of the later anti-Jewish Christian; it is itself one of those allusions to the fall of Jerusalem which would have been entirely unintelligible, if they had been possible, at that time. It is a perfectly natural and harmonious termination of the speech which fills the chapter. These violent denunciations of the Pharisees have themselves the impress of a strong personality, if there is such an impress anywhere in the Gospels; yet the defective morality and the wholly inaccurate knowledge betrayed in them compel us to dissociate them from Christ. They are quite intelligible only in the bitter struggles of Jew and Christian at a later date.

Many other passages might be adduced. Take the text in *Luke* (xxiii, 34): "Father, forgive them,

for they know not what they do"; or the story of the woman taken in adultery. Supremely typical of Christ, conservative theologians say; but the evidence of their being late interpolations in the Gospel is strong enough to compel divines who are not regarded as liberal to surrender them. Take, again, the fine chants that are put into the mouths of Mary, of Zacharias, and of Simeon in the early chapters of *Luke*. These are confessedly not words of Christ. But the man who composed those chants, and the apostrophe over Jerusalem, and the vivid descriptions of its fall, and the incisive denunciations of the Pharisees, was capable of composing anything in the four Gospels.

I will consider in the last chapter the larger application of this supposed criterion. It certainly does not help us to identify words of Christ in the Gospels, and need not be considered further here. Other theologians, following Dr. Schmiedel, look for passages which only a scrupulous fidelity to tradition can have compelled the evangelists to insert in their works. This test seems to me valuable and profitable in the case of such passages as that in which the family of Jesus pronounce him insane, or that in which the dying prophet cries: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But how far do these passages take us? The objection has been made that, if fifty generations of theologians found nothing to scandalize them in these passages, the evangelists may have been equally ingenious in interpreting them. The objection has weight; yet such passages do undoubtedly point to tradition

rather than invention. A case of our own time must occur to all who read of Christ's mother and brothers thinking him insane;¹ and the "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," lingering in the original Aramaic, puts a certain seal of reality on the general suggestion of some fervid young preacher who in an exalted moment rose to Messianic pretensions, and was put to death for blasphemy. Some passages of his life men might remember and admiringly magnify; of his teaching the burden would suffice. The contradictory versions of his words in the Gospels and other early documents—flat contradictions on such important points as the nature of Jesus, the relation of his followers to the Mosaic law, the range of their mission, divorce, etc.—to say nothing of the sharp quarrels which at once arose between Paul and others, tell us plainly how confused were the recollections of his followers, or how genuine recollections were modified to suit later beliefs and hopes. No man can say to-day through what transformations the recorded words have gone before they reached the form in which we have them.

Thus Dr. Schmiedel's ingenious and useful theory does not help us in the present study. We may grant that, when we find Christ saying, "Why callest thou me good?" the narrative has a ring of sincerity. But how does it accredit any particular

¹ I have, of course, nothing to do with the inconsistency of this statement with the statement that Mary knew from conception the supernatural nature of her son. The latter is clearly a late legend. The whole cult of Mary is built on it and on the romantic fourth Gospel. The earlier and more reliable strata of the Gospels uniformly represent Christ as on very bad terms with his mother.

statement which precedes or follows? It seems reasonable to conclude from such passages that the writers of the Gospels had before them authentic traditions, oral or written; but we have no means of determining how large those traditions were, and whether they included any particular saying recorded in the Gospels. After decades of assiduous scholarship, the Biblical problem seems, in this respect, almost insoluble. We do not know when our Gospels were written. And, even if we put their composition between 80 and 100, in spite of the apparent ignorance of them in the letters of leading bishops forty years afterwards, we should still have no right to trust them implicitly when they purport to give us the words of Christ; especially when they ascribe so much to Christ which some later Christian must have fabricated.

It is sometimes pleaded that the Oriental memory was retentive in proportion as its literature was scanty. Indeed, I shall presently plead for a large measure of trust in the memories of the pupils of the rabbis, and it may be thought that I am using one measure for the Jew and another for the Christian. The Talmud was, in fact, written much later than the Gospels, yet I would quote from it the sentiments of rabbis of the first century and earlier. But the circumstances are wholly different. In the schools of the rabbis there was not only a systematic, severe, and extensive cultivation of memory, but there was a rigorous and systematic control of it. The Jews would not commit their traditions to writing, to rival the books of the law; but those traditions

were sacred, and there was every care for accuracy in transmitting them. You did not, in the Jewish world, write a pamphlet about Hillel and his sayings, which people might accept at once because it edified. You learned from an accredited teacher, and only taught in turn when your knowledge was assured. That was one of the advantages of school-work and of literalism. In the Christian world the conditions were exactly the reverse. There was no control and no consistency. Dozens of gospels and scores of legends sprang up, and the acceptance was free and uncritical. *Mark* gives Christ a simple human entry into the world at Nazareth; by the time of the appearance of *Luke* a mass of legends about his birth had won acceptance. Every edifying addition, modification, and excision found favour among the Christians. The Gospels and the Talmud belong to different worlds.

If, then, half a century at least elapsed—how much more no man can say—between the death of Christ and the appearance of the Synoptic Gospels, and if they and other documents show a considerable fluidity or confusion in regard to the words of Christ and a great promptness to improve on them, we must regard with reserve the speeches actually ascribed to him. It would, therefore, be of material interest to know *where* the Gospels arose. Let us recall our main purpose. It is to study the relation of the sentiments ascribed to Christ in the Gospels to the general moral culture of his age. I have already partly shown, and will afterwards show in detail, that there is not one moral sentiment in the

Gospels to which you cannot find a parallel in the Jewish, Greek, and Roman moralists of that and preceding ages. If we find such parallels in Judæa alone, we must admit that there is no mystery about the substance of the teaching of Christ. I will deal in the last chapter, summarily, with the claim that he gave a peculiar and magnificent impress to these current sentiments; but it is necessary first to establish that there was nothing new in the substance. When a man like Sir Oliver Lodge talks of Christ having been put to death because his teaching was "so far in advance of his age," it is by no means superfluous to show that his teaching was the common moral teaching of that age. This is accomplished, I repeat, if we find in Judaism itself—in the Old Testament, the rabbinical teachings, the Essenian tenets, etc.—all the sentiments ascribed to Christ; for he must have been familiar with these sources.

We shall see that these Jewish parallels are available on every point; and the previous historical chapters, showing the gradual development of such sentiments in the great civilizations, will have prepared the reader to expect them. But it is important to understand that this same moral idealism and this asceticism were just as familiar in what is called the "pagan" world, and I will add parallels from Greek and Roman literature. It is, therefore, interesting, though not essential, to inquire if those who gave Christ's words their final form, and wrote the speeches which we cannot ascribe to Christ, lived in some of those Græco-

Roman cities of the time where all moral and religious cultures met; whether, in other words, the Gospels may not have been written in the cities of Asia Minor, or even Greece and Italy.

Even conservative theologians, building on the statement of Papias, often believe that *Mark*, the earliest Gospel, was written at Rome, and *Luke* somewhere outside Judæa; but *Matthew*, which contains most of the moral teaching, is said to have originated in Judæa. This, however, can only be said with any plausibility of the original Hebrew compilation which Papias ascribes to Matthew, and one must constantly bear in mind that, even if we respect this tradition, we have no idea what this early compilation included. I have already pointed out that a very large part of the speeches attributed to Jesus in *Matthew* cannot reasonably be admitted as such, and there is no criterion by which we may judge the remaining speeches; except that many sayings have an undeniably Jewish character. Further, the topography is of the vaguest description, quite as vague as in *Mark*; and in this respect the Gospel might have been written in any city of the Roman world. On the other hand, the outlook and phrasing are very often distinctly Judaic, the mission of the apostles is confined to the Jews, and the Old Testament is often quoted, not from the Greek translation, but from the Hebrew original. It seems a reasonable interpretation of these complex features that, as so many theologians believe, an originally Aramaic work has been used and augmented by a Greek (a Judæo-Greek) writer. Papias, it may be

recalled, in saying that Matthew wrote the sayings of Jesus, adds: "And each one interpreted them as he was able." We must admit that, on the internal evidence, our *Matthew* may have been written in any part of the Roman world; and, as it was obviously written after the dispersion of the Jews in the year 70, it is inconceivable that it was written at Jerusalem, and probable that it was written outside Judæa.

This is, however, a point of secondary interest. We shall see that, if the Gospels had been written in Jerusalem itself before the year 70, we can easily find a Jewish parallel for every sentiment contained in them, and there is no question of originality or superiority to contemporary moral codes. As it is, however, the evidence points to the appearance of the Gospels two generations after the death of Christ at least, and in an environment where such sentiments abounded. Possibly Christ, like so many of the rabbis, taught the maxims of *Isaiah* and *Wisdom* and *Job* and *Ecclesiasticus*, and of the finer Jewish commentators on them; possibly his immediate Jewish followers added more from these sources to the memory of his teaching; possibly the Greek romancers who finally constructed the Gospels added yet more from the non-Semitic culture about them. The slender evidence does not justify any positive opinion. We must, therefore, leave it open whether the speeches ascribed to Christ in the Gospels were really, in some cases, delivered by him or no, and we must deal with them merely as a moral code appearing towards the end of the first century, based on the teaching of Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPELS AND THE TALMUD

FOR the vast majority of people the most charming and distinctive feature of Christ's teaching is the use of parables. In spite of the puzzling statement in the fourth chapter of *Mark* (iv, 11), that he deliberately veiled his teaching *from* the multitude by parables—which seems to be an anachronistic expression of the reserve of Christians in a later age of persecution—it is repeatedly said that in this simple form of discourse to the multitudes lay his chief superiority over the scribes and Pharisees. This is part of the general sophistication of history that we find in orthodox circles. To say that the Pharisees were not a small and self-conscious group, but the overwhelming mass of the Jewish people, seems to ordinary believers an audacious and malicious attack upon the Gospels; though it may easily be gathered from authoritative sources. And that the Pharisees not only taught the most refined and ascetic moral principles, but were especially accustomed to put this teaching in the form of parable, seems to them a statement as audacious or flagrant as the denial of the historicity of Christ; yet an hour's study of the Talmud, or of some

reliable volume of selections from the Talmud (of which we have several in English), would show them that it is a truism.

Since, however, even the earliest part of the Jewish tradition embodied in the Talmud was not committed to writing until the third century of the present era, some theologians—notably Dr. Jülicher in his *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (1899)—have been bold enough to suggest that it was the example of Christ which set the rabbis making parables, and that all the parables of the Talmud are post-Christian. The more primitive part of the Talmud was, as I explained, fixed, after a wide and laborious investigation, by Jehuda the Nasi about the year 220. But, apart from those special circumstances of the schools which, we have seen, confined and guarded the stream of rabbinical tradition, the idea that the Jews may have imitated the Christian Scriptures seems to be based on a superficial view of their relations and of the position of the Christians. There was not only a bitter hostility, a constant and most searching antagonism, between the two religious bodies after the first century, but the Jews would have no incentive to borrow the traditions of the Christians. Even in the first half of the third century, the Christians were an obscure and small sect, with no prospect whatever of surpassing Mithraism and other religions in the affections of the Roman world. Dr. Jülicher is reading the situation in the light of the later triumph of Christianity; he imagines the Christian body advancing triumphantly, and the Jews borrowing

some of the elements of their success. The truth seems to be that until the fortunate and unexpected conversion of Constantine in the fourth century the Christians did not number a million in the whole Empire, and they generally struggled in obscurity, while the Jews amassed wealth and influence.

Even if we suppose that there was a mind to borrow from the Christian Scriptures (or earlier, from the Christian tradition), any actual borrowing seems impossible. The chief source of irritation on the part of the Jews was that the Christians were constantly winning proselytes from them. These proselytes would be sure to unmask this supposed trick of borrowing the parables or the methods of Christ, yet we hear no such charge brought against the Jews. The rabbinical system makes the idea still more impracticable. Especially after the fall of Jerusalem the Jewish schools were scattered over the Roman world, and there was constant communication between them. So important an innovation would have to be accepted, by a kind of conspiracy, by all the schools, since the whole school-tradition would have to be falsified in harmony with the innovation. And the great Christian writers, instead of detecting this remarkable imposture, actually tell us how natural it was for Christ to speak in parables, since it was a common form of speech in his country! "It is a common thing for the Syrians, especially in Palestine," says St. Jerome, who knew Palestine, "to add parables to their words."

But the evidence of the evolution of the parable

in Judæa and of its early use by the rabbis is strong enough to dispense us from further consideration of this fantastic hypothesis. Rabbi I. Ziegler (*Die Königsgleichnisse des Midrasch*, 1903) points out that we find the parable developing in the Old Testament. Solomon, the Jewish tradition said (1 *Kings*, iv, 32), uttered "three thousand proverbs"; and the Hebrew word is the same as for "parable." *Ezekiel* is full of more or less developed parables, and *Isaiah* has one or two of a very definite nature. But the evidence of the Talmud itself suffices, and this must be examined with care. The most effective reply to Jülicher from that side is *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (1912) by P. Fiebig, and I need do little more in the following pages than borrow from his learned studies of the Talmud parables which have been compared with those of Jesus.

The great value of Fiebig's study is that, while he is severely critical in quoting the Talmud and very attentive to its different chronological strata, he is not sufficiently critical in regard to the Gospels; he has, in other words, certainly no bias against the Gospels. He is far too apt to assume that Jesus actually spoke the words attributed to him; or, to put it in its most important light, to assume that the Christian parables really appeared about the year 30. This is not just. I have previously referred to a parable which we have every reason to regard as composed by some later follower of Christ. It is one of the two parables given in *Mark* (xii, 1-9), yet it is clearly a compound of *Isaiah's* parable of the vineyard (v, 1-6) with the killing of

Christ by the Jews. A literary critic would, however, find it impossible to detect any difference between that and the parables of *Matthew* and *Luke*. It is most important to keep in mind the fact that there is no sort of proof of the existence of these Christian parables until the end of the first, or beginning of the second, century.

It is therefore entirely wrong to say that parables or sayings which in the Talmud are attributed to rabbis who lived after the year 30 are excluded from comparison with those attributed to Christ in the Gospels. On the contrary, it is very important to compare with the text of the Gospels the sayings and parables attributed to the well-known rabbis of the period (30-120 A.D.) in which the Christian tradition was taking shape. Even when sayings more or less resembling those attributed to Jesus are ascribed to rabbis of the second century, we have, as I explained, strong reason to resent the suggestion that they had borrowed from the Christian scriptures. Such borrowing is almost inconceivable in the second century, though it is not impossible in later centuries, and we must not press every parallel found in the Talmud.

On the other hand, it would be evidence of a churlish and unscientific temper to say that, wherever we find an early Talmud parallel to sayings in the Gospels, Jesus, or the writers of the Gospels, borrowed from the rabbis. To put all the originality on the Jewish side would be merely to invert the prejudice and blunder committed by Christian writers, who insist that all the originality is on

the Christian side. The more candid student will probably expect that both rabbis and Christians had a very large traditional lore to draw upon, and a shrewd Christian was not less likely than an able rabbi to take some germ in this traditional teaching and develop it. Probably we shall be nearer the truth if we restrict actual borrowing on either side as much as possible. In some cases there seems to be little room for reasonable doubt that the actual teaching of the early rabbis (the name only begins to be used in the first century) has been put into the mouth of Jesus; but I may leave the judgment of this point to the reader in each case. What I propose to show is that the parable was a favourite vehicle of the rabbis, and that some of the Gospel parables were, in a very similar, and sometimes superior, form, actually put forward by rabbis of the first century.

The Talmud contains two elements of very different date. The teaching of the commentators on the law before Hillel and Shammai (in the last part of the first century B.C.) is only vaguely preserved, though undoubtedly a mass of comment—partly unattractive hair-splitting on precepts of the law, and partly moral dissertation of a high quality—had been accumulated in the schools. With the followers of Hillel and Shammai, about the year 10 A.D., the long line of definitely known “teachers” (*Tanaim*—an ordained teacher then begins also to have the title of “rabbi”) begins, and continues until Jehuda the Nasi closes the body of teaching (or *Mishna*) about the year 220. This Tanaitic

material (the *Mishna* and certain additions) is the older part of the Talmud, and is in Hebrew. But the teaching continued in the schools, and fresh fragments of the older teaching which had been overlooked were brought to light, so that the rabbis (now known as *Amoraim*) had by the fifth century a further mass of material to codify. This forms the *Gemara*, or later stratum of the two Talmuds. Generally speaking, this Amoraic material is late and uninteresting; but the earlier fragments embedded in it, which may generally be recognized by the Hebrew text (the context is Aramaic) or the formula of introduction, are valuable. In quoting from the Talmud we must, as far as possible, note carefully whether the quotation belongs to the earlier (or Tanaitic) portion or to the later (Amoraic); in simpler terms, whether it belongs to the *Mishna* or the *Gemara*. Some of the writers who quote parallels between the Talmuds and the Gospels pay too little attention to this distinction.

The reader will have a more precise idea of the value of the parallels if a word is added on the succession of the rabbis, which has been traced by Jewish writers. The Tanaim begin, just before the Christian era opens, with the rival followers of the great rival teachers, Hillel (liberal and lenient) and Shammai (the classical rigorist). The succession of masters from the time of Christ to the year 80 is Akabia ben Mahalalel, Gamaliel the Elder (grandson of Hillel), Chanina, Simon ben Gamaliel, and Johanan ben Zakkai. These names will occur repeatedly in our quotations. From 80 to 120 we have Gamaliel II,

Zadok, Dosa, Eliezer ben Jacob, Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, Joshua ben Chanina, Elazar ben Azaria, Elazar ben Arach, and Juda ben Bathyra; most of these names also will recur. From 120 onward the names are less important, and the interested reader may find the list in Rabbi Rodkinson's *History of the Talmud* (1903). I need add only that R. Tarphon and R. Akiba taught about 120-130; R. Meir about 140-160; and R. Jehuda the Nasi (who completed the Mishna) about 200-220. Few other names concern us.

Consulting the Talmud in the light of these explanations, we soon see that the position of Dr. Jülicher is quite untenable. The Gospels, it may be observed, do not claim that Jesus differed from the scribes and Pharisees by telling parables, though it is not uncommon to misread the words of *Matthew* (vii, 29) in this sense. In point of fact, there are many parables in the Talmud attributed to rabbis who taught long before *Matthew* was written, and we have no serious reason to doubt the Jewish tradition. If we had full records of the earlier teachers—if Jewish sentiment had not been so sternly opposed to the writing down of their teaching—we should no doubt be in a better position to trace the development of the parable; but in point of fact little is ascribed to any teacher personally before Hillel. However, the well-known rabbis of the first century frequently conveyed their instruction in parables, and there is evidence that some of the rabbis cultivated the art in a remarkable degree. Rabbi Meir, the most famous pupil of the

heroic Akiba, and not a man to copy Christian methods, is said (*Sanhedrim*, 38 b) to have had "three hundred fox-parables"; and an independent passage in the Mishna (*Sotah*, 14) says, in the exaggerated language of an encomium: "When Rabbi Meir died, the makers of parables ceased." From the context we understand that this merely means that R. Meir was remarkable for his use of parables.

I turn, however, first to the earlier rabbis, of whom Johanan ben Zakkai seems to have been conspicuous for the use of parable. This eminent rabbi died about the year 90, but much of his teaching falls before the year 70, as it was he who transferred the school to Jabneh after the fall of Jerusalem. The following parable, which is not directly connected with anything in the Gospels, will serve to illustrate his method¹:—

A parable. Like unto a man from the country who went into the shop of a glass-seller. And there stood before him a basket full of vessels and glass-work. And he smote them with his stick, and broke them. Then the shopman arose, and accosted him. And he said unto him: I know that it will do me no good, but come, and I will show thee how many precious things thou hast destroyed. So God showed them how many generations they had destroyed.

¹ It is taken from the Midrash rabba to *Genesis*, par. 19. In this chapter I take all the quotations from the Talmud from Fiebig's German work, as that scholar is a competent interpreter of the Talmud and has in this work proceeded with especial caution. Where the parable is contained in Rabbi Rodkinson's (partial) English translation of the Talmud, I give the reference. The Talmud parable usually begins abruptly with the phrase, "Like unto."

Here, of course, there is no parallel with any Gospel parable. I quote it only, as scores of others may be quoted, to show how the rabbis, even of the first century, were wont to convey a moral or religious lesson in the form of parable. In the next parable I take from Johanan ben Zakkai, however, the question of the relation to the supposed parables of Christ is acutely raised. It is a common feature of Talmudic parables to take the figure of a king—usually called “a king of flesh and blood,” or human king—and his servants, and to imagine him inviting them to a banquet or giving them royal robes. This is an allegory of the relations of men to the heavenly king; the banquet is the kingdom of heaven, the garments the conditions of virtue.¹ In the following parable the theme of the rabbi is the familiar exhortation to be ever ready for death, and it is conveyed in a naïve story of the behaviour of some petty and paternal oriental monarch:—

Like unto a king who invited his servants to a banquet, but appointed no time unto them. The wiser among them put on their festive garments, and betook themselves to the door of the king's house, saying: In a king's house nothing is wanting [perhaps the banquet takes place to-day]. But the foolish among them went about their work, saying: Can a banquet be prepared without trouble? And of a sudden the king summoned his servants. The wiser went in to him, as they were, in their festive garments; and the foolish went into him, as they

¹ See a large number in Rabbi Ziegler's *Die Königsgleichnisse des Midrasch* (1903), with illuminating comments. This work also demolishes the position of Jülicher, Weinel, and others who make the rabbis imitate Christ.

were, in their soiled garments. Then the king was pleased with the wise, but angry with the foolish. He said: They who have dressed themselves for the banquet may sit, and eat, and drink; but they who have not put on festive garments shall stand by and watch.¹

There is a slightly different version of this in a later part of the Talmud, where R. Jehuda the Nasi gives it as an ancient parable; but there is no reason to doubt that it was spoken by R. Johanan long before *Matthew* and *Luke* were written; that Johanan taught long after the death of Christ matters not, as we have no trace of the Christian parable until the appearance of the Gospels. It is, therefore, instructive to compare this with the parable of the marriage-feast (*Matthew* xxii, 2), which I may reproduce:—

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying: Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants: The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall

¹ *Sabbath*, 153 a (Rodkinson, vol. ii, p. 361).

find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to his servants: Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Any candid person will allow that if this rambling and incomprehensible parable were in the Talmud, and Johanan's parable were in the Gospel, the latter would be found far superior, and theologians would enlarge on the insipidity of the Talmud. Guests who slay a king's messengers because they bring invitations to a royal banquet; kings who have the highways swept to fill the vacant places and consign you to eternal damnation because, after being hurried in from the street, you do not chance to have been wearing your wedding-garment there—these things do not greatly enlighten the school-children on whom we impose them. But if you consider the parable carefully, and compare it with the shorter version in *Luke* (xiv, 16) and the parable of Johanan, the explanation is surely simple. The Gospel parable was never spoken by Christ. It is an allegory based on the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and the substitution of the Gentiles for them in God's favour. At the very time when *Matthew* and *Luke* suppose Jesus to give this allegory, they represent him as clinging to the exclusively Jewish

mission and telling the people to observe all that the rabbis bid them observe. In *Luke* it is made to illustrate the maxim that you should invite the poor to your dinners; but the later doctrinal idea is betrayed by the absurd supposition that the man's first guests one and all refuse to come. In *Matthew* the doctrinal idea is fully developed. The Jews (the first-chosen guests) maltreat and slay God's messengers, and the Gentiles are admitted. In the end, the doctrinal idea goes so far as to demand a certain condition (grace) in the guest, and twists the parable into the wildest implausibility to convey this.

Surely we have here something very different from Jülicher's idea of the rabbis borrowing from Jesus! Fiebig, wrongly conceding (without close examination, apparently) that Jesus spoke the parable, will not admit that it is based on the rabbinical saying. But in this case we have not only no reason to think the Gospel parable early, but every reason to regard it as late. When, therefore, we have a perfectly intelligible, if ingenuous, parable spoken by a rabbi about or before the year 70, and a similar story made hopelessly unintelligible unless we suppose it to have been written by a Christian long after the year 70, we are justified in thinking that in this case a rabbinical saying was borrowed, distorted, and put into the mouth of Christ. The only reasonable alternative is to suppose that Johanan and the Christian writer independently developed an earlier idea; of this we have no evidence, but it is quite possible.

It seems also not improbable that the parable of the ten virgins was composed with an eye to Johanan's parable. The many incongruities of the parable—the midnight wedding, the failure of bridesmaids to provide an essential detail of their outfit, the notion that bridesmaids fall asleep a few hours before a wedding, the selfishness of the wise virgins, and the harshness of the bridegroom (*Matthew*, xxv, 1-13)—make it a jumble of doctrine and of human impossibilities which is much more intelligible in a later and not very clear-headed Christian than in the mouth of Christ. It seems to be a variation on the well-known rabbinical parable, exhorting men to be ever on the watch. The parable of the vineyard (*Matthew*, xxi, 33-40) I have already described as a similar late parable relating to the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, founded on the parable in *Isaiah* (v, 1-6), from which many details are obviously taken.

In further illustration of the rabbinical idea of dividing men into wise and foolish in their parables, it may be useful to quote one from another part of the Talmud (*Sabbath*, 152 b; Rodkinson, ii, 359). This parable is anonymous, but it is clearly Tanaitic, or a part of the earlier stratum of the Talmud:—

Like unto a king of flesh and blood who distributed royal garments among his servants. The wiser of them folded the garments, and laid them in a chest. The foolish went their way, and worked in them. After a time the king demanded to see the garments. And the wise brought them to him clean, as they were; but the foolish brought them soiled, as they were. And the king was pleased with the wise and

angry with the foolish. To the wise he said: My garments may go to the treasure-house, and ye may go in peace to your homes. But to the foolish he said: My garments may go to the wash, but ye shall go to prison. So saith the Holy One about the body of the just (*Is.*, lvii, 2): He goeth into peace.

The idea recurs constantly in the teaching of the rabbis, and was probably familiar enough to the Jews in the time of Christ. But we come again somewhat nearer to the Gospel parables if we consider one that is attributed in the Talmud to Rabbi Elazar ben Arach, a pupil and friend of R. Johanan. The older man had lost a son, and R. Elazar said, by way of consolation:—

I will tell thee a parable. To whom shall I liken the matter? To a man with whom the king hath entrusted a deposit. Every day he wept, and cried, and said: Woe is me, when shall I be free from this burden, and in peace? So thou, rabbi, hadst a son.....and he left the world sinless. Thou mayest therefore be comforted; for thou hast restored thy trust uninjured.

This parable is chiefly interesting as an illustration of the spontaneity with which the rabbis, even out of school, resorted to parable.¹ But one naturally associates it with the parable of the talents (*Matthew*, xxv, 14-28). A comparison of this with the like parable in *Luke* (xix, 12-27) shows that some simpler and earlier parable has been differently developed by the later followers of Christ. In both it is more or less distorted by the doctrinal theme,

¹ It is taken from the *Abot of R. Nathan*, ch. xiv (Rod., i, 56).

and in *Luke* the familiar allusion to the rejection of Jesus by the Jews creeps in. What the simpler original parable was, and whether it was actually spoken by Jesus, we cannot ascertain. R. Elazar ben Arach taught in the early decades of the second century, and it cannot seriously be thought that his little parable inspired those in the Gospels. But if, as is common, he is using a traditional idea, this may also have been employed by Jesus or the later writers. The idea is, however, not so profound that we need assume indebtedness on any side.

Much the same must be said of a parable ascribed in the Talmud (*Rosh ha shana*, 17 b) to R. Jose, who taught about the same period; too late, that is to say, for us to assume that any Gospel writer built upon his saying. Explaining the law to a proselyte, he said:—

I will make thee a parable. To what shall I liken the matter? To a man who lendeth his neighbour a mina, and appointeth unto him a day of reckoning in the presence of the king. And he swore to him on the life of the king. The time came, but he paid not; and he came to make his peace with the king. And the king said unto him: Thy offence against me is forgiven: go thou, and make peace with thy neighbour.

This simple and intelligible parable, another good illustration of rabbinical usage, recalls the Gospel parable of the two debtors (*Matthew*, xviii, 23–34); in which a servant owes his king the preposterous sum of ten thousand talents (about £2,000,000 sterling),¹ and, receiving grace, will not be equally

¹ In Spence and Exell's *Pulpit Commentary* the preacher is

indulgent to a slave who owes him a small debt. The application is, however, different, and the parables agree only on very general lines. It is interesting merely to notice that an idea approaching that of the Gospel parable was current in rabbinical circles.

Fiebig then includes among the parables two sayings of R. Elazar ben Azaria and R. Elisha ben Abuja, which I give among the parallels in the next chapter. They are imperfect parables, closely resembling the last words of the Sermon on the Mount, and clearly showing that the idea of building on an unsound foundation, or of floods and gales overthrowing the badly-established soul, was familiar to the rabbis. Indeed, the idea, as we shall see, goes back to the Old Testament.

A very much closer parallel, and one of great interest, as the idea of borrowing seems to be excluded, is found in a parable attributed (*Jalkut Simoni* i, par. Jethro, sect. 286) to R. Simon ben Elazar :—

Like to a king who had two supervisors : one set over the treasures of silver and gold, and one set over the stores of straw. The one who had charge of the straw store was suspected, and he murmured because they would not set him over the store of silver and gold. Then said they to him : Fool, if thou incurrest suspicion in regard to the straw-store, how canst thou be found fit to take charge of the treasure of silver and gold.....If the children of Noah were not faithful to the commandments given

directed to make the following delicious reflection on this text :
"The reckoning had only just begun ; there may have been other even greater debts to come" (p. 223)!

them, how much less would they have observed all the commandments of the Law?

Fiebig observes that this is not only a late parable (about the year 200), but one with little relation to the parable of the unjust steward (*Luke*, xvi, 1-10). The conclusion of that parable, however, is entirely similar to the idea of Simon's parable: "He that is unfaithful in the less will be unfaithful in the greater." It is not at all clear how, in *Luke*, the moral can be drawn from the parable, which is one of those extraordinary and bewildering vagaries that some less clear-headed follower seems to have attributed to Jesus. The lord "commends the unjust steward," and Christ tells his hearers to make for themselves "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"; a lesson which he emphatically reverses the next moment. There is some strange confusion about the parable and its moral, and it is possible that we have in R. Simon's parable the application of an earlier idea which may lie at the root of the Christian parable.

This puzzling parable of the unjust steward is followed in *Luke* by the well-known story of the rich man and Lazarus (xvi, 19-31), and the fundamental ideas of this, and some of the detail of the story, have interesting parallels in the Talmud. In the Midrash *rabba* to *Koheleth* (par. i, a commentary on the words: "That which is crooked cannot be made straight," *Eccles.*, i, 15), a section which belongs to the seventh or eighth century, there is a Tanaitic fragment (in Hebrew) which coincides with the secondary idea of the Gospel parable.

Fiebig remarks that the actual lateness of the book prevents us from entertaining the idea that the Christians borrowed from it, but he adds that the passage, being undoubtedly early, "shows that Jesus does not in *Luke* xvi, any more than elsewhere, give us quite new, unheard-of, and entirely original ideas, but shows himself, in his ideas and figures of speech, to be the child of his age and his people" (p. 100). The parable, which is meant to illustrate the impossibility of doing penance after death, is worth quoting (slightly abbreviated):—

There are wicked men who are companions in this world. One such did penance before his death, and one did not penance. He that did penance was found worthy, and is in the company of the just; the other is in the company of the wicked. And this man, seeing his companion, crieth out: Perchance there is some preference in this world. Woe is me.....Why is this man in the company of the just, and I in the company of the wicked? And they [that stood about] said unto him: Thou foolthy companion saw thy undoing, and swore to amend his evil ways, and did penance like a just man. And he said unto them: Let me go and do penance. And they answered and said: Knowest thou not, fool, that this world is like the Sabbath?Whereupon he gnasheth his teeth and devoureth his flesh. And he saith: Let me go and see the honour of my companion. And they say: Fool, we are commanded by the mouth of power that the just shall not go among the wicked, nor the wicked among the just.

There is so much correspondence in detail between this parable and the Gospel parable of Lazarus that we must greatly regret that it is impossible to give

it a more precise date. As it is, however, we must be content to know that the idea of the wicked "gnashing their teeth" in torment as they behold the bliss of the just, from which an impassable gulf separates them, was known in the rabbinical world. But the interest does not end here. I am not aware that any divine has ever refused to ascribe the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to Jesus because of its certainly questionable morality; though there are few Christian pulpits from which a preacher would venture to affirm that the rich man will go to hell because of his wealth, and the beggar go to heaven because of his poverty. There are, however, now divines who regard the parable as a late compilation, and assuredly the most reasonable interpretation of it is that the rich man is the Jew, and the beggar at the gate, who is at last preferred to the Jew, is the Gentile. If this is so, the Christian parable belongs to the later period, and parallel passages in rabbinical tradition are interesting.

Now there is a lengthy and rambling parable or story in a late section of the Jerusalem Talmud (*Hagigah*, 77 d) which in many respects approaches the Christian parable. It is in the Aramaic text, and, as we have it, is not earlier than the fourth or fifth century; but the hero of the story is Simon ben Shatah, who lived about 100 B.C., and we cannot say how early the story may be. It tells of two pious Jews who lived at Ascalon. One of them died, and had a humble funeral. Shortly afterwards the son of a publican died, and received an honour-

able funeral, so that the friend of the dead Jew murmured. The dead man then appeared to him in a dream, and told him not to complain. "A few days [nights] afterwards," the story runs, "the survivor saw his pious companion walking in a garden, in a park, amidst many waters. And he saw the son of Majan the Publican, his tongue hanging out, at the brink of the river; he wanted to reach the water, and could not." It is the same idea of the underworld as in the Christian parable, but we must be content to know that such ideas were current in the rabbinical sphere.¹

To the main idea of the parable, that the rich have their reward in this world and the poor in the next, we have a parallel in a saying of R. Rab (*Berachot*, 61 b): "The world was made only for Ahab ben Omri and Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa: for Ahab ben Omri this world, and for Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa the world to come." Ahab is the typical unscrupulous rich man, and Chanina was one of the poorest of the rabbis. The idea is, therefore, the same, except that Ahab is not condemned merely for his wealth. R. Rab, however, lived in the early part of the third century, and the passage must be quoted only in illustration of rabbinical sentiments. In the next chapter we shall see that the rabbis were

¹ In the same story there is an incident which recalls the Gospel parable of the banquet. When the Jew complains of the grand funeral of the publican's son, he says: "What good hath the son of Majan the publican done? Far be it from him. He hath not done a single good deed in his life. Save that on one occasion he prepared a feast for the councillors, but they came not to eat the feast. And he said: The poor, who have nothing, must eat it."

at all times convinced of this transmundane reward of the unworldly.

In this later section of the Talmud we find also many loose parallels to the minor parables. In the Midrash to *Solomon's Song* (*Shir ha shirim*, par. i, to ch. i) the Rabbi Pinehas ben Jair (about 200 A.D.) commends the search for wisdom in these words:—

Like unto a man, who, when he hath lost a piece of money in his house, lights many lamps and candles until he findeth it.....A man lights many lamps and candles in order to find those things which pertain to the life of an hour of this world, whereas the words of the Law sustain the life of this world and of the life to come.

In the same book Rabbi Chanina (about 300 A.D.) briefly expresses the same idea: "Like unto a king who hath lost gold or a fine pearl in his house; doth he not find it by means of a light that is worth but a farthing?" The thought is so simple and obvious that it may very well have occurred independently to Jesus (or the maker of the parables of the lost drachma and the buried treasure) and to various rabbis. In point of fact, however, it is directly inspired by many texts (*Prov.* ii, 4, etc.) of the wisdom-books of the Old Testament, and we have here rather an indication of the common source of Jewish and Christian writers. The same may be said of a parable about a "pearl of great price" that occurs late in the Talmud (*Sabbath*, 119 a), and remotely recalls the parable in *Matthew* (xiii, 45-46) and other passages. A Jew named Joseph, who observed the Sabbath, lived in poverty; but a rich pagan was warned that this man would ultimately

gain all his wealth. So the rich man "sold all that he had," and invested the money in a rare stone. While he travelled, however, this stone was blown into the sea and swallowed by a fish, and Joseph bought the fish. There is very little analogy, and the moral is different; but it shows how easily the later books of the Old Testament inspired such parables.

The closest parallel of all is the parable of the hired workers who labour for different hours and are paid alike. The Gospel parable (*Matthew*, xx, 1-16) is not a happy mingling of transcendental doctrine and natural events. Whatever we may think of the doctrine that God may reward a very slight merit as generously as a high merit and long life of service, it becomes incongruous when you illustrate it by a human employer who claims to "do what he likes with his own." The Talmud parable (*Berachot*, 5 c, Jerusalem Talmud) neatly avoids these incongruities:—

Rabbi Zeira said: To whom shall I liken the Rabbi Bon, son of Chiya? To a king that hath hired many workers, and among them was one who did more work than was needful. What did the king do? He took him, and walked about with him. When the evening was come, the labourers came to receive their hire, and he gave unto this one the same wage as unto the others. And the labourers murmured and said: We have worked the whole day, and this man hath worked but two hours, yet he hath given him the same wage together with us. Then the king said to them: This man hath done more in two hours than ye have done during the whole day. So R. Bon did more in the Law in twenty-eight years [he died at that age] than a clever pupil could learn in an hundred years.

As the Rabbi Zeira lived about the year 300 A.D., one is at first disposed to think that he knew of, and improved upon, the Gospel parable. Fiebig observes, however, that the parable is a Hebrew text in the Aramaic context, and this usually means greater antiquity. He does not, in any case, think it possible for the rabbis to borrow from the Christian scriptures, and the reasons I have previously given make it extremely improbable. Either the parable is, in substance, an old one, or it occurred independently to Jew and Christian. The parable in *Matthew* has the appearance of a simple and natural simile distorted to suit doctrinal ends.

The parable of the lost sheep has a somewhat remote parallel in the later stratum of the Talmud (Bereshit rabba to *Genesis*, ch. xxxix, 2; par. 86, fol. 84 c). R. Judan (about 320 A.D.), commenting on the text referred to ("And the Lord was with Joseph"), said:—

Like unto a drover who drove twelve yoke of oxen laden with wine. One of them strayed into the yard of a heathen. He therefore left the eleven and went after the one. And they said to him: Why dost thou leave the eleven and go after the one? And he said unto them: Those are on the public street, and I have no anxiety about them; [but this I must seek as] perhaps the wine will be used for libations. So it was with the other children of Jacob [besides Joseph]: they remained under the eye of their father.

There can hardly be any question of interdependence of Jewish and Christian parable in this case; but it is not impossible that the text of *Genesis* on which

R. Judan comments was accustomed to inspire parables of the kind.

To the parable of the prodigal son a parallel is found by some writers in the Midrash rabba to *Exodus*, par. 46. This treatise belongs to the eleventh or twelfth century, but the passage in question is in Hebrew, and presumably old. It runs:—

Like unto the son of a chief physician, who met a juggler and saluted him. He said to him: My lord, my lord, my father. The father heard him, and was angry. He said: He shall see my face no more, as he hath called the juggler, My father. After some days the son fell ill, and wept, and said: Call my father, that he may see me. They went, and told his father; and at once his compassion was aroused over him, and he went to him.....So hath the All-holy said to Israel: Now call ye me, My father. Yesterday ye served the stars, and called the false god, My father.

It cannot be denied that, in view of the archaic character of this text, it is not idle to connect it with the parable of the prodigal son. The idea is the same, though the story is more dramatically developed in the Gospel. Curiously enough, we find the same idea embodied in a Buddhist parable which was current in China in the third century, and seems to be earlier than Christianity. It is in ch. iv of the *Saddharma-Pundarika* (vol. 21 of the "Sacred Books of the East," pp. 99-106), and the English translator is of opinion that it is definitely pre-Christian. "It is a case, O Lord," the disciples say to Buddha, "as if a certain man went away from his father, and betook himself to

some other place. He lives there, in foreign parts, for many years....." The story is too long to reproduce in full. It is enough to say that the son becomes desperately poor, and, in the course of his wandering, comes to his father's house, and is set by the father (who recognizes him, but conceals the fact) to do the lowest work. Twenty years later, on his death-bed, the father affectionately acknowledges his son, and makes him his heir. Whether the Buddhist conception is at the root of the Jewish and Christian parables, or whether all three were independently devised, is a question we may never decide.

Another Buddhist parallel is assigned by Dr. G. A. van den Bergh van Eysinga in his *Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen* (1904), and the author does much to show that Buddhist influence is recognizable in the Gospels. He quotes (p. 49) a story from the *Divyāvadāna* (f. 217 a) which in some respects resembles the story of Christ and the woman of Samaria (*John*, iv, 6-20). Buddha's disciple Ananda met a woman of low caste drawing water from a well, and asked her for a drink. Fearing to contaminate him, she told him that she was of low caste; and Ananda simply replied that he asked her for water, not for the name of her caste or family. Professor Drews refers to a Buddhist parallel to the parable of the Good Samaritan, but I find none in the sources to which he sends his reader, and there seems to be some confusion with the Ananda story which I have quoted. One or two other Buddhist parallels of great

interest will be found in the next chapter, and it seems very probable that the great religion of further Asia contributed some elements to the Christian synthesis.

There remain a few Gospel parables of little interest to which I find no parallel, as well as the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Sower. The former imply no great originality or power, while the latter two clearly indicate the action of later Christian writers. The parable of the Good Samaritan is so obviously inconsistent with the express command of Christ not to convey his Gospel to the Samaritans—a command which is emphatic and unwavering in the older strata of the Gospels—that it cannot possibly have been spoken by Jesus in the form in which we have it. In its original form it seems to have been an anti-clerical, not an anti-Jewish, story. The priest and the Levite passed by the wounded man, and the layman bound his wounds and helped him. Later Christian hatred of the Jews seems to have put the Samaritan in the place of the benevolent Jewish layman. There is, in fact, internal evidence to suggest this, as a Samaritan would not be likely to travel on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. The parable of the sower, on the other hand, is merely a play upon an idea which occurs repeatedly in propagandist religions, and can be traced long before the time of Christ.

We must, in conclusion, proceed with great caution in making any general statement about the Gospel parables. The traditional idea, which many divines and some eminent laymen still repeat unreflectingly,

is wholly wrong and obviously inconsistent with the results of research. Half the more important parables of the Gospels betray the hand of a Christian writer after the year 70, and to recognize the words of Christ in the whole series of parables is to sacrifice all scholarship to a tradition which begins in obscurity in a credulous age. Even worse is the traditional idea that Christ was personally distinguished by the use of parables. The Jews were accustomed to have moral and religious points conveyed in parables, and cannot have been in the least "amazed" at hearing Jesus follow that practice. But whether any of the parables were really spoken by Jesus, and to what extent they utilize or develop current Jewish ideas, it is difficult to say. There is neither external evidence (in the shape of quotations) nor internal evidence that any of the Gospel parables existed in the first century; and there is reasonable evidence that some of them were spoken by rabbis of the first century, and others by rabbis of the first quarter of the second century.

It seems at once a liberal and critical conclusion that probably Jesus, like many of the rabbis, spoke occasionally in parables, and that some of his parables, partly original and partly slight developments of existing ideas or allegories, were preserved in the Christian tradition; but that many of these parables were modified, further developed, or perverted by the later Gospel writers, who added others of their own invention or borrowed yet others from the rabbinical tradition. The words of Jesus cannot be identified with the slightest degree of confidence,

nor is there any firm ground whatever for a claim of originality or distinction. The Gospels arose in an age of parables, of very unequal merit. Sometimes the Talmud parables are plainly superior to those of the Gospels: sometimes the superiority is on the side of the Gospels. There is, in fact, every reason to regard the Gospel parables as—like, as we shall see, the remainder of the supposed teaching of Christ—a synthesis of the work of many unequal minds, reflecting very different dates in the first century. If, in fine, any be disposed to find a literary or mental unity in the whole series of parables, such a unity would have to be attributed to the late compiler of the actual Gospel, since there are whole parables and parts of parables which plainly belong to the last part of the century.

In a final chapter we may consider other features for which an element of distinction or originality is claimed. I need only notice here the distinctions which Fiebig, whom I have followed in this chapter, finds in the Christian parables. I have already pointed out that his very able study of the parables is weakened in itself, though no doubt made more useful as testimony, by his bias in favour of the Christ-authorship of the parables. The reason he gives for this is that the Gospels “certainly existed about 100 A.D.,” because by that time they are quoted in Christian literature. We have, however, seen that there is not a single clear quotation of the Gospels before 130 A.D., and, even if they could be dated thirty years earlier, we should have no guarantee whatever of their authenticity.

Fiebig does not seem happier in his general remarks on the parables. The Christian parables make no pretence of learning, he says; the Talmud parables always do. The reader may judge for himself from the preceding pages. The Christian parables deal with great religious issues, he thinks, and the Talmud parables with trivialities. Again I think that the candid reader will, at least very largely, dissent. The third distinction he finds is the constant pre-occupation of the Christian parables with the approaching "kingdom of heaven"; and we may readily agree that this is a distinctive, though not particularly happy, feature, since it was a false expectation (as far as the central meaning of that vague phrase is concerned). Fiebig's fourth distinction—that the Christian parables reflect a great personality—is already refuted by our discovery that some of the parables, which are quite equal to the others in power and picturesqueness, cannot reasonably be attributed to Christ. But to this point we will return when we have surveyed the whole body of teaching ascribed to Christ in the Gospels.

CHAPTER IX

PARALLELS TO THE TEACHING OF CHRIST

IN the course of the long and exhaustive controversy about Christ and his message there have, of course, been many references to the fact that the teaching ascribed to him has ample parallels in earlier or contemporary thought. The conventional or unscholarly view of his originality is so gross and superficial that I have actually heard clergymen declare that the command to love one's neighbour as oneself—a command quoted by Christ from the oldest books of the Old Testament (*Levit.*, xix, 18)—is one of the most signal instances of his originality! To theologians it is well known that parallels to almost every moral text of the Gospels have been quoted, and there has been of late, as I said, some tendency to remove the stress from originality to personality. Dr. Estlin Carpenter, for instance, observes that it is of little interest to gather isolated parallels; the unique feature is the unifying and vivifying spirit of the Gospels, the great personality at the source of the tradition.

It cannot, however, be doubted that the overwhelming majority of Christians, and many non-Christians, are entirely unaware of the extent of the

research in this field. Sir Oliver Lodge, for instance, observes that Christ had "inspiration in an extraordinary degree," and (in his chief work, *Man and the Universe*) gives a list of the moral sentiments which Christ introduced into the world. He has obviously not even glanced at works which deal with the subject, and very few have the disposition or the opportunity to do so. Even theologians do not seem to have more than the vaguest notion, as a rule, what has been done in this field of culture, and the majority of them claim distinctive elements in the morality of the Gospels. Yet nearly eighty years ago F. Nork gave, in his *Rabbinische Quellen und Parallelen zum neuen testamentlichen Schriftsteller* (1839), an enormous mass of parallel texts from the Old Testament and the Talmud; Hippolyte Rodrigues made a large number of these available in French, in his *Origines du Sermon de la Montagne* (1868); and Rabbi Dr. E. Schreiber collected from the Old Testament and the Talmud such a quantity of parallel texts (given in his *Prinzipien des Judenthums verglichen mit denen des Christenthums*, 1877) that we find something like five hundred Jewish parallels to the first eight verses of the Sermon on the Mount alone! Many of these were afterwards given in English in Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*, and there is little excuse for any divine who thinks that humility, asceticism, meekness, strict chastity, non-resistance to evil, and love of one's fellows or one's enemies, are peculiar to the Christian Gospel.

In the comparative scheme which follows I gratefully avail myself of the work of these scholars, and

carry it a step further, especially in the accumulation of Old Testament and pagan parallels. It will be understood that I am far from claiming to give all the parallels to the Gospel sentiments which may be found in the Old Testament, the Talmud, and the Greek and Roman writers. The field of research is so vast that I have been unable to do more than carry this interesting work a little nearer towards completion. But I have collected sufficient material for any reader to see at a glance whether any particular sentiment attributed to Christ has any element of novelty. The supposed words of Christ are, in the first column, given in the order in which they occur in *Matthew*, and in the end I add a few passages which are peculiar to *Luke*. *Mark* contains no moral sayings that are not in *Matthew*, and *John* I leave out of account for reasons which I have given previously.

In the second column I give complete parallels to these from the Old Testament, which (except for the apocrypha) I quote from the revised version. For the quotations from the Talmud, in the third column, I rely mainly on Nork and Schreiber—both expert Hebraists—and have merely translated from the German; adding a few texts from articles in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*. To a considerable extent I have checked these quotations by Rabbi Rodkinson's English translation of some of the treatises of the Talmud, and found them correct; but Rodkinson has most unfortunately omitted the customary folio numbers, and this (and the very incomplete nature of his work) made it impossible or useless to give

the references to his volumes. I have consulted other recent translations of the Talmud, but in the main I rely on Nork and Schreiber.

For the quotations from Greek and Roman writers I have used Jowett's classical translation of Plato, T. W. Higginson's translation of Epictetus, and G. Long's translation of Marcus Aurelius. The passages from Plutarch and Seneca I have translated directly from the Greek and Latin, as there is no satisfactory or complete translation of their works.

A general appreciation will be attempted in the next chapter, but it may be useful to premise a few words. It will be understood that, in view of my aim, I have omitted purely doctrinal passages of the Gospels, and confined myself to moral sentiments. I have not, however, taken the limitation narrowly, and the reader must be prepared to find words of Christ, of a more or less doctrinal or otherwise not strictly ethical nature, to which no strict parallel is attempted. In a few places, in fact, I have given contrasts rather than parallels; especially in order to show that the Gospel writer—we can hardly think that it was Christ—misrepresents the Old Testament or the rabbis.

Further, much of the alleged discourse of Christ turns necessarily upon the Jewish law, or the controversy with the Pharisees, or some other local topic. Here no one will seek parallels from Greek and Roman writers, and, at the most, I may adduce a passage embodying the moral sentiment—if there is one—implied in the Gospel text. Indeed, it will be generally understood that it is parallels of *senti-*

ment or *principle*, not of *language*, that I undertake to supply. One would hardly expect masters of the Jewish schools, much less Greek philosophers, to express their moral convictions in the same language as an uncultivated Jew from the provinces. We expect their appeal to be more intellectual; and we expect the appeal of Christ to be all the more emotional and impulsive when we reflect that he is inflamed by a conviction that the end of the world is near, while they assume that the social order will continue indefinitely. In the circumstances, the reader will probably find that the approximation of language is at times marvellous, while there is assuredly no shade of moral idealism in the Gospel texts to which parallels are not given. Hundreds more might have been given, it must be remembered—especially on humility, asceticism, endurance of injury, love of one's fellows or of enemies, chastity, etc.—while many fine sentiments of the pagan writers had to be omitted because there was no parallel to them in the words of Christ. One illustration of this will suffice. Christ repeatedly warns his hearers not to expect a reward in this world, but *always* dangles before them the greater reward in the next world. A Stoic would sternly condemn this, and would fail to see that expecting a large reward in the next world was in any way less mercenary than expecting a small reward in this. Medieval experience, contrasted with Roman and modern experience, does not suggest even that Christ's way was the more effective.

Finally, a word must be said about the quotations

from the Talmud. Although they are largely from the older part of the Talmud (the Mishna, or older fragments), I have not hesitated to admit them from later books. The reason will be obvious to most readers. The sentiments attributed to Christ are (as the second column shows) already found in the Old Testament, and it is therefore futile and superfluous to inquire at what time they are expressed by Jewish commentators on the Old Testament. They were familiar in the Jewish schools, and to all the Pharisees, long before the time of Christ, as they were familiar in all the civilizations of the earth—Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian, Greek and Hindu. Our preliminary study of their development, long before the time of Christ, has fully prepared us for this. We need therefore concern ourselves little as to whether some rabbi or the evangelist had priority; neither one nor the other was original. A balanced judgment will take full account of the whole of the four comparative columns, and of the earlier chapters in which I have prepared the way for them. We then understand the Gospel teaching as the expression of a normal and natural phase in the moral development of man, exalted and perverted by a belief in the approaching end of the world.

THE GOSPELS

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

I dwell in the high and holy place.....to revive the spirit of the humble.—*Is.*, lvii, 15.

He that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honour.—*Prov.* xxix, 23.

Walk humbly with thy God.—*Micah*, vi, 8.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me.....to comfort all that mourn.—*Is.*, lxi, 1-2.

A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—*Ps.* li, 17.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.—*Is.*, lxvi, 13.

The meek shall inherit the earth.—*Ps.* xxxvii, 11.

The Lord lifteth up the meek.—*Ps.* cxlvii, 6.

The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord.—*Is.*, xxix, 19.

THE TALMUD

The Law is not with the proud, but with the contrite of spirit.—*Tanchuma*, 84, 4.

We find the Law only in men of lowly spirit.—*Taanit*, 7, 1.

Whenever there is question in the Bible of the greatness of God, his love of the humble is recorded.—*Megillah*, 31.

God is ever nigh to men of broken heart.—*Vajikra rabba*, 7.

The divine majesty is ever with him who is of contrite heart, bowed spirit, and little talk; and there is an altar in his heart.—*Jalkut to Prov.*, 25.

Whosoever is in sorrow, and findeth not the blame in his evil ways, may be sure that it is God's love that visiteth him.—*Berac-hot*, 5, 2.

When a man hath acquired meekness, then will he also acquire wealth, honour, and wisdom [R. Johanan].—*Midrash Jalkut Mishle*, 22.

He who offereth humility to God hath as much merit as if he had offered all the victims in the world.—*Sotah*, 8.

GREEK AND ROMAN

What disease shall we say that the rich man suffereth from but spiritual poverty?—PLUTARCH, *On Covetousness*, iv.

Any person may live happy in poverty, but few in wealth and power.—EPICURETUS, *Fragments*, cxxviii.

God hath a paternal mind toward good men, and loveth them greatly; let them, he saith, be tried by labours and pains and losses, that they may gather strength.—SENECA, *On Providence*, ii, 6.

Shall not the having God for our maker, and father, and guardian, free us from griefs and alarms?—EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, i, 9.

I will be meek and yielding to my enemies.—SENECA, *On the Happy Life*, xx, 5.

A calm and meek and humane temper is not more pleasant to those with whom we live than to him who possesseth it.—PLUTARCH, *On Restraining Anger*, xvi.

THE GOSPELS

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

He that walketh righteously shall dwell on high.—*Is.*, xxxiii, 15.

Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat.—*Is.*, lv, 1.

The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish.—*Prov.*, x, 3.

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honour.—*Prov.*, xxi, 21.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.—*Ps.* xli, 1.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?..... He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.—*Ps.* xxiv, 3-4.

There is no price worthy of a continent soul.—*Ecclus.*, xxvi, 15.

Seek peace and pursue it: the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.—*Ps.* xxxiv, 14.

THE TALMUD

The age in which the teaching is not found—in which a righteous life, conformed to the law, is not possible—liveth in hunger.—*Schemot rabba*, 31.

He who showeth mercy to his fellow creatures shall receive mercy from the Lord.—*Sabbath*, 151, 2.

The mark of Israel is the practice of mercy.—*Jebamot*, 79.

We must not kill even the smallest worm without need.—*Talkut Tillim*, 1.

The school of Schammai says: Not only the open sin, but an unclean thought, maketh a man answerable to God.—*Baba mezia*, 44, 1.

The sinful mind is worse than the sin.—*Joma*, 28.

Love peace, and seek it at any price [Hillel].—*Pirke Abot*, 1, 12.

He who establisheth

GREEK AND ROMAN

He who doeth well must of necessity be happy and blessed.—PLATO, *Gorgias*, 507.

Virtue alone bringeth secure and perpetual joy.—SENECA, *On the Happy Life*, xx, 5.

It is the mark of a generous and lofty mind to give aid, to do service.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, iii, 15.

Forgiveness is better than punishment: for the one is a proof of a gentle, the other of a savage, nature.—EPICURETUS, *Fragments*, lxiii.

Those who have been pre-eminent for holiness of life are released from this earthly prison, and go to their pure home, which is above.—PLATO, *Phædo*, 114.

The refined and pure soul, imitator of God, raising itself above human things, placing nothing of itself outside itself.—SENECA, *Letter cxxiv*, 23.

A wise and good person neither quarreleth with any man, nor, as far as is possible, suffereth another to do

THE GOSPELS

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree.—
Micah, iv, 3.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. For even if in the sight of men they be punished, their hope is full of immortality; and having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good, because God made trial, and found them worthy of himself.—
Wisdom, iii, 1-5.

THE TALMUD

peace in his house is rewarded by God as if he had established peace in all Israel.—*Abot of R. Nathan*, 28.

He who maketh peace between neighbours will not only have eternal life, but even in this life good fruit will not be wanting to him.—*Peah*, 1, 1.

It is better to be persecuted than to be a persecutor.—*Baba mezia*, 93.

God is always on the side of the persecuted.—*Vajikra rabba*, 27.

They who are persecuted and hate not, who bear ridicule and injury and do no injury, are the elect of God, of whom it is written: They shine with the splendour of the sun.—*Sabbath*, 88, 2.

The martyrs are so high that none is worthy to be near them.—*Pesachim*, 50, 1.

[All meat needs to be salted that it be preserved. Money also needs to be salted to be preserved.

GREEK AND ROMAN

so. The life of Socrates giveth us an example of this, as of other things; since he did not only avoid quarrelling himself, but did not even suffer others to quarrel.—*EPICLETUS*, *Discourses*, iv, 5.

Neither you nor I nor any man would rather do than suffer injustice; for to do injustice is the greater evil of the two.—*PLATO*, *Gorgias*, 476.

God hath regard for those whom he desireth to excel in virtue, as often as he sendeth on them some trial which will make them act with spirit and courage.—*SENECA*, *On Providence*, iv, 5.

The Cynic hath surrendered his body to be treated at pleasure by those who will.—*EPICLETUS*, *Discourses*, iii, 22.

To have good repute amidst such a world as this is an empty thing.—*M. AURELIUS*, v, 34.

THE GOSPELS

thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Think not that I came to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—*Prov.*, iv, 18.

It is he that maketh instruction to shine forth as the light.....I will yet bring instruction to light as the morning, and will make these things to shine forth afar off.—*Ecclus.*, xxiv, 27, 32.

The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed.—*Is.*, liv, 10.

He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.—*Prov.*, xix, 16.

THE TALMUD

With what can money be salted? With charity.—*Ketuboth*, 66.]

When R. Johanan ben Zakkai was near death, he lamented his approaching end. And his disciples said to him: Light of the world, why weepest thou?—*Abot of R. Nathan*, 24.

The Israelites asked God: Lord of the world, thou commandest us to set a light before thee, though the light is with thee..... And the Lord answered and said: This I ask not as if I needed light, but that ye may illumine me by your selves, that the nations may say: See how Israel glorifies its God.—*Bamidbar rabba*, 15, 229.

Not a letter of the Law will ever be destroyed.—*Cosri*, 1, 83.

Heaven and earth shall pass, but not the word of God.—*Bereshit rabba*, 10, 1.

Deuteronomy once cast itself before the throne of God, and complained: O Lord of the world, thou hast written thy law in me, and if the least in it be changed, the whole must fall. Yet, behold, King Solomon seeketh to extir-

GREEK AND ROMAN

Virtue, however obscure, cannot be hidden; it giveth proof of itself.—SENECA, *On Tranquillity*, iii, 7.

Live as on a mountain.Let men see, let them know a real man who liveth according to nature. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as others do.—M. AURELIUS, x, 15.

If you always remember that God standeth by as a witness of whatever you do, either in soul or body, you will never err.—EPICTETUS, *Fragments*, cxv.

They who are bidden to suffer what timid mortals dread do but say: We seemed to God worthy that in us He should try how much human nature can endure.—SENECA, *On Providence*, iv, 8.

THE GOSPELS

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

And they that are left behind shall know that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and nothing sweeter than to take heed unto the commandments of the Lord.—*Ecclus.*, xxiii, 27.

Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which, if a man do, he shall live in them.—*Levit.*, xviii, 5.

Exodus, xx, 13.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart..... thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—*Levit.*, xix, 18.

THE TALMUD

pate the letter jod.....And the Lord answered and said: Solomon and thousands of his like shall pass away, but thou shalt abide for ever.—[Jerusalem Talmud] *Sanhedrim*, 20, 3.

Judah the Saint used to say: Be as solicitous about a small commandment as about a large one.—*Pirke Abot*, 2, 1.

God gave man his spirit in a state of perfect purity, and it is man's duty to restore it in the condition in which he received it.—*Sabbath*, 152, 2.

Anger kindleth a fire within a man, and causeth him to forget even the regard for God.—*Nedarim*, 21.

The friends of God are they who fall not into anger.—*Pesachim*, 113.

GREEK AND ROMAN

If a man should conceive certain things as really good, such as prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, he would not, after having first conceived these, listen to anything which should not be in harmony with what is really good.—M. AURELIUS, v, 12.

I who have seen the nature of him that doth wrong, that it is akin to me, not only of the same blood or seed, but that it doth participate in the same intelligence, and the same portion of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, nor can I be

THE GOSPELS

And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council ; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.¹

¹ It is obvious that these are not words of Christ. They refer to the established Christian ritual.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

He that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.—*Prov.*, xv, 18.

Be not wroth with thy neighbour for every wrong.—*Ecclus.*, x, 6.

Who shall set a watch over my mouth, or a seal of shrewdness upon my lips ; that I fall not from it, and that my tongue destroy me not.—*Ecclus.*, xxii, 27.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.—*Prov.*, xxi, 3.

I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.—*Hosea*, vi, 6.

THE TALMUD

He who causeth his brother publicly to blush shall have no part in the future life.—*Pirke Abot*, 3, 13.

Whosoever revileth his neighbour shall be punished.—*Kiddushin*, 28, 1.

Whosoever calleth his neighbour impious bringeth on himself the punishment of hell.—*Sohar to Exodus*, 50, 299.

It is better for a man to cast himself into a furnace than to make his brother blush in public.—*Sotah*, 10.

The Youm Kippour doth not expiate sin without reconciliation.—*Yoma* (end).

Be loth to embroil thyself, and quick to be reconciled.—*Pirke Abot*, 2, 10.

If the offender were to offer for sacrifice all the sheep of Arabia, he would not be free until he asked pardon of the offended.—*Baba kamma*, 92.

GREEK AND ROMAN

angry with my kinsman, nor hate him.—M. AURELIUS, ii, 1.

Yield not to hatred and anger.—EPICLETUS, i, 63.

Let us not moderate anger, but suppress it entirely; for how can there be moderation of an evil thing?—SENECA, *On Anger*, iii, 42.

Nature doth produce two, or three, or more brothers from one seed and principle, not that they may quarrel and dispute, but that they may give each other assistance.—PLUTARCH, *On Fraternal Love*, ii.

It is better to advise than to reproach.—EPICLETUS, *Fragments*, cii.

It is forbidden to hurt a man; for he is thy fellow citizen in the city of the world.—SENECA, *On Anger*, ii, 31.

Wilt thou not bear with thy own brother, who hath God for his Father?—EPICLETUS, *Discourses*, i, 52.

What preventeth us, when we have had some quarrel with our kindred or friends, from consigning that day to perpetual oblivion?—PLUTARCH, *On Fraternal Love*, xviii.

To ask pardon for a trans-

THE GOSPELS

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.—*Prov.*, xxv, 8.

The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before there be quarrelling.—*Prov.*, xvii, 14.

It is an honour for a man to keep aloof from strife.—*Prov.*, xx, 3.

Exodus, xx, 14.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.—*Exodus*, xx, 17.

Lust not after her beauty in thine heart.—*Prov.*, vi, 25.

I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?—*Job*, xxxi, 1.

Gaze not on a maid..... Turn away thine eye from a comely woman, and gaze not on another's beauty.—*Ecclus.*, ix, 5, 8.

Look not upon every body in regard of beauty, and sit not in the midst of women.—*Ecclus.*, xlii, 12.

THE TALMUD

Whosoever is quick to pardon will have his sins forgiven him.—*Megillah*, 25.

The patient man is greater than a hero.—*Pirke Abot*, 4, 1.

Grieve not, my son, we have yet another pardon for sin; that is, to do good and love your neighbour.—*Abot of R. Nathan*, 4.

Whosoever regardeth even the little finger of a woman hath already sinned in his heart.—*Berachot*, 24, 1.

Whosoever looketh with lust on a woman's heel sins no less than if he had dishonoured her.—[Jerus. Talmud] *Challah*, 58, 3.

A man must not look upon a beautiful woman, though she be not married; nor upon a married woman, though she be ugly.—*Abodah zarah*, 20, 1.

The Rabbis teach: Whosoever giveth money from his hand into the hand of a woman, that he may thus

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gression is as great a proof of benevolence and love as to grant it to a transgressor.—PLUTARCH, *On Fraternal Love*, xviii.

Fools corrupt friendship, but the wise profit even by their enemies.—PLUTARCH, *On the Use of Enemies*, ii.

To be boxed on the ears wrongfully is not the worst evil which can befall a man, nor to have my purse or my body cut open; but to smite and slay me and mine wrongfully is far more disgraceful and more evil.—PLATO, *Gorgias*, 508.

Our souls are connected and intimately joined to God.....Must he not be sensible of every movement of them?—EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, i, 14.

It is the intention, not the outward act, which makes the wickedness.—SENECA, *On the Happy Life*, xvi.

Live as if God beheld thee.—SENECA, *Letter* x.

If a man lie with his own wife, imagining her another, he is an adulterer.—SENECA, *On Constancy*, vii, 4.

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And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable to thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.¹

¹ Mark and Luke omit the exception in case of fornication, and make Jesus absolutely forbid divorce. The confusion which this

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Deut., xxiv, 1.

Let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth, for the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away.—*Mal.*, ii, 15-16.

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have occasion to regard her, is in danger of hell.—*Berachot*, 61, 1.

[In the *Midrash Jalkut*, section Vayeecki, No. 16, at v. 48 *Genesis*, it is said that a rabbi burned his eye out when the devil tempted him in the form of a beautiful woman.] It is better for me to be burned by fire in this world, since that is light compared with the eternal fire. [Jerus. Talmud.] — *Jalkut Rubeni*, 65, 1.

It were better for the evil-minded to have been born blind. — *Tanchuma*, 71, 4.

A man shall not put away his wife unless it be for adultery.—*Gittin*, 90.

Whosoever shall put away his wife is hated of God. [R. Johanan and others.]—*Gittin*, 90, 2.

R. Eliezer said: Whosoever shall put away his first wife, over him the altar sheddeth tears.—*Sabbath* [ii, 60, Rod.].

If a man putteth his wife away with his left hand, let him take her back with

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Is it for one paltry leg, wretch, that thou dost accuse the universe? Canst thou not forego that, in consideration of the whole? Canst thou not gladly yield it to Him who gave it?—*EPICLETUS*, i, 49.

The wise man counteth as temporary and uncertain, not only chattels and possessions and dignities, but even his body and eyes and hands, and whatever maketh life pleasant; and he liveth as one who hath received on trust, and is ever ready to restore cheerfully.—*SENECA*, *Of Tranquillity of Mind*, xi.

[Divorce was permitted by every Roman and Greek, so that one must not look in them for parallels to this reactionary tendency of later Jews. On chastity itself the pagan moralists insisted sternly.]

It is infamous for a man to exact chastity of his wife and corrupt the wives of others.—*SENECA*, *Letter* xciv, 26.

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has caused among theologians is merely an echo of the controversies of the ancient rabbis. Some, like the famous R. Akiba, allowed divorce on slight grounds; some only for adultery; and some forbade it altogether.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be: Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatever is more than these cometh of evil.

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Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.—*Ex.*, xx, 7.

When a man voweth a vow unto the Lord, or sweareth an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word.—*Numbers*, xxx, 2.

The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.—*Is.*, lxvi, 1.

He that sweareth and nameth God continually shall not be cleansed from sin.—*Ecclus.*, xxiii, 10.

All things come alike to all.....he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.—*Eccles.*, ix, 2.

Accustom not thy mouth to an oath, and be not accustomed to the naming of the Holy One. A man of many oaths shall be filled with iniquity, and the scourge shall not depart from his house.—*Ecclus.*, xxiii, 9-11.

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the right.—*Sotah*, 46, 1.

Only when ye hold your women in honour will ye be rich.—*Baba mezia*, 59.

The altar sheddeth bitter tears over the man who treats his wife badly.—*Gittin*, 9.

Many readers of the Talmud have never sworn.—*Ketuboth*, 76.

[There were no civic or official oaths of any kind in ancient Judæa.]

R. Jona saith that even an oath to confirm the truth hath evil consequences.—*Schebuot*, 39.

He who is given to oaths will end in perjury.—*Nedarim*, 20.

Like unto a king that hath made himself a throne, and maketh for himself a footstool.—*Midrash Gen. rabba*, 1.

Thou canst not make one hair black or white.—*Sepher Rasiel Haggadol*, 10, 2.

If all the men in the world were to unite in trying to make a raven's wing white, it would be of no avail.—*Vajikra rabba*, 19, 162.

The Yea of the godly is Yea, and his Nay is Nay.—*Ruth rabba*, 3, 18.

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Be neither a man of many words, nor busy about too many things..... having need neither of oath nor of any man's testimony.—M. AURELIUS, iii, 5.

Avoid taking oaths, if possible, altogether; at any rate, as far as thou art able.—EPICTETUS, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii.

We need not raise our hands to heaven, nor beseech the keeper to admit us to the ear of the image, as though thus we might be better heard; God is near thee, is with thee, is within thee.—SENECA, *Letter* xli, 1.

Be mostly silent, or speak merely what is needful, and in few words.—EPICTETUS, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii.

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Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

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Exodus, xxi, 24 [a solitary and inconsistent survival of ancient custom].

Thou shalt not take vengeance.—*Levit.*, xix, 18.

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.—*Is.*, l, 6.

Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him.—*Lament.*, iii, 30.

He that taketh vengeance shall find vengeance from the Lord.—*Ecclus.*, xxviii, 1.

Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.—*Prov.*, xxiv, 29.

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He who maketh a vow is, even if he keep it, an offender.—*Nedarim*, 22.

R. Nathan says: He who maketh a vow hath raised an heathen altar and sacrificed thereon.—*Jebamoth*, 109, 2.

They who bear injury without requiting it, who hear themselves slandered and reply not.....it is of these the prophet speaketh when he saith: The friends of God will shine one day like the sun.—*Yoma*, 23, 1.

Love the man who punisheth thee.—*Derech Eretz*, 9.

If any demand thy ass, give him also the saddle.—*Baba kamma*, 92, 2.

[The above is described as a "proverb of the people."]

If thy friend call thee an ass, put on the yoke.—*Baba kamma*, 87.

If any man say to thee, kill this man or I will kill thee: thou must incur death rather than inflict it.—*Sanhedrim*, 74.

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When Cato was struck on the mouth, he was not angry, and sought no vengeance: he denied the deed.—SENECA, *On Constancy*, xiv, 3.

The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrong-doer.—M. AURELIUS, vi, 6.

Never mind if someone doth despise thee as a fool, and insult thee, if he hath a mind; let him strike thee, by Zeus, and do thou be of good cheer, and do not mind the insulting blow, for thou wilt never come to any harm in the practice of virtue.—PLATO, *Gorgias*, 527.

There is this fine circumstance connected with the character of a Cynic that he must be beaten like an ass, and yet, when beaten, must love those who beat him, as the father, as the brother of all.—EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, ii, 12.

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Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.¹

¹ Nowhere in the Old Testament is a man told to hate his enemy, and a Jew can hardly have said or written this. Rodrigues calls it "a lying interpola-

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Thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother. . . . Thou shalt open thine hand wide.—*Deut.*, xv, 7-11.

The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, but the righteous dealeth graciously and giveth.—*Ps.* xxxvii, 21.

Turn not away thine eye from one that asketh of thee.—*Ecclus.*, iv, 5.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—*Levit.*, xix, 18.

If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt surely help with him.—*Exodus*, xxiii, 4-5.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.—*Prov.*, xxv, 21-22.

I have delivered him that

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He doeth most worthily who giveth double the alms asked of him.—*Sabbath*, 36, 1.

Do works of mercy, that God may be merciful to you.—*Bereshit rabba*, 33, 32, 1.

Thou must neither desire the misfortune of an enemy nor rejoice in his fall.—*Pirke Abot*, 4, 21.

If thy enemy and thy friend both hath need of thee, aid first thine enemy, as it is a greater victory over thyself.—*Baba mezia*, 32.

Thou shalt not hate, not even in thy mind.—*Menacoth*, 18.

How is it possible for one that feareth God to hate a man and regard him as an enemy?—*Pesachim*, 113.

When the angels wished to sing a chant of joy because the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, God

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I found my lamp was stolen. I considered that he who took it away did nothing unaccountable.—*EPICETUS*, i, 64.

All liberality is prompt, and it is the character of him who giveth freely to give quickly.—*SENECA*, *On Benefits*, ii, 5.

Nothing is nobler than magnanimity, meekness, and philanthropy.—*EPICETUS*, *Fragments*, xlvi.

It is royal to do good and be abused.—*ANTISTHENES* (quoted by *M. Aurelius*, vii, 36).

It is peculiar to man to love even those who do wrong.—*M. AURELIUS*, vii, 22.

Shall any man hate me? Let him look to it. But I will be meek and benevolent towards every man.—*M. AURELIUS*, xi, 13.

Shall I not injure him who hath injured me?..... Are we hurt when any detriment happens to our bodily possessions, and are we not at all hurt when our will is depraved?—*EPICETUS*, *Discourses*, ii, 11.

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tion"; though one might recall passages of the Psalms, etc., where the Jew invokes a curse on his enemies (as Christ does on the Pharisees and on the cities which would not receive his followers). On the other hand, love of enemies is a common maxim of the Old Testament and the Talmud, and of all moralists of the time.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than

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without cause was mine adversary.—*Ps.* vii, 4.

Let them curse, but bless thou.—*Ps.* cix, 28.

This also were an iniquityif I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me.—*Job*, xxxi, 28-9.

Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?—*Mal.*, ii, 10.

Upon whom doth not his light arise?—*Job*, xxv, 3.

The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself.—*Levit.*, xix, 34.

Help a poor man for the

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said to them: My creatures are drowned, and would ye sing?—*Sanhedrim*, 39, 2.

It is better to be wronged by others than to wrong.—*Sanhedrim*, 48, 2.

Harbour not feelings of revenge, not even against a heathen, not even against a snake.—*Pesachim*, 113.

If others speak evil of thee, reply not; but if thou hast spoken evil of others, even the least, go and be reconciled.—*Derech Eretz*, 7.

Whose sins doth God forgive? The sins of him who forgiveth injuries.—*Megillah*, 28.

The day of rain is good for just and unjust.—*Sohar to Genes.*, 67, 263.

[Our wise men say: Be ye not like slaves, who serve their Lord for the sake of a reward.—*Pirke Abot*, i, 3.]

Salute both strangers and friends on the public streets,

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The immortal gods are not deterred in their great bounty by the sacrilegious and negligent.....Let us follow their example, as far as human frailty allows; let us confer benefits, not traffic in them.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, i, 1.

How many men are unworthy of the light, yet the sun riseth on them.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, i, 1.

If thou wouldst imitate the gods, render service even to the ungrateful; for the sun riseth on the wicked.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, iv, 26.

To forgive an enemy, when a man hath the opportunity to avenge, is a token of magnanimity; but who doth not love for his humanity, and admire for his probity, the man who showeth mercy to an enemy in affliction, who helpeth him when he is in want, and giveth aid to his children and family in adversity? — PLUTARCH, *Of the Use of Enemies*, ix.

He is an ungrateful man,yet I will not give more grudgingly on that account, but more generously.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, vii, 32.

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others? Do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret him-

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commandments' sake, and according to his need send him not empty away.—*Eccclus.*, xxix, 9.

Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.—*Levit.*, xi, 44.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord shall deliver him in the day of evil.—*Ps.* xli, 1.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord.—*Prov.*, xix, 17.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.—*Eccles.*, xii, 14.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.—*Proverbs*, xxviii, 27.

Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find

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that ye may be loved in heaven and well received by men.—*Berachot*, 17, 1.

Receive every man with friendly greeting. — *Pirke Abot*, 1, 15.

Be compassionate and merciful like God; make thyself equal to God.—*Sabbath*, 133, 2.

As the Lord is merciful, forgiving, protecting, and patient, be thou likewise.—*Sotah*, 13.

He who giveth alms in such wise that all men know it, the gift is indeed good to the poor, but it is bestowed that the giver may be praised for his goodness.—*Hagigah*, 5, 1.

R. Eleazar said: He who giveth alms in secret is greater than Moses himself.—*Baba bathra*, 9, 2.

What pious gift saveth a man from eternal death? That which is given to one whom the giver knoweth not.—*Baba bathra*, 10, 1.

All the charity of the heathen will be counted a sin unto them if they have

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The stranger, having no kindred and friends, is more to be pitied by gods and men.—PLATO, *Laws*, v, 729.

He who conferreth benefits, imitateth the gods: he who seeketh them, the traffickers. — SENECA, *On Benefits*, iii, 15.

God ought to be to us the measure of all things..... He who would be dear to God must, as far as possible, be like Him and such as he is.—PLATO, *Laws*, iv, 716.

The good man is the pupil and follower, and real child of God.—SENECA, *On Providence*, i, 5.

He who hath done some good and laudable action, and then telleth it to others, showeth that he still looketh without, and desireth glory, and hath not yet a true vision of virtue.—PLUTARCH, *On Progress in Virtue*, x.

Whatsoever I do, either by myself or with some other, ought to be directed to this only—to that which is useful and well suited for society. How many, after being celebrated by fame, have been given up to oblivion?—M. AURELIUS, vii, 5-6.

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self shall reward thee openly.¹

¹ The stress which Christ constantly lays on the reward of good deeds should be noted and contrasted with the exhortations of rabbis and pagans.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy

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it after many days.—*Eccles.*, xi, 1.

Be not a hypocrite in the mouths of men.—*Eccclus.*, i, 29.

No thought escapeth him; there is not a word hid from him.—*Eccclus.*, xlii, 20.

Rend your heart, and not your garments.—*Joel*, ii, 13.

When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear.—*Is.*, i, 15.

Pride is hateful before the Lord and before men.—*Eccclus.*, x, 7.

He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them

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a mind only to be praised by men for it.—*Baba bathra*, 10, 2.

Do good for good's sake, with a pure intention: make not of it a crown wherewith to adorn thyself.—*Nedarim*, 62.

The just take pleasure in God's commands, not in the reward for keeping them.—*Abodah Zarah*, 19, 1.

It would not befit that lowliness of mind which prayer should inspire to stand on a lofty place and pray.—*Berachot*, 10, 2.

Who are they that will not behold the face of God? First hypocrites, then liars.—*Sotah*, 42.

Pray with bent head, conscious before whom ye stand.—*Berachot*, 30, 2.

Let our humility and good deeds plead before thee [prayer of R. Johanan].—*Berachot*, 16, 2.

The just of earlier days gave an hour to recollection

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When thou hast done a good act and another hath received it, why dost thou still look for a third thing besides these, as fools do; either to have the reputation of having done a good act, or to obtain a return.—M. AURELIUS, vii, 73.

How sweet and precious a thing it is if a giver will take no thanks, and hath already, in giving, forgotten his deed.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, ii, 6.

Cannot He who made and moveth the sun..... perceive all things?—EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, i, 54.

We prefer to invoke the Gods, to whom we make fitting supplication, silently and in our hearts.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, ii, 1.

Wait not for applauses, and shouts, and praises, in order to do good.—EPICURETUS, *Fragments*, lxxxiii.

Make thyself worthy of the help of the divinity.—M. AURELIUS, xii, 14.

When thou hast shut thy doors and darkened thy

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closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

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twain, and prayed unto the Lord.—*2 Kings*, iv, 33.

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.—*Ezech.*, xxiii, 23.

God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore, let thy words be few.—*Eccles.*, v, 2.

He knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of men, and looking into secret places.—*Ecclus.*, xxiii, 19.

Thou, O Lord, art our Father.—*Is.*, lxiii, 16.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.—*Ps.* ciii, 13.

Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.—*Ps.* cxv, 3.

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before prayer.— *Berachot*, 30, 2.

God is nigh only to those who seek him in truth.— *Berachot*, 31.

When ye pray, remember whom ye are addressing [R. Eleazar].— *Berachot*, 28, 2.

When thou prayest to God, let thy words be few. *Berachot*, 61, 1.

Better is a short prayer with devotion than a long prayer without fervour.— *Menachoth*, 110.

Pray not unless thou be in a holy and devout mood. *Erubin*, 65.

God knows man's thoughts before they are conceived.— *Baba mezia*, 58, 2.

On whom do we rely? On our Father who is in heaven. *Sotah*, 9, 15.

["Our Father in heaven" is a common phrase in old Jewish prayers.]

Magnified and sanctified be his great name in the world which he hath created according to his will. May he establish his kingdom. [Opening of the ancient Kaddish prayer.]

What is a short prayer? R. Eliezer said: Thy will be

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room, remember never to say that thou art alone. God is within, and thy genius is within; and what need have they of light to see what thou art doing?— EPICLETUS, *Discourses*, i, 54.

God seeth the minds of all men bared of the material vesture.— M. AURELIUS, xii, 2.

On all occasions call on the Gods, and perplex not thyself about the length of time in which thou shalt do this.— M. AURELIUS, vi, 23.

We ought not to pray at all, or we ought to pray in this simple and noble fashion.— M. AURELIUS, v, 7.

Wilt thou not feel thyself to be ennobled on knowing thyself to be the son of God?— EPICLETUS, *Discourses*, i, 2.

Have no will but the will of God, and who shall restrain thee?— EPICLETUS, *Discourses*, i, 17.

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Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.¹

¹ The "Lord's Prayer" is much shorter in *Luke*, and is unknown in *Mark*. It is commonly regarded by theologians as a composition not due to Christ.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

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Feed me with food convenient [properly, apportioned] for me.—*Prov.*, xxx, 8.

Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done thee, and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest.—*Ecclus.*, xxviii, 2.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory.—1. *Chron.*, xxix, 11.

Man cherisheth anger against man, and doth he seek healing from the Lord? Upon a man like himself he hath no mercy, and doth he make supplication for his own sins?—*Ecclus.*, xxviii, 3.

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done in heaven, and peace to those who fear thee on earth.—*Berachot*, 29, 2.

Blessed be God every day for the daily bread he gives us [Hillel].—*Jom Tob*, 16, 1.

Whosoever is ready to forgive shall have his sins forgiven.—*Megillah*, 28.

[And see previously.]

Lead me neither into sin nor into temptation.—*Berachot*, 16, 2.

Never should a man bring himself into temptation, as David did.—*Sanhedrim*, 107, 1.

Praised be the name of the glory of thy kingdom for ever [close of public prayers in the temple].—(Jerus. Talmud) *Berachot*, 13, 3.

So long as thou thyself art compassionate, God will show thee mercy; but if thou hast no mercy, God will have none for thee [Gamaliel ii].—*Sabbath*, 130.

[And see previously.]

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Hast thou often seen a beggar who did not live to old age—nay, to extreme old age?—EPICETUS, *Discourses*, iii, 26.

If ye go forth, returning evil for evil and injury for injury.....we shall be angry with you while you live, and our friends, the laws in the world below, will receive you as an enemy.—PLATO, *Crito*, 54.

Virtue cometh to the virtuous by the gift of God.—PLATO, *Meno*, 100.

Since I am a reasonable creature, it is my duty to praise God.....nor will I ever desert this post so long as it is permitted me.—EPICETUS, *Discourses*, i, 16.

It is the part of a great mind to despise injury.—SENECA, *On Anger*, ii, 32.

When Diogenes was asked, How shall I avenge myself on my enemy? he said, By living virtuously and honestly.—PLUTARCH, *On the Usefulness of Enemies*, iii.

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Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

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Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.—*Is.*, xxxviii, 4.

The works of all flesh are before him, and it is not possible to be hid from his eyes.—*Ecclus.*, xxxix, 19.

Labour not to be rich...
...for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.—*Prov.*, xxiii, 4.

Bestow thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall profit thee more than gold.—*Ecclus.*, xxix, 11.

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Who are they that will not behold the face of God? First, hypocrites.—*Sotah*, 42.

[In J. Hagigah, 77, 4, there is a story in which a pious Jew sees a Jewess in hell. "And he said to those (who were about): Why is she here? And they said to him: This woman fasted and made it known to others." The hero of the story lived before Christ.]

Let a man not lower himself with fasting.—*Taanit*, 22, 2.

It is not the sackcloth and the fasting which bring rain, but repentance and good works.—*Taanit*, 16.

They took their pleasure in gathering earthly riches, but I seek heavenly goods. My forefathers gathered in a place where the hand of man could steal, but I put my treasures in a place where none can enter. My forefathers heaped up riches which brought them no profit, but I seek what brings salvation.—*Baba bathra*, 11, 1.

I will teach my son only the Law, for we are nourished by its fruits in this

GREEK AND ROMAN

Many people shed tears only in order that they may show them.—SENECA, *On Tranquillity*, 15.

Vain is the greatness of pride, and it bringeth into contempt even things of high esteem.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, ii, 13.

When thou hast learned to nourish thy body frugally, pride not thyself upon it; nor, if thou dost drink water, say upon every occasion: I drink water.—EPICTETUS, *Enchir.*, xlvii.

The reality, and not the appearance, of virtue is to be followed above all things, as well in public as in private life.—PLATO, *Gorgias*, 527.

Know that thief and robber cannot reach the things that are properly thy own.—EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, i, 18.

What tyrant, what robber, what thief, or what court can be formidable to those who count the body and its possessions as nothing? —EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, i, 35.

The sum of our happiness must not be placed in the flesh: the goods which reason affordeth are true,

THE GOSPELS

The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in darkness.—*Eccles.*, ii, 14.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.—*Is.*, v, 20.

Many have sinned for a thing indifferent, and he that seeketh to multiply gain will turn his eye away.—*Eccclus.*, xxvii, 1.

Give me neither poverty nor riches.....lest I be full and deny thee.—*Prov.*, xxx, 8-9.

He that loveth gold shall not be justified: and he that followeth corruption shall have enough thereof.—*Eccclus.*, xxxi, 5.

THE TALMUD

world, and the capital is saved for the world to come.—*Kiddushin*, 82.

The man who giveth freely, but desireth not that others follow his example, hath an evil eye in regard to the generosity of others.—*Pirke Abot*, 5, 13.

Sinful thoughts deserve greater punishment than the sin itself.—*Joma*, 29.

My forefathers served Mammon, but my mind is set upon the treasures of the soul.....My fathers sought the things of this world, but I seek a heavenly reward.—*Baba bathra*, 11, 1.

GREEK AND ROMAN

solid, and eternal; they cannot die nor be diminished.—SENECA, *Letter lxxiv*, 16.

The perfect man, full of divine and human virtues, can lose nothing: his goods are guarded by solid and unshakable walls.—SENECA, *On Constancy*, vi, 8.

Where our interest is, there too is our piety directed.—EPICTETUS, *Enchirid.*, xxxi.

If thou dost act unrighteously, thy eye will turn to the dark and godless, and, being in darkness and ignorance of thyself, thou wilt probably do deeds of darkness.—PLATO, *Alcibiades*, i, 134.

If thou dost chiefly admire little things, thou wilt never be held worthy of great ones.—EPICTETUS, *Fragments*, xlv.

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth.....turn to it with all thy soul.....If nothing appears to be better than the deity which is planted in thee, give place to nothing else.—M. AURELIUS, iii, 6.

THE GOSPELS

Therefore I say unto you Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field,

THE OLD TESTAMENT

They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.—*Ps.* xxxiv, 10.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.—*Ps.* lv, 22.

A covetous man's eye is not satisfied with his portion; and wicked injustice drieth up his soul.—*Ecclus.*, xiv, 9.

Who provideth for the raven his food? — *Job*, xxxviii, 41.

He giveth food to all flesh; for his mercy endureth for ever.—*Ps.* cxxxvi, 25.

Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.—*Ps.* cxlv, 16.

Who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. — *Ps.* cxlvii, 8-9.

These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them

THE TALMUD

He who created the day found also the food thereof; wherefore he who, having sufficient food for the day, says, What shall I eat to-morrow? is one of the men of little faith [R. Eliezer].—*Mechilta to Exod.*, 16, 4.

Hast thou ever seen a bird, or a beast of the forest, that must obtain its food by work? God feeds them, and they strive not to secure their nourishment.—*Kiddushin*, 4.

Hast thou ever seen a lion bearing a burden, or a stag gathering the summer's fruits, or a wolf buying oil?And shall I, who have been created to serve my Creator, be more anxious about my food? (Jerusalem Talmud.)

God's providence reaches all creatures: from the horns of the unicorn to the eggs of the lice.—*Sabbath*, 107, 2.

If the beasts themselves find their food, how much

GREEK AND ROMAN

I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul.—PLATO, *Apology*, 30.

Make not an idol of thy clothes, and thou wilt not be enraged with the thief.—EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, i, 64.

Dispise the flesh as if thou wert now dying.—M. AURELIUS, ii, 2.

Must a philosopher be more helpless and anxious than the brute-beasts? each of which is self-sufficient, and wants neither proper food, nor any suitable and natural provision.—EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, i, 35.

Any one thing in creation is sufficient to demonstrate a Providence to a humble and grateful mind.—EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, i, 16.

It is a mark of want of intellect to spend much time in things relating to the body.—EPICURETUS, *Enchiridion*, xli.

Does any good man fear that food shall fail him? It

THE GOSPELS

which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore taken no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

their meat in due season.—
Ps. civ, 27.

Fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him.—*Ps. xxxiv, 9.*

The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.—*Ps. xxxiv, 10.*

The Lord knoweth the days of the righteous; and their inheritance shall be for ever.—*Ps. xxxvii, 18.*

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.—*Ps. xxxvii, 25.*

If the righteous man is God's son, he will uphold him.—*Wisdom, ii, 18.*

THE TALMUD

more a man who sinneth not?—*Kiddushin*, 82, 1.

The beast hath a mind only to serve man, and man knoweth his higher calling—to serve God. Doth it become him, then, to care only for his bodily wants?—*Kiddushin*, 4.

He who chooseth the Scriptures for his chief business shall see his goods increase.—*Abodah Zarah*, 19, 2.

Whosoever hath a crumb of bread in his sack, yet asketh, What shall I eat to-morrow? is a man of little faith.—*Sotah*, 48, 2.

Let care wait until its hour cometh: it will then weigh heavy enough.—*Berachot*, 9, 2.

GREEK AND ROMAN

doth not fail the blind; it doth not fail the lame.—*EPICETUS*, *Discourses*, ii, 115.

There is not anything necessary to us but we have it either cheap or gratuitous: and this is the provision which our Heavenly Father hath made for us.—*SENECA*, *On the Happy Life*, xv.

Keep thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately.—*M. AURELIUS*, iii, 12.

In contemplating thyself never include the vessel which surrounds thee, and these instruments which are attached to it.—*M. AURELIUS*, x, 38.

When thou hast had enough to-day, thou dost sit weeping about to-morrow, in regard to how thou shalt get food. Why, if thou hast it, slave, thou wilt have it; if not, thou wilt go out of life.—*EPICETUS*, *Discourses*, i, 36.

He who hath great riches hath likewise need of many things.....and the richest must be in the worst condition, since they seem to be most in want of such things.—*PLATO*, *Eryxias*, 406.

THE GOSPELS

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.—*Levit.*, xix, 17.

There is a reproof that is not comely; and there is a man that keepeth silence, and he is wise.—*Ecclus.*, xx, 1.

Judge of thy neighbour by thyself: and be discreet in every point.—*Ecclus.*, xxx, 15.

Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.—*Prov.*, ix, 8.

Speak not in the ears of

THE TALMUD

Judge every one as favourably as ye can.—*Pirke Abot*, i, 6.

Judge not thy neighbour until thou hast stood in his place [Hillel].—*Pirke Abot*, 2, 4.

With the measure with which a man measureth shall it be meted unto him.—*Sotah*, 8, 2.

The fault from which thou art not free blame thou not in another.—*Baba mezia*, 59, 2.

R. Johanan said: There was a time when to him who said, Remove the toothpick from thy tooth, a man used to say, Do thou remove the beam from thine own eye.—*Baba bathra*, 15, 2.

Cast not pearls before swine, and give not wisdom to the man who cannot understand its worth. For

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It is shameful that man should begin and end where the irrational creatures do.—*EPICLETUS, Discourses*, i, 6.

When thou art offended with any man's transgression, presently reflect upon thyself, and consider what thou thyself art guilty of in the same kind.—*M. AURELIUS*, x, 30.

Take care that thou be far removed from the things thou findest fault with in another.—*PLUTARCH, On the Use of Enemies*, iv.

Whenever Plato was among evil-doers, he was wont to ask himself: Do I myself perchance have the same vice?—*PLUTARCH, On the Usefulness of Enemies*, iv.

Thou wilt commit the fewest faults in judging if thou art faultless in thy own life.—*EPICLETUS, Fragments*, lvii.

If we would be righteous judges, let us first persuade ourselves that none of us is blameless.—*SENECA, On Anger*, ii, 28.

Do not make much talk among the ignorant about thy principles, but show them by thy actions.—

THE GOSPELS

them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you ; for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

a fool ; for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.—*Prov.*, xxiii, 9.

I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me.—*Prov.*, viii, 17.

Then shall ye call upon me ; and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord.—*Jer.*, xxix, 12-14.

Who did call upon him, and he did despise him ?—*Ecclus.*, ii, 10.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—*Levit.*, xix, 18.

What thou thyself hatest, do to no man.—*Tobit*, iv, 15.

THE TALMUD

it is of more value than precious stones, and who-soever desireth it not is like the swine.—*Mibchar Hapnininim*, i.

The doors of prayer are never closed.—*Sotah*, 49.

Adam prayed to the Lord, and rain fertilized the earth. From this we see that the prayer of the just is heard by God.—*Chulin*, 60, 1.

And Hillel said: What thou dost not like, do thou not to thy neighbour. That is the whole law; all the rest is explanation.—*Sabbath*, 31, 1.

If thou wouldst not have another take away what is thine, take not thou what belongs to thy neighbour [R. Akiba].—*Abot of R. Nathan*.

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EPICLETUS, *Enchiridion*, xlvi.

God hath not merely provided for our needs; we are loved even to delight.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, iv, 5.

Doing this, and living after this manner, we shall receive our reward from the Gods and those who are above us.—PLATO, *Laws*, iv, 718.

The Gods, like good parents who smile at their ill-natured children, cease not to heap benefits even on them who doubt the existence of their benefactors, but scatter their favours with equal hand among all nations.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, vii, 31.

If thou wouldst be well spoken of, learn to speak well of others.—EPICLETUS, *Enchiridion*, vi.

What thou avoidest suffering thyself, seek not to impose on others.—EPICLETUS, *Fragments*, xxxviii.

[When Kung-fu-tse was asked for a general rule of behaviour, he replied in a word which means literally "as heart," or "Have a heart in common with your

THE GOSPELS

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.¹

¹ These and the following are obviously not words of Christ; they are related to the later dissensions among his followers.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The way of sinners is made smooth with stones, and at the last end thereof is the pit of Hades.—*Ecclus.*, xxi, 10.

The righteous live for ever, and in the Lord is their reward.—*Wisdom*, v, 15.

Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet.—*Deut.*, xiii, 3.

Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you.—*Jerem.*, xxiii, 16.

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways.—*Ezech.*, xviii, 30.

Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof.—*Jerem.*, xi, 19.

If the ungodly put forth boughs, and flourish for a season.....their fruit shall be useless, never ripe to eat, and fit for nothing.—*Wisdom*, iv, 45.

THE TALMUD

Penance and good works are a shield against evil chances.—*Pirke Abot*, 4, 13.

The number of those who have a claim to felicity is very small.—*Sukkah*, 145, 2.

Even from the stalk ye know what fruit the gourd will bear.—*Berachot*, 48, 1.

The world is judged with goodness, and each is dealt with according to his works.—*Pirke Abot*, 3, 19.

GREEK AND ROMAN

neighbour." His counsel was not negative, as is often said. See last edition of *Encyc. Brit.*]

Wherefore I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who, having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body..... has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth—in these adorned, she is ready to go on her journey to the world below.—PLATO, *Phædo*, 115.

If the companion be corrupt, he who converses with him will be corrupted likewise.—EPICLETUS, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii.

Virtue looketh with unfaltering eyes on the torments that are prepared for her: she betrayeth no change of countenance whether fortune offer prosperity or adversity.—SENECA, *On Constancy*, v, 5.

THE GOSPELS

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore whoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. But if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings.....then will I cause you to dwell in this place.—*Jerem.*, vii, 4-5.

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but I will not answer.—*Prov.*, i, 28.

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.—*Ps.* vi, 8.

Timber girt and bound into a building shall not be loosened with shaking: so a heart established in due season on well-advised counsel shall not be afraid. A heart settled upon a thoughtful understanding is as ornament of plaister on a polished wall.—*Ecclus.*, xxii, 16-18.

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established.—*Prov.*, xxiv, 3.

THE TALMUD

It is not fine words, but good deeds, that avail.—*Pirke Abot*, 1, 17.

R. Elisha ben Abiya said : To whom shall I liken a man whose deeds are good, and who is zealous for the Law? To a man who, in building a house, putteth stone below and brick above, so that when the flood cometh it is not shaken. And to whom shall I liken a man whose deeds are not good, yet he is zealous for the law? To a man who putteth brick below and stone above; and, when but a little water cometh, it beareth it away.—*Abot of R. Nathan*, 24.

R. Elazar ben Azariah said: To what shall I liken the man whose wisdom is greater than his deeds? To

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The unholy do only waste their much service upon the Gods.—PLATO, *Laws*, iv, 717.

The good man will stand firm, and bear, not only patiently but gladly, whatever happens; he will know that every adversity is a law of nature; and, just as the good soldier bears wounds and counts his scars, and even in death loves the emperor for whom he falls, he will ever bear in mind that old precept: Follow God.—SENECA, *On the Happy Life*, xv, 5.

It is the part of a great man to conquer the calamities and terrors of morals.—SENECA, *On Providence*, iv, 1.

He that lifteth himself above great adversity, and beareth the evils which

THE GOSPELS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.

Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice.—*Hosea*, vi, 6.

What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—*Micah*, vi, 8.

[Compare the ideals and manners of the Essenes (p. 92) which are here reproduced in the words of the Gospel.]

As I learned without guile, I impart without grudging.—*Wisdom*, vii, 13.

THE TALMUD

a tree whose branches are many and roots few; and the wind cometh, and tear-eth it up, and casteth it on its face.....But to what shall I liken him whose deeds are greater than his wisdom? To a tree whose branches are few and roots many, so that even if all the winds in the world come and rage against it, they cannot move it from its position.—*Pirke Abot*, 3, 18.

When a man would read the Law, and there is a corpse to be buried, the latter is to be considered the smaller matter.—*Megillah*, 3, 2.

He who offereth humility to God hath as much merit as if he had offered all the victims in the world.—*Sotah*, 8.

He that is merciful to God's creatures may expect heavenly mercy.—*Sabbath*, 151.

As I have freely taught you, so must ye freely spread my doctrines; for the Lord gave me the Law without pay. I follow his example, and I expect you to follow mine.—*Berachot*, 4.

R. Chija said: It befits not a pupil of the wise to

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crush others, is consecrated by his sufferings.—SENECA, *To Helvia*, xiii, 6.

It was vain for them to sacrifice and offer gifts, seeing that they were hateful to the Gods, who are not, like vile usurers, to be gained by bribes.—PLATO, *Alciades*, ii, 149.

No mind is good without God.—SENECA, *Letter lxxiii*, 16.

Provide things relating to the body no further than absolute need requireth.—EPICTETUS, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii.

Why must I any longer

THE GOSPELS

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.....But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you..... but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

[The lengthy speech preparing the disciples for persecution is clearly a later composition, based on experience.]

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Let us set snares for the just, because he is a burden to us.....Let us put him to the proof with insults..... Let us condemn him to a shameful death.—*Wisdom*, ii.

I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.—*Exod.*, iv, 12.

The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.—*2 Samuel*, xxiii, 2.

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand, three thousand and five and thirty days.—*Daniel*, xii, 12.

Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?—*Job*, xxxi, 34.

THE TALMUD

wear shoes. — *Sabbath*, 174, 1.

R. Jehuda ben Simon said: God praiseth the Israelites, saying: In my sight are they pure as doves, but to the nations are they cunning as serpents. — *Shir Hashirim rabba*, 15, 3.

We must thank God for the evil as well as the good. — *Berachot*, 60.

It is enough for the servant that he be as his master. — *Berachot*, 58, 2.

He who beareth himself proudly acteth as if he cannot bear the nearness of

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seek good and evil in externals? — EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, iii, 20.

Suppose that men kill thee, cut thee in pieces, curse thee. What then can these things do to prevent thy mind from remaining pure, wise, sober, just? — M. AURELIUS, viii, 51.

Dare to look up to God, and say, Make use of me for the future as thou wilt. I am of the same mind: I am one with thee. Lead me whither thou wilt. — EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, ii, 16.

When the good man seeth his faith tried by the torments of perfidy, he descendeth not from his height, but riseth above his torment, and saith: I have what I willed, what I sought: I withdraw not, and will not withdraw. — SENECA, *On Benefits*, iv, 21.

What madness it is to fear a charge of infamy from the infamous. — SENECA, *Letter* xci, 20.

One would not think that ye would need an instructor

THE GOSPELS

have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.—*Prov.*, xvii, 15.

The Most High knoweth all knowledge.....declaring the things that are past, and revealing the traces of hidden things.—*Ecclus.*, xlii, 18-20.

Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.—*Is.*, viii, 12-13.

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked; for the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.—*Prov.*, iii, 25.

As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground.—*1 Samuel*, xiv, 45.

Doth not he see my ways,

THE TALMUD

God, whose glory filleth the world.—*Berachot*, 43, 2.

R. Akiba taught the son of Asai in secret, and he gave the doctrine to his pupils in the market-place.—*Berachot*, 22, 1.

When R. Johanan ben Zakkai was near death, he grieved.....He said: If a king were to be angry with me, and put me into chains, I would console myself with the thought that such chains were only for this world..... But I have to go before the King of Kings, and I fear his wrath. — *Abot of R. Nathan*, 24.

R. Simon ben Jochai said: Without the will of God no bird falleth from heaven; how much less shall danger threaten a man's life, if God do not

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.....to rear up young men of such a spirit that, knowing their affinity to the Gods, and that we are, as it were, fettered by the body and its possessions.....they should resolve to throw them all off, and depart to their divine kindred.—EPICTE-TUS, *Discourses*, i, 9.

We must live as if we were ever in sight: our minds must be as though someone could ever penetrate to our inmost thoughts. And this is so. What avails it that something be hidden from men? From God nothing is concealed.—SENECA, *Letter lxxxiii*, 1.

Be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the Gods.—PLATO, *Apology*, 41.

Why may not such an one call himself.....a son of God? And why shall he fear anything that happens among men?—EPICTE-TUS, *Discourses*, i, 9.

God neglecteth not one of the smallest things.—EPIC-TETUS, *Discourses*, iii, 24.

If thou dost always re-

THE GOSPELS

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it.

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name

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and count all my steps?—*Job*, xxxi, 4.

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.—*Prov.*, xxiv, 10.

The Lord cast down the thrones of rulers, and set the meek in their stead.—*Ecclus.*, x, 14.

For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are those of his own house.—*Micah*, vii, 6.

My friends scorn me.—*Job*, xvi, 20.

My son, if thou comest to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation.—*Ecclus.*, ii, 1.

He that serveth God according to his good pleasure shall be accepted.—*Ecclus.*, xxxv, 16.

Thou renderest to every man according to his work.—*Ps.* lxii, 12.

And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah.....and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord,

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send it?—*Bereshit rabba*, 79, 77, 4.

Do I not number every hair of every creature?—*Pesikta*, 18, 4.

No man striketh here below with his finger, but it is known above.—*Chulin*, 7.

Shortly before the coming of the Messiah, the son will rise against the father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. Each will find enemies in those of his own house. In those days men will trust none but God.—*Sotah*, 49, 2.

What shall a man do to live? He shall die. What shall a man do to die? He shall live.—*Taanit*, 32, 32.

If ye give ear to my angel, it is as if ye hearkened unto me.—*Schemoth rabba*, 32.

He who feedeth one learned in divine things will be blessed by God and man.—*Sohar to Gen.*, 129, 512.

He who taketh his neigh-

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member that God standeth by as a witness of whatever thou dost either in soul or body, thou wilt never err, either in thy prayers or actions, and thou wilt have God abiding with thee.—*EPICLETUS*, *Fragments*, cxv.

I am a sort of gad-fly, given to the State by God [Socrates].—*PLATO*, *Apology*, 30.

No man seemeth to me to have a higher regard for virtue, none to be more devoted to it, than he who hath forfeited the repute of a good man in order to save his conscience.—*SENECA*, *Letter lxxxi*, 20.

May not he who is truly a man cease to care about living a certain time?..... He leaveth all that with God.—*PLATO*, *Gorgias*, 512.

Conscience giveth joy, even when it is oppressed. *SENECA*, *On Benefits*, iv, 21.

The rites of hospitality are taught by Heaven.—*PLATO*, *Laws*, iv, 718.

The stranger who cometh from abroad shall be received in a friendly spiritshowing respect to Zeus, the god of hospitality.—*PLATO*, *Laws*, xii, 953.

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of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

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which he spake by Elijah.
—*1 Kings*, xvii, 15-16.

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.—*Prov.*, xxi, 13.

Do good to one that is lowly.—*Ecclus.*, xii, 5.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.—*Is.*, xxv, 5-6.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies.—*Ps.* viii, 2.

Wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of babes to speak clearly.—*Wisdom*, x, 21.

Come unto me ye that desire me.—*Wisdom*, xxiv, 19.

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bour into his house hath the same reward as if the Schechina [divine spirit] itself entered his house.—*Shir hashirim rabba*, 13, 3.

What God will do in the days of the Messiah he has already shown in the days of his prophets. God saith: In the days of the Messiah I will cause the blind to see.—*Vajikra rabba*, 27, 171, 2.

The land in which the dead arise is the land in which the kingdom of the Messiah will open.—*Beres-hit rabba*, 72, 3.

Round the Messiah will gather all who study the law, the little ones of the world; for by the boys who go to school shall his power be made manifest.—*Sohar to Exodus*, 4, 13.

God sends his spirit only on the modest and lowly.—*Nedarim*, 35.

Let man first take on himself the yoke of heaven, then the yoke of the com-

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What sort of a man is he who giveth the name of brother to his friend and will not walk the same way with him?—PLUTARCH, *On Fraternal Love*, iii.

The wise man will stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked, and will give hospitality to the exile and alms to the needy.—SENECA, *On Clemency*, vi.

What is the first business of a man who studieth philosophy? To part with self-conceit.—EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, ii, 172.

The soul doth not apprehend God unless it be pure and holy.—SENECA, *Letter lxxxvii*, 21.

Do not return to philosophy as if she were a master, but act like those

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Take my yoke upon you ; for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. [The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.] What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day.

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Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. —*Is.*, lv, 1.

Draw near unto me, ye unlearned.....Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction..... I laboured but a little, and found for myself much rest. —*Ecclus.*, li, 23-27.

Behold thy king cometh unto thee.....lowly, and riding upon an ass.—*Zech.*, ix, 9.

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.—*Is.*, xlii, 2.

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice.—*Hosea*, vi, 6.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lordthe new moons and sabbaths.....I cannot away with.—*Is.*, i, 11, 13.

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mandments.—*Berachot*, 13, 1.

He who goeth to bed at night with the resolve to take on himself the yoke of the kingdom above, and forceth his earthly hopes to the background in his heart, is shielded from all evil.—*Sohar to Gen.*, 8, 30.

Humility is the crown of all virtue.—*Abodah zarah*, 2.

The Law was given unto men, not angels.—*Berachot*, 25, 2.

The sabbath is given unto you, and not ye unto the sabbath.—*Joma*, 85, 2.

The Passover was given to the Israelites, not the Israelites brought into the world for the Passover.—*Pirke Eliezer*, 50.

If a domestic animal fall into a well (on the sabbath), see if it be injured; if so, it must be taken out and killed; if not, it shall live.—*Baba mezia*, 46.

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who have infirm eyes.—*M. AURELIUS*, v, 9.

It is the nature of the gods to be meek and placid.—*SENECA*, *On Anger*, ii, 27.

The gods are not fastidious: they lend a hand to the man who would rise.—*SENECA*, *Letter lxxiii*, 15.

The idea is inconceivable that the Gods have regard, not to the justice and purity of our souls, but to costly processions and sacrifices.—*PLATO*, *Alcibiades II*, 150.

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Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother.

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The fruit of a tree declareth the husbandry thereof; so is the utterance of the thought of the heart of a man.—*Ecclus.*, xxvii, 6.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.—*Prov.*, xx, 11.

Good labours have fruit of great renown, and the root of understanding cannot fail.—*Wisdom*, iii, 15.

Be not a hypocrite in the mouths of men, and take good heed to thy lips.—*Ecclus.*, i, 29.

Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure.—*Ecclus.*, ii, 2.

No secret utterance shall go on its way void.—*Wisdom*, i, 11.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.—*Prov.*, xviii, 21.

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.—*Jerem.*, vii, 8.

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.—*Prov.*, iii, 1.

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God hateth him who speaketh with his tongue what he doth not mean in his heart.—*Pesachim*, 113, 2.

The tongue bringeth to the light all the secrets of the heart, both good and evil thoughts.—*Sepher Rasiel Hagadol*, 10, 1.

There are idle words, and these God will bring back to the memory of man on his death-bed.—*Hagigah*, 5, 2.

Think not too lightly of any man, nor too highly of anything, for there is not any man that hath not had his day, and no thing that hath not its place.—*Pirke Abot*, iv, 3.

God is glorified by the observance of the divine commands.—*Mechilta to Exodus*, 15, 2.

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Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by its thoughts.—M. AURELIUS, v, 16.

This thought will suffer nothing sordid, nothing base, nothing cruel, to remain in the mind—the Gods are witnesses of all things, and before them we are on trial.—SENECA, *Letter cii*, 29.

These [vice, etc.] can be no otherwise expelled than by looking up to God alone as our pattern.—EPICETUS, *Discourses*, ii, 17.

The body must be treated with severity, lest it obey not the mind readily.—SENECA, *Letter viii*, 5.

What is once said and done thou canst not recall.—EPICETUS, *Fragments*, xcvi.

Let us speak what we think, and think what we speak; let our speech accord with our life.—SENECA, *Letter lxxv*, 4.

Leave me to fulfil the will of God, and to follow whither he leads.—PLATO, *Crito*, 54.

Great is the mind that is wholly subject to God.—SENECA, *Letter cvii*, 12.

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Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.....For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with

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And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.—*Daniel*, xii, 3.

Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.—*Prov.*, xvii, 7.

For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.—*Genesis*, viii, 21.

A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.—*Prov.*, xviii, 7.

The heart of fools is in their mouth; but the mouth of wise men is their heart.—*Eccles.*, xxi, 26.

My son, if thou comest to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation.—*Eccles.*, ii, 1.

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?—*Eccles.*, i, 3.

For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.—*Ps.* xlix, 8.

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They who are persecuted and hate not.....are the elect of God, of whom it is written: They shine with the splendour of the sun.—*Sabbath*, 88, 2.

Keep thy mouth from sin, and thy body from wrong, and God will be with thee [R. Meir].—*Berachot*, 17, 1.

God gave man his spirit in a state of perfect purity, and it is man's duty to restore it in the condition in which he received it.—*Sabbath*, 152, 2.

Penance and good works are a shield against evil chances.—*Pirke Abot*, 4, 13.

Weigh the hurt that cometh to thee of the transgression of a divine command against the reward that is promised thee for fulfilling it, and the gold of sin against the punishment that awaiteth

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Consider that thou dost not thrive merely by the food in thy stomach, but by the elevation of thy soul. For the former is evacuated, and carried off altogether; but the latter, though the soul is parted, remains uncorrupted through all things.—EPICTETUS, *Fragments*, xxvi.

Nothing is more unhappy than the man who hath never known adversity.—SENECA, *On Providence*, iii, 3.

We have to struggle against this flesh with all our minds.—SENECA, *To Marcia*, xxiv, 5.

In this present life I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body.....but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God

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his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is

THE OLD TESTAMENT

For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.—*Job*, xxxiv, 11.

My soul is even as a weaned child.—*Ps.* cxxxii, 2.

They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in his sight.—*Eccclus.*, ii, 17.

He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.—*Prov.*, xxii, 11.

Incorruption bringeth near to God.—*Wisdom*, vi, 19.

The turning away of the simple shall slay them.—*Prov.*, i, 32.

Do good to one that is lowly.—*Eccclus.*, xii, 5.

Be not ashamed to instruct the unwise and foolish.—*Eccclus.*, xlii, 8.

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the sinner.—*Pirke Abot*, 2, 1.

Each is dealt with according to his works.—*Pirke Abot*, 3, 19.

A man converted is like a new-born child.—*Jebamoth*, 62, 2.

A young man deserves praise when he becomes like the children.—*Tanchuma*, 36, 4.

Whosoever humbleth himself in this life for love of the Law, the same will be reckoned among the great in the kingdom of heaven.—*Baba mezia*, 84, 2.

If thou hast learned much, make not a boast thereof.—*Sanhedrim*, 93.

Whosoever leadeth his fellow man into sin doth worse than if he took away his life.—*Tanchuma*, 74, 1.

The proud man loseth his wisdom if he be wise.—*Pesachim*, 66.

Holiness leads to humility; humility to the fear of God.—*Abodah zarah*, 20.

Abai said: Ten thousand just are daily rejoiced with

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himself is pleased to release us.—PLATO, *Phædo*, 67.

Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite.—M. AURELIUS, iii, 8.

The soul doth not apprehend God unless it be pure and holy.—SENECA, *Letter lxxxvii*, 21.

Simple and modest is the work of philosophy. Draw me not aside to insolence and pride.—M. AURELIUS, ix, 28.

Keep thyself simple, good, pure, serious, free from affectation, a friend of justice, a worshipper of the Gods, kind, affectionate, strenuous in all proper acts.—M. AURELIUS, vi, 30.

Who is there whom bright and agreeable children do not attract to play, and creep, and prattle with them?—EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, i, 216.

A sensible legislator will rather exhort the elders to reverence the younger, and above all to take heed that no young man sees or hears one of themselves doing or saying anything disgraceful.—PLATO, *Laws*, v, 729.

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in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.¹

¹ The references to the children's "belief," to scandals, etc., show that the writer—in part, at least—takes the word "children" in the not uncommon Jewish sense of converts. Whether the writer of the Gospel started from some literal reference of Jesus to children must remain open.

If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not a secret to another.—*Prov.*, xxv, 9.

The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.—*Prov.*, xix, 11.

At the mouth of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.—*Deut.*, xix, 15.

He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed.—*Prov.*, xxix, 1.

Who will justify him that sinneth against his own soul?—*Ecclus.*, x, 29.

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the sight of God in heaven.
—*Sukkah*, 45, 2.

R. Chanina said: Jerusalem was destroyed because no man forgave the sin of his neighbour.—*Sabbath*, 119, 2.

R. Samuel said: Whosoever dissuadeth his brother from sin for the honour of God hath won a part in eternal life.—*Tanchuma*, 29, 3.

Whosoever hath sinned against his brother shall say to him: I have sinned against thee. If he give ear to him, it is well: if not, let him bring two other men, and appease the injured one in their presence.—*Joma*, 87, 1.

Abai used to say: Let a man always fear God and answer his neighbour with a cheerful face, restrain his anger, spread peace and harmony among his brethren and all men, so that he may

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Souls find their way easiest to the Gods when they have been withdrawn early from the society of men, for they are the least soiled.—SENECA, *To Marcia*, xxiii.

The Gods are not fastidious: they lend a hand to the man who would rise.—SENECA, *Letter lxxiii*, 15.

Show him his error, admonish him. If he listeneth, thou wilt cure him, and there is no need of anger.—M. AURELIUS, v, 28.

My love breedeth another love: and so, like the stork, I shall be cherished by the bird whom I have hatched.—PLATO, *Alcibiades I*, 135.

Thou oughtest not to be affected contrary to nature by the evil deeds of another; pity him rather.—EPICETUS, *Discourses*, i, 18.

An adviser ought in the first place to have a regard to the delicacy and sense of shame of the person admonished.—EPICETUS, *Fragments*, cl.

How much finer it is to show a gentle and paternal mind to the erring: not to reprove them, but to lead them back.—SENECA, *On Anger*, i, 15.

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Again I say unto you,
That if two of you shall
agree on earth as touching
any thing that they shall
ask, it shall be done for
them by my Father which
is in heaven. For where
two or three are gathered
together in my name, there
am I in the midst of them.

If thou wilt be perfect,
go and sell that thou hast,
and give to the poor, and
thou shalt have treasure in
heaven: and come and fol-
low me.

Verily, I say unto you,
That a rich man shall hardly
enter into the kingdom of
heaven. And again I say
unto you, It is easier for a
camel to go through the
eye of a needle, than for a
rich man to enter into the
kingdom of God. Everyone
that hath forsaken homes,
or brethren, or sisters, or
father, or mother, or wife,
or children, or lands, for
my name's sake, shall re-

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Wakefulness that cometh
of riches consumeth the
flesh.—*Ecclus.*, xxxi, 1.

Blessed is the rich that
is found without blemish,
and hath not gone after
gold. Who is he? and we
will call him blessed: for
wonderful things hath he
done among his people.—
Ecclus., xxxi, 8-9.

Who said unto his father,
and to his mother, I have
not seen him: neither did
he acknowledge his brethren,
nor knew his own children.
.....Bless, Lord, his sub-

THE TALMUD

be loved above and below—by God and by men.—*Berachot*, 17, 1.

Separate not thyself from the congregation [Hillel].—*Pirke Abot*, 2, 4.

R. Chanina said: Where there are two persons, andthe Law is the subject of their discourse, there also is the shechina.—*Pirke Abot*, 3, 2.

God is present wherever two persons discuss the Law.—*Berachot*, 6, 1.

Rabba said: If ye would have eternal life, sell all ye have, and be converted to our faith.—*Abodah Zarah*, 64, 1.

Whosoever giveth alms for the glory of heaven shall have his gift sown by God in the garden of Eden, where it will bear fruit a thousandfold.—*Talkut Rubeni*, 165, 3.

Art thou from Pumbeditha, where they can drive an elephant through the eye of a needle?—*Baba mezia*, 38, 2.

[The above was a proverbial Jewish saying for an

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Anger at another's sin is base and petty: virtue will never imitate the vices she reproveth.—SENECA, *On Anger*, ii, 6.

These principles make friendship in families, concord in cities, peace in nations.—EPICURETUS, *Discourses*, iv, 5.

Democritus cast aside his wealth, deeming it a burden to the good mind.—SENECA, *On Providence*, vi, 2.

Poverty will bring thee joy, as thou wilt be free from many cares.—PLUTARCH, *On Covetousness*, iv.

Very rich and very good at the same time a man cannot be.—PLATO, *Laws*, v, 742.

It is a great thing not to be corrupted by the nearness of wealth: great is the man who is poor amid wealth.—SENECA, *Letter xx*, 10.

Riches are not among the number of things which are good.....It is difficult therefore for a rich person

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ceive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

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stance, and accept the work of his hands—*Deut.*, xxxiii, 9, 11.

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.—*Prov.*, xviii, 12.

What good did our arrogance profit us? and what good have riches and vaunting brought us?—*Wisdom*, v, 8-9.

The man of low estate may be pardoned in mercy, but mighty men shall be searched out mightily.—*Wisdom*, vi, 6.

Exalt not thyself lest thou fall, and bring dishonour upon thy soul.—*Ecclus.*, i, 30.

The greater thou art, humble thyself the more.—*Ecclus.*, iii, 18.

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impossibility. Similarly, "sell all thou hast" is a common rabbinical expression for "make every effort."]

Joseph, son of Joshua, fell into a state of ecstasy during an illness. When his father asked him what he saw he said: A world upside down: they who are more highly esteemed here are below, and the lower are above. Verily, said the old man, thou hast seen in thy mind a rational world.—*Baba bathra*, 10, 3.

Whosoever lowereth himself, him doth God exalt; whosoever exalteth himself, him doth God lower; whosoever seeketh greatness, from him it flees; whosoever fleeth greatness, it runneth after him.—*Eruvin*, 13, 2.

R. Elieser, R. Joshua, and R. Zadoc were the guests of R. Gamaliel; and he served them with wine and stood while they ate.—*Kiddushin*, 32, 2.

Be patient and humble with every man.—*Derech Eretz*, 8.

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to be modest, or for a modest person to be rich.—EPICLETUS, *Fragments*, xviii.

Wealth is dangerous to the foolish, since vice groweth with wealth.—EPICLETUS, *Fragments*, xciv.

If such a thing as wife or child be granted thee, there is no objection; but if the Captain calls, run to the ship, and never look behind.—EPICLETUS, *Enchiridion*, vii.

No one who is a lover of money, a lover of pleasure, or a lover of glory, is likewise a lover of mankind.—EPICLETUS, *Fragments*, x.

Nothing is more becoming in a ruler than to despise no one, and never to be insolent.—EPICLETUS, *Fragments*, cxxvii.

He who is lifted up with pride, or elated by wealth or rank or beauty.....is left deserted by God.—PLATO, *Laws*, iv, 716.

If thou dost happen to be placed in some high station.....wilt thou not remember what thou art, and over whom thou bearest rule—that they are by nature thy relatives, thy brothers—that they are the

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Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

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Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.—*Deut.*, vi, 5.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—*Levit.*, xix, 18.

Exalt not thyself in the counsel of thy soul.—*Ecclus.*, vi, 2.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you.—*Mal.*, i, 6.

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.—*Prov.*, xxv, 14.

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill, that he may set him with princes.—*Ps.* cxiii, 6.

The prayer of the humble

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He who doth not observe the commandments in this world solely out of fear and love of God will have no reward in the life to come.—*Sotah*, 36.

Grieve not, my son, we have yet another pardon for sin: that is, to do good and to love your neighbour.—*Abot of R. Nathan*, 4.

R. Shemaja said: Love the work, and not the dignity, of Rabbi.—*Pirke Abot*, 1, 10.

Let no man say: I devoted myself to the study of the Scriptures that men might call me Rabbi.—*Nedarim*, 62, 1.

He who striveth to make a name for himself loseth his name [Hillel].—*Pirke Abot*, 1, 13.

If a man exalt himself, God will abase him: but if he be humble, God will exalt him.—*Nedarim*, 55, 1.

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offspring of God?—EPIC-
TETUS, *Discourses*, i, 14.

What is sufficient? Why, what else than to venerate the Gods and bless them, and to do good unto men.—M. AURELIUS, v, 33.

Reverence the Gods, and help men. Short is life.—M. AURELIUS, vi, 30.

Think of God oftener than thou breathest.—EPICTE-
TUS, *Fragments*, cxiv.

Thou must live for another, if thou wouldst live for thyself.—SENECA, *Letter xlvi*, 2.

What is the first business of a man who studies philosophy? To part with self-conceit.—EPICTE-
TUS, *Discourses*, ii, 172.

God only is wise.—PLATO, *Apology*, 23.

Admit that you are nobody, and know nothing.—EPICTE-
TUS, *Discourses*, ii, 1.

Let us satisfy our consciences, and do nothing for the sake of reputation.—SENECA, *On Anger*, iii, 41.

Seek not good from without; seek it within yourselves, or ye will never find it.—EPICTE-
TUS, *Discourses*, iii, 24.

Nothing is so much to be avoided in doing good as

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Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

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pierceth the clouds.—*Ecclus.*, xxxv, 17.

When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean.....learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.—*Is.*, i, 15-17.

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed: to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless.—*Is.*, x, 1-2.

Your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity.....none calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies.—*Is.*, lix, 3-4.

What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—*Micah*, vi, 8.

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Keep thyself from the airs which the Pharisees give themselves.—*Sotah*, 22, 2.

R. Elieser said to the widow: Verily, the plague of the Pharisees hath fallen on this woman (Jerus. Talmud).—*Sotah*, 20, 1.

[There are a few allusions of this kind in the Talmud; but for each such there are a hundred Pharisaic maxims like the following, and it is better to contrast these with the words of the Gospel (which do not seem to be words of Christ, but part of the bitter struggle of Jew and Christian in a later generation). Compare also the rabbinical maxims on earlier pages.]

The hypocrite ends in hell.—*Sotah*, 41, 1.

Four men dare not appear before God: the mocker, the liar, the hypocrite, and the slanderer.—*Sotah*, 42, 1.

The man who prideth himself on his piety, and boasteth of it, is compared by our wise men to a swine that stretcheth out its cloven hoofs with ostentation.—*Bereshit rabba*.

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pride.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, ii, 11.

God is not worshipped by the slain bodies of bulls, nor by offerings of gold and silver, nor by the squandering of treasures, but by a pious and upright will.—SENECA, *Letter cxv*, 5.

Why do we deceive ourselves? Our evil is not external: it is within us, in our very hearts; and so we shall hardly attain unto health, for we know not that we are sick.—SENECA, *Ep.* 1, 4.

Fraud appeareth with the pleasant face of virtue, and a benignant countenance concealeth depraved thoughts.—SENECA, *Fragments*, xcvi.

God saith: What complaint against me have ye who follow righteousness? Others I have surrounded with false goods, and have deluded their vain minds with a long and deceptive dream.....but within they are miserable, sordid, base, adorned only outwardly like their walls. Theirs is not a solid and genuine happiness: it is encrusted, and that but thinly.—SENECA, *On Providence*, vi, 3.

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Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of

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Is not this the fast that I have chosen?.....Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?—*Is.*, lviii, 6-7.

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right.....hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment.....he shall surely live.—*Ezek.*, xviii, 5, 16.

Give thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked.—*Tobit*, v, 16.

Be not slow to visit a sick man.—*Ecclus.*, vii, 34.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given will he pay him again.—*Prov.*, xix, 17.

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[This became proverbial.]

The proud heart is grievous to the Eternal, even if it have only a little pride.—*Sotah*, 5.

None will have a part in eternal life that doth not walk humbly.—*Sanhedrim*, 88, 2.

A Roman general asked R. Akiba: If your God loveth the poor, why doth he not feed them? He answered and said: In order that we may escape Gehenna.—*Baba bathra*, 10, 1.

Whosoever giveth drink and food to the wise and their disciples will receive a great reward from God.—*Bamidbar rabba*, 4, 191, 1.

God clotheth the nakedfollow thou his example: God visiteth the sickso do thou visit the sick: God comforteth those who mourn.....so do thou comfort those who mourn.—*Sotah*, 14, 1.

We must feed and clothe even the poor of the heathen, and visit their sick.—*Gittin*, 61.

Whosoever giveth hospitality with generosity will be rewarded with Paradise.—*Jalkut Rubeni*, 42, 2.

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How a man ought to order what relateth to his descendants, his kindred, his friends, and his fellow-citizens, and the rights of hospitality taught by Heaventhese things the laws will accomplish.....and will thus render the State, if the Gods co-operate with us, prosperous and happy.—*PLATO, Laws*, iv, 718.

The stranger who cometh from abroad shall be received in a friendly spirit.....he shall depart, as a friend taking leave of friends, and be honoured by them with gifts and suitable tributes of respect. These are the customs according to which our city should receive all strangers of either sex..... showing respect to Zeus, the God of hospitality.—*PLATO, Laws*, xii, 953.

All good men will show mercy and humanity.—*SENECA, On Clemency*, v.

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the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

Her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

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When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them.—*Is.*, xli, 17.

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity: for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.—*Ps.* vi, 8.

Shall not he render to every man according to his work?—*Prov.*, xxiv, 12.

Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.—*Prov.*, xvii, 5.

He that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.—*Prov.*, xiv, 21.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.—*Prov.*, xxviii, 27.

The ungodly shall go from a curse into perdition.—*Ecclus.*, xli, 10.

Love covereth all sins.—*Prov.*, x, 12.

Thou lovest all things that are, and abhorrest none of the things which thou didst make.—*Wisdom*, xi, 24.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, and he

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Sin-offerings can, says R. Johanan ben Zakkai, cleanse only the sins of Israel: good deeds make amends even for the heathen.—*Baba bathra*, 10, 3.

So hospitable and charitable was Job that he had four doors made to his house, on the east, west, north, and south, so that a man coming from any of these directions would not need to search for the entrance of the house, but would find an inviting door from whichever side he arrived.—*Abot of R. Nathan*, 7.

Do works of mercy, that God may be merciful to you.—*Bereshit rabba*, 33, 32, 1.

A disciple learned from R. Johanan: Every one that busies himself with the study of the law or with deeds of love.....hath all his sins forgiven.—*Berachot*, 5 a.

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The immortal Gods love us, and — which is the greatest honour we could have—have placed us next to themselves.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, ii, 29.

Man is formed by nature to acts of benevolence.—M. AURELIUS, ix, 42.

The evil are won by persistent goodness.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, vii, 31.

Love is a mighty god, wonderful among gods and men.....the source of the greatest benefits to us.—PLATO, *Symposium*, 178.

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LUKE.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

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forgiveth sins.—*Ecclus.*, ii, 11.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.....to comfort all that mourn.—*Is.*, lxi, 1-2.

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.—*Amos*, vi, 1.

Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.—*Is.*, lxxv, 13.

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand, three thousand and five and thirty days.—*Daniel*, xii, 12.

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The sincerest reverer of heaven is he that eateth the labour of his own hands.—*Berachot*, 8.

The world was made only for Ahab ben Omri [rich] and Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa [poor]: for Ahab ben Omri this world, and for Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa the world to come.—*Berachot*, 61, 2.

R. Simon said: Whosoever on the way reflecteth on parts of the Law and suddenly casteth his eyes

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The wise man will give hospitality to the exile and alms to the needy; he will restore children to their weeping mothers, loose the chains of the captive, release the gladiator from his bondage, and even bury the body of the criminal.—SENECA, *On Clemency*, vi.

Avarice is the worst pest of the human race.—SENECA, *To Helvia*, xiii, 2.

Let parents bequeath to their children, not a heap of riches, but the spirit of reverence.—PLATO, *Laws*, v, 729.

Fix thy desire or aversion on.....health, power, honours, thy country, friends, and children..... and thou wilt be unfortunate. But fix them on Zeus, on the Gods.....and how canst thou be any longer unprosperous?—EPICETUS, *Discourses*, ii, 17.

When a man hath found the chief good, he should take up his abode with it during the remainder of

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Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat, lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

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Gold hath been the ruin of many, and their destruction was present.—*Eccclus.*, xxxi, 6.

Far better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.—*Prov.*, xxv, 7.

The lofty looks of men shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down.—*Is.*, ii, 11.

Have they made thee ruler of a feast? Be not lifted up: be thou among them as one of them.—*Eccclus.*, xxxii, 1.

He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.—*Prov.*, xvii, 19.

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.—*Prov.*, xxii, 4.

He raiseth up the poor

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on other things.....acteth not otherwise than if he had drawn evil on himself.—*Pirke Abot*, 3, 7.

He who chooseth the reading of the Scriptures for his chief business shall see his goods increase.—*Abodah Zarah*, 19, 2.

R. Akiba said in the name of R. Simon ben Aschai: Take thy seat three places from the top, until thou art asked to move upward. Never seek the first place, so that thou mayest not have to hear it said, go lower. It is better that they should say to thee, go higher.—*Vajikra rabba*, i, 145, 1.

God humbleth the proud.—*Sotah*, 5, 1.

God passed over all the great mountains and chose the small mountain Sinai for his revelation.—*Sotah*, 8.

One of the three who especially enjoy the divine love is the man who dwelleth not on his gifts.—*Pesachim*, 113.

Fame fleeth the man who

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his life.—PLATO, *Laws*, v, 728.

Go on thy way, and finish that which is set before thee. M. AURELIUS, vi, 26.

Covetousness is the root of all evil.—SENECA, *On Clemency*, i.

It were better to die of hunger, exempt from grief or fear, than to live in affluence with perturbation.—EPICTETUS, *Enchiridion*, xii.

Is anyone preferred before you at an entertainment?If these things are good, you ought to rejoice that he hath them.—EPICTETUS, *Enchiridion*, xxv.

Two things must be rooted out in men: conceit and diffidence.—EPICTETUS, *Discourses*, iii, 14.

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When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours: lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.

And he looked up and saw the rich men casting

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out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill, that he may set him with princes.—*Ps.* cxiii, 6.

Him that hath an high look and a proud heart I will not suffer.—*Ps.* ci, 5.

[See the parable of the wedding-feast (to which this is an introduction) in previous chapter.]

I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor.—*Job*, xxix, 15.

Better it is to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.—*Prov.*, xvi, 19.

He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want.—*Prov.*, xxii, 16.

If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him; or what receiveth He of thine hand?—*Job*, xxxv, 7.

Exalt not thyself in the day of honour.—*Ecclus.*, xi, 4.

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seeketh it. — *Tanchuma*, 41, 4.

Jose, son of Johanan of Jerusalem, said: Build thy house in such wise that the door is toward the street, and the poor may be thy companions in it.—*Pirke Abot*, 1, 5.

A king had finished the building of his palace, but he sent out no invitations to guests, but summoned all who passed by.—*Sanhedrim*, 37, 1.

If thou hast done much good, say that it is little.If thou hast done little evil, say that it is much.—*Derech Eretz*, 13.

Do not presume to claim anything on account of thy merits.—*Berachot*, 10, 11.

The odour of sacrifice of a great ox, or of a small

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It is a base traffic to expect a return for a benefit.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, i, 2.

Some there be who, when they have done a good turn to any, are ready to set them on the score for it, and to require retaliation.....Thou must be one of those who, what they do, do without further thought, and are in a manner insensible of what they do.—M. AURELIUS, v, 7.

When thou art feasting at table, thou shouldst give among the servants part of what is before thee.—EPICURETUS, *Fragments*, xxx.

As a horse when he hath run, and a dog when he hath tracked the game, or a bee when it hath made honey, so a man when he hath done a good act doth not call out for others to come and see, but goeth on to another act.—M. AURELIUS, v, 6.

The good who offer but a little flour and a vessel

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their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said: Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

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Let them curse, but bless thou.—*Ps. cix, 28.*

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bird, or of a handful of meal, ascends just as easily to heaven; it matters not whether a man offer much or little if he direct his heart to heaven in the offering.—*Menachoth*, 110.

The good will is worth as much as the deed in the sight of God.—*Kiddushin*, 40.

Love him that punisheth thee.—*Derech Eretz*, 9.

As the Lord is merciful and forgiving.....be thou likewise.—*Sotah*, 13.

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are held to be religious: the wicked escape not impiety, if they deluge the altars with blood.—SENECA, *On Benefits*, i, 6.

[In the Buddhist *Asvaghosha's Sermons* there is a story of a "lone woman" who gave "two mites" (all she had) at the offertory, and the president of the assembly, "disregarding the rich gifts of others," praised her. Asvaghosha lived in the first century. See "Sacred Books of the East," vol. xlix.]

I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them [Socrates to his judges].—PLATO, *Apology*, 41.

CHAPTER X

PERSONALITY IN THE GOSPELS

THE comparative scheme given in the previous chapter seems to be conclusive as regards the question of the originality of the Gospel ethic. There is no shade of moral idealism in the discourses attributed to Christ that had not found expression in the Old Testament centuries before, was not familiar among the Jewish teachers who spent their lives in meditation on the Old Testament, and was not put forward by some, if not all, of the great non-Christian and non-Jewish moralists of the time. Indeed, a fifth column might have been added to show that the sentiments were familiar in more ancient Persia, Egypt, and Babylonia; and a sixth to show their currency in India and China. What we have seen, however, suffices to discredit the claim that Jesus brought a single new element of moral idealism into the world. Whatever amount of distinctive phrasing or conceiving we may find in the Gospels, the moral sentiment which is put in these distinctive ways was common to the whole religious and ethical world of the time. There is no advance whatever upon current morality in the Gospels.

It is not necessary to show this in detail by examining the various claims that have been put forward. These claims are usually urged by men

who do not trouble even to make a patient study of the morality of the Old Testament, to say nothing of the Talmud and the Greek moralists. There is, for instance, a stubborn belief that Christ was the first to deduce that subtle refinement of moral principle, the love of one's enemies, as the Gospel seems to claim. Whether Christ or any of his followers ever did, in the literal sense, love his enemies; how far the counsel is consistent with the precept to follow God as a pattern, who, on the Christian teaching, assuredly does not love his enemies; whether the maxim is of the least practical use—these things we need not examine. It is enough to have shown that the counsel was not novel.

A learned Austrian Jesuit has recently written a work in defence of the old claim, and it is characteristic of "the will to believe." The most desperate efforts are made to show that Plutarch and Seneca may, in some mysterious way beyond the imagination of ordinary historians, have studied gospels which even Christian writers of their time never notice; or to persuade us that the rabbinical tradition was distorted into harmony with the teaching of Christ. Yet the plain words of Socrates and Plato, and the words of *Exodus*, of *Proverbs*, and other ancient Jewish writers, insist, centuries before the time of Christ, on the duty of kindly feeling and kindly action even towards one's enemies. If a quibbler be disposed to point out that the word "love" is not found in the parallel texts, I would remind him that the Christian injunction to love

your enemies because you would be rewarded for doing so, and the belief that Christ himself, as God, condemned his enemies to eternal fire, would have revolted a pagan moralist.

The counsel to turn the other cheek to the smiter is in the same position. It goes back to *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* on the Jewish side, and it is expressly formulated by Plato, and was a common-place in Epictetus, on the pagan side. Even archbishops do not find the counsel commendable in modern times, and the social historian might draw up an appalling indictment of its consequences (in the modified form in which the Church urged it on the oppressed) in Europe. Such as it is, however—and few will fail to recognize the grace of personal character which the counsel involves—it was a familiar teaching of moralists of the first century, and began much earlier.

That internal purity is as essential as outward conformity with law is another of the supposed distinctions of Christ's ethic. In this case the claim is flagrant. How any man can think that the older Jewish writers, to say nothing of Hillel and Shammai and their followers, or that Plato and Zeno, to say nothing of Plutarch and Epictetus, regarded an immoral desire as guiltless, is not easily understood. Persian and Buddhist, Greek and Jew, were clear and emphatic on the point. It is a moral truism in the only sense in which it is defensible; for to say that the desire of adultery is as bad as actual adultery, in the literal sense, is to ignore considerations of the gravest character.

However, the maxim was, as I have shown, general at the time, and the earlier chapters trace it in ancient Egypt and Babylon.

Humanity is said by others to be distinctive of Christ's message, and again the claim is monstrous. One finds incessant exhortations to humility, modesty, and meekness in the Old Testament and the pagan moralists, and in the rabbinical discourses it seems to have been one of the most familiar themes. It might be claimed that Christ is unique in commending children as a model (either because of their purity or their lack of self-consciousness, or both), but one sees at a glance that the well-known texts in which he refers to children are, at least in part, metaphorical. Love of children is hardly a distinction in a Jew. The wisdom-books of the Old Testament reflect those rich parental instincts which are found in the race. Indeed, apologists must be hard put when they lay stress on the mere fact that Jesus loved children! Nevertheless, it is clear that the words in the Gospels are largely metaphorical. To speak of children as "believing in me" and having received a revelation which was hidden from "the wise and prudent" is, if it be taken literally, nonsense. We recognize the hand of a later Christian writer who wishes to denounce those who scandalize converts. On the other hand, Christ has scarcely a word about the love of parents (probably because of his estrangement from his mother) and the respect due to the aged, which are so constantly and finely enjoined by all other Jewish moralists. His ascetic ideal, in fact, is destructive of family

sentiment, and had disastrous consequences in Europe.

It may be said, in a word, that the most prominent elements of the Gospel ethic, sound or unsound, were the characteristic elements of that stage of moral development. Long before Christ's time they were preached and practised among the followers of Buddha and the followers of Pythagoras, among the Essenians and the Serapians; and the Stoic philosophy and the more austere rabbis impressed them on their pupils with no less sincerity than constancy. One does not need to wander over the whole literature of the time in search of parallels; from either Plutarch, or Seneca, or Epic-tetus alone, you can take a complete series, and there is every reason to think that the lost teaching of Pythagoras or of Apollonius would have been found to coincide.

But the most important point to remember, and the one which I have taken especial care to establish, is that the supposed teaching of Jesus is no advance whatever on the later and finer teaching of the Old Testament. Glancing over the first two columns of the scheme in the last chapter, I find that the only sentiments to which the books of the Old Testament afford no parallel are the injunctions (1) to cut out an eye, or cut off a limb, which occasions temptation, (2) to let the dead bury their dead, and (3) to distribute all your goods to the poor. If these be literally urged, they form no part of a moral code. The only Christian who ever obeyed the first injunction, Origen, has been unanimously

condemned by divines; and the pitiful story of medieval monasticism sufficiently condemns the other two. Insofar as these maxims are paradoxical expressions of a real moral or religious feeling, that feeling was well known both in Judaism and beyond. The second part of *Isaiah*, many of the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Wisdom*, and *Ecclesiasticus* contain and repeatedly impress all the sound moral maxims of the New Testament.

Nor can it be said that Christ at least differed from rabbis and philosophers in appealing to the outcast, the poor, and the sinner. Poverty excluded none either from the schools of the rabbis or the schools of the Stoics. Lowliness, unworldliness, and a genial attitude towards the poorest were enjoined by all moralists. Christians love to conceive the rabbis as learned and affluent gentlemen, like high-caste Hindus, who carefully preserved the fringes of their garments from contact with "the common people" and sinners. Compare with this the true picture of two of the most famous of the rabbis who earned a slender and laborious living (as many of them did) by making shoes, not disdaining to make the shoes of women who were sinners in the city, yet preserving a grave and gentle modesty in their relations with such customers. It seems, on the other hand, that the story of Christ's relations with the converted sinner, Mary Magdalene, is historically very doubtful, while the story of the woman taken in adultery is rejected outright by many theologians.

There are two chief elements of freshness in the

Gospels. The first is, as theologians justly claim, the insistence on "the kingdom of heaven." This phrase has given considerable trouble to students of the New Testament, and it is plainly used in several different senses. Broadly speaking, it has two main significations: the coming rule of the Messiah over a transfigured earth, and the internal conditions of virtue which entitle a man to a share in that kingdom. The second meaning is derivative, and may not have been used by Christ at all; though the point matters little. The chief and fundamental idea is, of course, a familiar Jewish idea; but it seems to me that theologians, in discussing it, do not sufficiently attend to Persian influence. The expectation of such a kingdom is plainly expressed in *Micah* (iv, 7) and *Zechariah* (xiv, 9), and it won universal acceptance in Judaism. We saw that there was just such an expectation among the zealots of the Persian religion, and at least three centuries before Christ the Persian religion had a deep influence on the Jewish. This intensification of the Messianic hope is especially apparent among the Essenians, and it is not improbable that Jesus received it from them. In any case, it was a common Jewish and Persian attitude to believe that God would not long delay the establishment of his "kingdom" on earth and the triumph of the good over the evil.

Jesus, like others, believed that the kingdom was close at hand, and it is this belief which gives a character to many of his sayings. He taught no new virtue, and no new moral heroism; but he (or

the Gospel writer) taught the familiar virtues in language which glows with the ardour of this false expectation. If there was to be in a few years a judgment of the whole earth, a sorting of the sheep from the goats, an assignment of positions for all eternity, it mattered little about worldly things. It was an excellent investment to sell all your goods, and offer the other cheek to the smiter, and disown your parents and brethren, and deny your body the most elementary gratification. There never was a more utilitarian ethic in history than that of Jesus; though his modern followers, who shrink from his heroic deductions, profess to scorn utilitarianism. There is not a page of the Gospels that fails to remind the reader of the vast reward in the world to come. Stoics rejected that idea of virtue, and even rabbis taught their followers that it was an inferior motive. But Jesus saw the clouds already breaking to let the fire of heaven upon the earth, and he rose to passionate excesses in the recommendation of virtue. He was not alone in this, as John the Baptist and the Essenes remind us; and it is profoundly interesting to see how a Pythagoras or an Epictetus reaches the same heroic conclusions without such a motive. However, it is this burning expectation, this utter error, which gives a kind of inspiration to some of the language of the Gospels, and enables the liberal-minded student to understand their excesses.

The second, and sounder, element of freshness in the Gospels is the revolt against an outworn creed. In this case, however, we have every reason to

suppose that the actual Gospels go far beyond the teaching of Christ. When we find them affirming on one page that not a tittle of the law shall pass, or that the people must do all that the rabbis enjoin, and on another that Christ has come to teach a higher law; on one page that the disciples of Jesus do not keep the prescribed fasts, and on another that Jesus tells his hearers how to behave during the fasts; we can scarcely hesitate to judge the situation. Christ may have, like the Essenes, refused to offer sacrifice in the Temple, but he generally respected the Mosaic law. In the generation after Paul, when Christianity became a Gentile religion opposed to the Jews, the healthy energy of the revolt against a dead law was felt, and it inspires some of (from the literary point of view) the finer passages of the Gospels. Jesus is transformed into a God introducing a new dispensation, and appropriate language is put into his mouth. Every "reformation" has this inspiration.

These elements of freshness make the Gospels much finer reading than the Talmud, and even, in my opinion, than the works of the Stoics. I do not mean from the ethical point of view, for I agree with the ethic of neither. How many do to-day? But there is a vigour and originality of phrase in much of the Gospels which reconciles us to the exaggerations and aberrations more easily than we are reconciled to the similar exaggerations of Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius. We feel that the Gospels are more logical than the philosophers. Their foundation is the hundred-fold reward in the approaching

kingdom; the philosophers build on something equally erroneous, but less substantial in its error.

And here a last word must be said about the idea that, whether or no the Gospels bring a unique morality, they do reflect a unique personality, or a personality of great power and insight. This very common claim of liberal theologians can only be understood as the outcome of a desperate effort to recover something from the wreck of the Christian tradition. I see no reason why a non-Christian historian should have any bias, or even unconscious prejudice, against such an idea. Indeed, it is on general historical considerations that I feel that the man who made this deep, if limited, impression on his fellows—the man before whose memory the masterful Paul bowed to the dust—the man about whom such a rich growth of legends gathered—probably was a gifted and impressive personality. But to say that this personality is reflected in the Gospels is surely to play fast and loose with the results of research.

I would recall a few considerations from an earlier chapter. The canticles of Zecharias, Mary, and Simeon, in the early chapters of *Luke*, are literary pieces as fine as any in the New Testament. Even the orthodox believer will hardly suppose that they were really uttered, and taken down in shorthand; in the case of Mary, indeed, there was no hearer. They do not reflect three personalities, but one; and it is confessedly not the personality of Christ. Then there are all the anachronistic passages, and even long discourses, which I have previously mentioned.

The lamentations over Jerusalem in *Matthew* and *Luke* are just as fine, but they were not spoken by Christ. The constant references to coming or actual persecution contain some of the finer sentences of the Gospels; yet it is an anachronism, to say the least, to ascribe them to Christ. The parables which refer to the execution of Christ by the Jews, or the substitution in God's favour of the Gentiles for the Jews, are not a whit inferior to the best of the other parables; and these again a purely historical consideration must dissociate from Christ. In fact, it is, historically, quite unreasonable to suppose that any lengthy discourse attributed to Christ in *Matthew* was really spoken and learned by heart, or committed at once to parchment; while of the short pregnant sayings one must surely say that they are not superior to the sayings of the unknown authors of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*, or the second part of *Isaiah*. Finally, the personality reflected in *Matthew* is not the personality reflected in *Mark*, and that set forth in *John* is still more diverse. In each case it is the personality of the author.

The conclusion is not a matter of prejudice, but of simple historical inference. If the same character is found in the later and the earlier elements of the Gospels, the things that Christ is supposed to have said and the things that he is not supposed to have said (or said with no human audience), it is useless to say that they reflect the personality of Christ. The limit I have conceived for this essay is reached, and I must invite the reader to examine the point for himself. Run through the Gospel sayings

reproduced in the previous chapter (and there are further anachronisms among the doctrinal sayings), and ask yourself whether there is any difference between the sayings that *might* be of Christ and those that are not.

In point of fact, many theologians now admit that it is not likely that we have the actual words of Christ at all—a conclusion that would have been reached long ago if candid historical considerations had been applied to the matter. At the most, a few aphoristic sentences may survive with little or no change. The discourses are a later literary product: even short and detached discourses. One example may be given. There is the fine passage, so often quoted as most characteristic of Christ, in *Matthew* (xi, 28-30):—

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

But we may say with confidence that Christ never spoke those words. The doctrinal implication of divinity is late: the words are inconsistent with his constant insistence that his burden is heavy and grievous (to sell all one's property, to separate from one's family, to take up one's cross, etc.); and, most decisive of all, the words are simply borrowed, with little alteration, from *Ecclesiasticus* (li, 23-27). The reader will notice many such in the previous columns. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to say anywhere that we have the actual words of Christ;

and it is quite certain that many of the passages we cannot attribute to him are as fine and impressive as the doubtful passages. The attempt to build up the character of Christ from the Gospels is utterly futile. We can but say that the phenomenon of Christianity itself suggests a strong and eloquent personality, a kind of Essene without the robe, a man exalted by a firm conviction that the end of the world was at hand.

Instead of one personality, the Gospels, with their various strata yet similarity of tone, suggest a number of like-minded, exalted personalities; as in the work of the Esdras school. And our last consideration must be of the value of this Christian synthesis of the first or second century. Granted that it only gathers together the moral common-places of the age, what is the value of the synthesis as such? May we suppose that it is in itself an achievement which, apart from doctrine or from the question of a great human personality, gives a *raison d'être* to Christianity in our own time?

It is difficult to see how any candid historian can claim for it more than an academic historical interest. It admirably preserves for us the notes of one of the stages in religious and moral evolution: it is just as clearly unsuitable for our age. The dominant conception of an impending end of the world, which energizes it, cannot be abandoned without weakening the whole structure. The counsels which were quite logical under that conception—to cast away one's possessions, disown one's relatives, empty one's pockets to the thief,

crucify the flesh, etc.—are now so illogical that divines hardly know what to make of them. The modern divine scarcely even regards them as counsels of perfection; in spite of the moral genius he ascribes to Christ, he thinks that the prophet was quite mistaken in saying that, “if you would be perfect,” you must live in abject poverty, not make any provision for the morrow, and not marry. Yet these are the most characteristic elements of the Gospel ethic. The remaining conceptions—hospitality, brotherly love, conjugal fidelity, honesty, truthfulness, etc.—are platitudes of the ethical life, as old as Ptah-hotep. The more important of them, such as justice, are least developed of all in the Gospels; the less important or more individual, such as humility and chastity, are preponderantly developed. The whole system, moreover, is informed by a mercantile spirit—the reward in the life to come—which is repugnant to the finer sentiment of our time, and which places the foundation of character in a hazardous speculation. How many educated people now believe in the naïve heaven of Jesus?

Our age needs a new winnowing, and a new synthesis. Christ's conception of conduct is inaccurate, archaic, narrow, vexatious, and impracticable in a score of ways. The Gospels represent a distortion of moral development. By their fruits—the Middle Ages—you shall know them; I mean that the grossness and descent of the Middle Ages were an inevitable reaction on an impracticable standard, and an inevitable result of belittling culture and human interests. The imposition of this archaic and

erroneous code of morals on children is as stupid as it is mischievous. They learn its weaknesses in later years and despise their training. The modern world has no real sympathy with the system. It is defended for doctrinal and ecclesiastical reasons. Morality would perish in the twentieth century if we insisted on this ascetic code. Its errors, however, and its ineffectiveness do not properly concern me. It is enough to have shown its lack of originality and its failure to reveal to us the personality of the founder of Christianity.

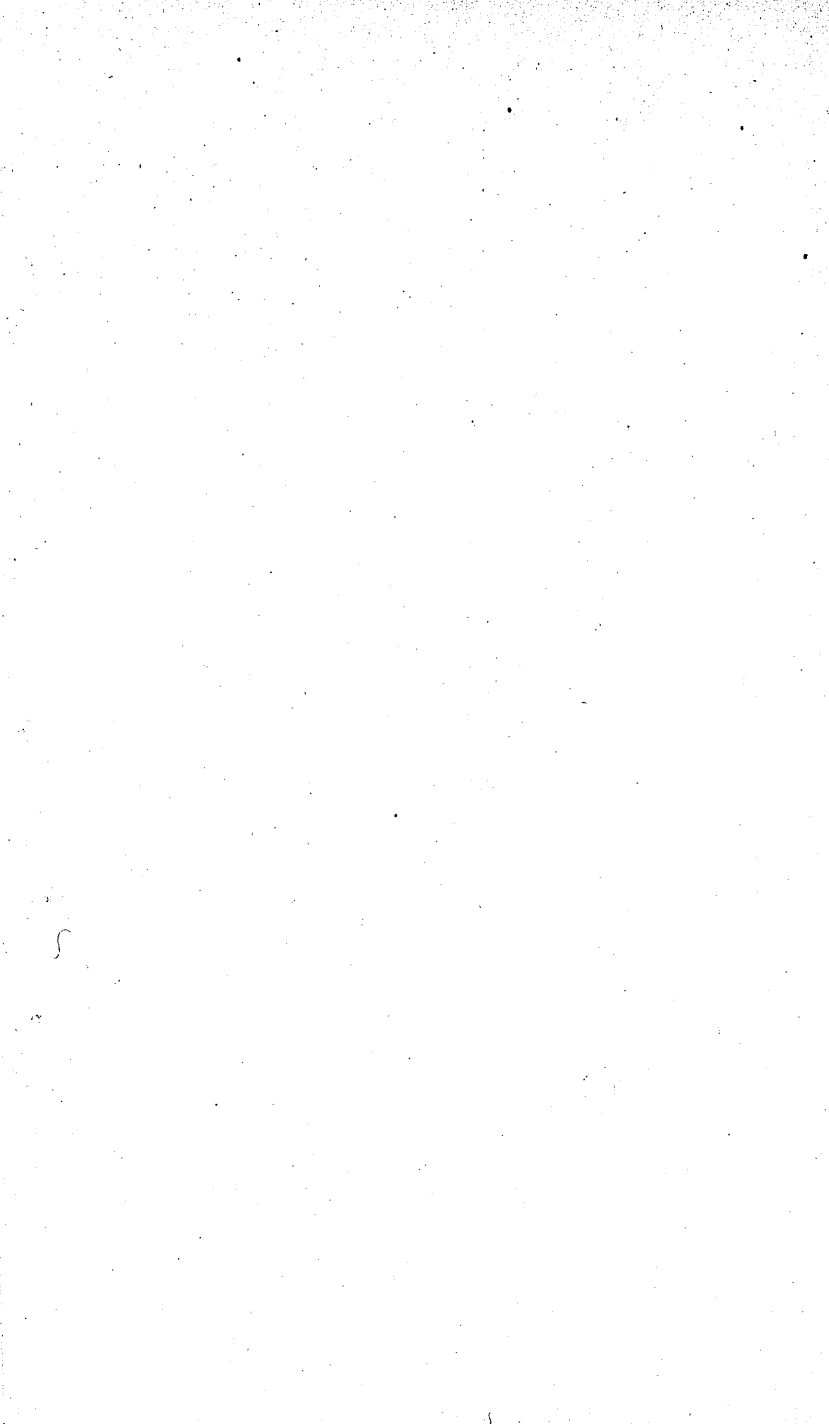
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