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THE

CHURCHMAN

FEBRUARY, 1903.

ART. I.—EZEKIEL ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF RELIGION IN ISRAEL.—CH. XX.

IN view of the active reconstruction of the early history of Israel which has lately been going on, attention may well be called to the abstract of it given by Ezekiel in the twentieth chapter of his book. It is short, being limited to the religious history and to the lesson which it is his purpose to impress; but it is an important record for the following reasons:

1. Its authenticity. No one questions that we have it as Ezekiel wrote it.

2. Its authority, as the word of a priest and prophet well known to us: a priest educated in the traditional learning of his Order; a prophet who sees visions of God, and marks the days when the word of the Lord comes to him; a prophet also in the sense of moral insight and command, a preacher of individual responsibility, commending himself to men's conscience in the sight of God.

3. Its date, at the beginning of the exile, in the first decade of the captivity of Judah, anterior to the times in which it is now contended that literary labours gave us the first books of the Bible as we have them.

Ezekiel had lived in changing times, in boyhood while Josiah still ruled and Jeremiah began to prophesy, then under Jehoiakim, when the heathen party recovered power. About the age of seventeen he had seen the first prelude of captivity, when Jerusalem submitted to the conqueror, and selected youths, who must have been his own companions, "of the seed royal and of the nobles" (Daniel one of them), were carried to Babylon for the service of the King. Eight years later intrigue and rebellion brought their punishment. The city was broken up; the young King Jehoiachin, after a

three months' reign, went into lifelong captivity, and with him the flower of the nation, "the chief of the land, all the men of might ten thousand," and all the skilled artificers, leaving only "the poorest sort of the people" under the vassal King Zedekiah. Eleven years later his falseness and folly brought on the final blow in the destruction of the city and temple, the dispersion of the population, and desolation of the land. So, according to Jeremiah's vision, the good figs were carried to Babylon and the evil figs remained. That first captivity, with all its anguish of heart and its natural inclination to sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, was yet a vigorous stock, and struck roots where it was. They followed the wise counsel of Jeremiah's letter, and as colonists in the land of exile came to realize, as they had never done at home, their national religion and character. That was the purpose of the dispensation; but it did not look hopeful at first. Imbued with the inveterate poison of idolatry and spirit of self-will, they needed a stern and resolute ministry, and in God's mercy they had it. Ezekiel, in the thirtieth year, which would have qualified him as a priest, found himself called to be a prophet. In the fifth year of the captivity he saw visions of God, and was sent to the rebellious house. It is a trying commission; but the signs of a prophet are recognised, and in the first year of his ministry "the elders of Judah," his fellow-captives, "sit before him," as if to hear what he may have to say; and he has a vision of the manifold provocations of God going on at that very time in distant Jerusalem. After this we hear no more of "elders of Judah." In the second year—and after—the prophet's visitors are "the elders of Israel." The tribal name is dropped; the national name succeeds. It was natural that, as far as circumstances made it possible, the exiled branches of the same race should gravitate towards each other. So on the occasion before us (chap. xx.)—

"It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the Lord, and sat before me."

The answer is decisive—"I will not be enquired of by them." It had been given before (chap. xiv.), with a penetrating indictment of their double mind and cherished sin. It is given again, as to persons who now showed a better disposition, with lessons from the early history of their race.

"Wilt Thou judge them, Son of Man; wilt Thou judge them? Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers!"

But why should they be judged by the deeds of their fathers? In his last public teaching the prophet had insisted on the

limitation of personal responsibility. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Yet national life is one, and the past leaves consequences to be inherited and lessons to be remembered, especially in Israel, which always carried the consciousness of its origin through all deflections from it. If they cannot evade personal responsibility because of the sins of their fathers, much more must they acknowledge it when they make their fathers' sins their own. If they think that the privilege of Israel is a right to inquire of the Lord, they must know that the sins of Israel cancel it, and that participation in idolatries abrogates participation in promises.

The story of the past is one of election on the one side and apostasy on the other, of calls of God and choice of idols, and is given in three divisions, in Egypt, in the Wilderness, and in the Land—three stages in the life of the people —and is interesting as showing an independent tradition, touching ground which is passed over in the Pentateuchal narrative.

1. The story in Egypt is given (vers. 5-9) and represents the people as one, called by their ancestral name and receiving communications from God, which marked His choice of them and their separation from the people among whom they sojourned. It speaks of

> "The day when I chose Israel and lifted up My hand to the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, saying, I am the Lord your God . . . Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against Me; and would not hearken unto Me. They did not cast away every man the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt."

It might have followed "that I should pour out my fury upon them to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt." But the sentence was revoked, and changed into a bringing them out in the sight of the nations.

It will be seen that this passage falls in with the narrative while containing supplementary information. At the end of Genesis Israel has come down into Egypt with a certain knowledge of the true God derived from their fathers, and with traditions of His communications and promises. At the beginning of Exodus that knowledge is supposed to exist, however faintly, and those traditions to survive. They are the inheritance of Moses, the basis of his mission and the ground of his appeal to Israel. What has been their state meantime? They have multiplied rapidly, and at the end have been oppressed and enslaved. But what of their religious

state? Ezekiel's tradition supplies the information. It was one in which testimony from their God was given and was disregarded. This testimony to the election and religion of their race, by whatever means and through whatever persons it came, was such as could be described as a "lifting up of the hand" of the Lord in attestation and command. Doubtless, as in all later history, the testimony found response in obedient hearts, and was always an element in reserve, but to the people in general it was given in vain. With their natural tendency to idolatry, and having before them its imposing and mysterious forms, they readily adopted the superstitions of their neighbours and masters, and did not hearken to the voice which recalled them to the God of their fathers. "They did not cast away every man the abominations of his eyes or forsake the idols of Egypt."

Here we have a plain statement of the case. This adoption of the idols of Egypt is not, as recent historical critics tell us, a step upwards from fetishism to a higher level of religion. It is to Ezekiel a fall, and a grievous fall, from the better to the worse, a sin against light, an evil choice deserving the judgment of destruction, which mercy changes into a removal from the temptation and a new stage of probation.

2. This takes place in the life in the wilderness (vers. 10-27), the record being (like that of Israel in Egypt) in harmony with the narrative of the Pentateuch, yet with tokens of an independent tradition. It is divided into two parts, the first (vers. 10-18) concerning the people who came out of Egypt, the second (vers. 19-27) dealing with "their children in the wilderness."

1. The delivery of the Law is affirmed as the first act after the departure from Egypt.

"I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them. Moreover, also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (chap. xx. 11, 12).

How much is contained in these few words! There was Divine legislation by definite act of God. "I gave them My statutes." These are not only national laws, but such as go straight to the individual conscience and fasten on practical conduct. It is the *man* who is to *do* them. "Which if a man do he shall live in them," in that deeper, longer sense of "life" which belongs not to its surface but to its truth and essence, and which is a conspicuous feature of Ezekiel's thought, pervading his whole prophecy. It draws nearer than ever before to the yet unspoken word "eternal life." More prophet than priest, he urges the spiritual and ethical

nature of the Law; of positive ordinances, naming only the Sabbath, in its highest meaning and function, as expressed Exod. xxxi. 13—"a sign between me and them that I am the Lord which sanctify them." No doubt there was need to impress the obligation on sojourners among the heathen. In the wilderness there was again the same story of rebellion, ending in the sentence: "That I would not bring them into the land which I had promised them. Never theless" (it is added) "Mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make a full end of them in the wilderness." So it was with the generation that came out of Egypt, as Exodus relates and Ezekiel testifies.

Then with their children there is the like record of admonition and rebellion, and of a sentence suspended over them.

"I lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries. Moreover, I gave them (delivered them over to) statutes that were not good and judgments whereby they should not live (viz., the wretched rites and pollutions of the heathen), that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord."

This is the record of those untold thirty-eight years, in which one generation died out and another succeeded, before the reassembling of "the children of Israel, even the whole congregation" (Numb. xx. 1). The story told in these general terms by Ezekiel is given by an earlier prophet with more particularity in respect both of the sin and the threat.

"Did ye bring unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Yea, ye have taken up Succoth your king (R.V., or, as the LXX. renders, the tabernacle of your Moloch), and Chiun your images, the star of your God, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, the God of Hosts is His name" (Amos v. 25-27).

As they had adopted idols of Egypt when sojourning there, so in their nomad life they took up the idolatries with which they came in contact, and were threatened with captivity in the furthest regions of which they then had knowledge. It is Ezekiel's account, only in fuller form, and with a more detailed tradition of the spiritual apostasy in the forty years.

3. On the third indictment, that which Ezekiel draws against Israel in their land, it is unnecessary to dwell, because the narrative in the historical books is on the whole unquestioned, and it is considered that, in the evolution of opinion with the aid of prophets, there was an approximation to a higher character of religion sufficient to make the contemporaneous idolatries truly abominations.

It is in regard to the first two stages of the national life that the testimony of Ezekiel is important, because it contra-

venes the recent theory of the origin of the religion of Israel, and harmonizes with the Pentateuchal narrative. The theory is one of natural evolution, the narrative is one of Divine interventions. It asserts a definite and manifest intervention of God, in the call of Abraham, in the communications which followed, and the promises to his seed and to mankind, which he receives by faith and transmits to his descendants. Thus are created relations with the one living and true God which are renewed through the history of the patriarchs, and are the possession of the family when they go down into Egypt. When they there become a nation, these interventions take place, first, as here stated, in smaller measure, then on a greater scale in the mission of Moses and the laws of Sinai.

The evolution theory supposes that these things did not happen, that these relations with God did not exist, and that the recorded expressions of more intelligent faith, higher moral law, and purer piety were impossible to that rudimentary stage of undeveloped religious capacity, and, therefore, that the account of them is an imaginative transfer to traditional ancestors of the ideas of the age in which the stories were finally written. Ezekiel's testimony on the origin of the religion of Israel is *for* the narrative and *against* the theory; it stands for intervention, not for evolution, in other respects, and *most* expressly in regard to the giving of the Law. That was natural, it may be said, in a priest whose successors produced the "Priest's Code," and gave it an introduction in legendary and imaginative pictures of Abraham and Moses—pictures in that remote stage of religious evolution, as our critics say, "unthinkable." They feel themselves much at liberty with these writers or their representative editor whom they know as P., but who cannot be identified or located or provided with a name. The impersonal letter cannot defend itself against criticisms, inferences, and suppositions. It is a different matter to deal with a man like Ezekiel, a strong personality, a conspicuous figure moving in the midst of undoubted history, and speaking of what is undoubted history to him and to the elders of Israel who sit before him. He is an authority on the religious history of his people, and his witness bears directly on the present question—that between the narrative which asserts direct intervention, and the theory which allows only for gradual evolution.

We reach the verge of a question which cannot be discussed here. Properly speaking, the thesis should be not evolution *or* intervention, but evolution *and* intervention. Evolution, development of one condition into another, is a law of the universe, therefore of the realm of thought, as a

part of the universe, therefore of religion as a province of the realm of thought. It has had full scope and varied field of action in all the religions of the world, Eastern and Western. What was achieved? Did any one of these religions issue in a knowledge of the one living and true God, in reconciliation and communion with Him, meeting the wants of the conscience and the soul? All are failures. In one race alone such relations of man with God are initiated, exemplified, and in a preliminary measure attained. The religion of Israel stands apart from all the rest—a phenomenon to be accounted for. It accounted for itself by a history of Divine intervention, definite acts of God, which broke in upon the natural evolution of thought, as being for this purpose incapable, and gave it in the way of grace new material and new direction. It is sought to get rid of these facts, and the sacred narrative is to be admired as imagination and discredited as history. Abraham with his call and promises, Moses with his revelation and mission, Sinai with its law and covenant, are to be taken as drama and romance, not origins of thought, but results of it. Yet is this religion of Israel recognised by all as the foundation and introduction of Christianity, which proclaims as its origin a stupendous intervention. One cannot but observe with some wonder that preachers of the Gospel of the Incarnation and Resurrection should seem to think they gain an important point if they can disallow the interventions of God which Scripture makes the origin of the first stage of revelation, and should speak with evident complacency while they assure us that the history of religion in Israel was, after all, much like the history of all other religions.

It has been enough now to observe that Ezekiel did not think so. In his view God who chose that people had again and again "lifted up His hand" in attestations, commands, and warnings, which made their rebellions and idolatries sins against the light. In the words of Job (xxiv. 13): "These are of them which rebel against the light. They know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof." But the light was not extinguished by their rebellions; it shone on elect souls amid the encircling gloom and led them on. It grew clearer, and flashed brighter in the prophets. In the Captivity it broke upon the Elders of Israel and dispelled for ever the dark shadow of idolatry. In the Restoration it accompanied the Remnant who returned, and after that diffused itself more widely through long, silent hours of twilight. Then the sun rose, and the day was come.

T. D. BERNARD.

Art. II.—OUR LORD'S VIRGIN BIRTH AND THE CRITICISM OF TO-DAY—I.

"JESUS, the son of the carpenter Joseph and his wife Mary, was born in Nazareth." These are the words with which Professor Otto Schmiedel commences his summary of the chief problems of the life of Jesus in an expansion of a lecture published last year, delivered to an audience composed chiefly of educated laymen. They are characteristic of many similar attempts to dismiss, by a short and easy method, the opening statements of the Gospel history, and they remind us of a similar pronouncement with which a famous French sceptic commenced his "Life of Jesus." From the point of view of both biographers their statements are not surprising. A writer who lays it down as an absolute rule that a place in history should be denied to miraculous circumstances, or a writer who does his best to reduce as much as possible the significance of the miraculous powers attributed to our Lord, could scarcely be expected to look with favour upon the accounts of the Nativity given us in the New Testament. How far it was likely that the miraculous element in these accounts should have found a place in them, unless it was true, we shall try to consider later. But at the outset it may be observed that the opening narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke are questioned not only for their miraculous elements, but for their historical setting.

A claim, indeed, has recently been made to the discovery of "a key to the famous problem of the birthplace of Jesus" ("Encycl. Biblica," Art. III., "Nazareth"). We are reminded that there was not only a Bethlehem-Judah, but also a Bethlehem of Galilee, not far from Nazareth. In the earliest form of the evangelical tradition, Jesus was said to have been born in Bethlehem-Nazareth, which really means Bethlehem-Galilee,[1] and the reference is to the Bethlehem mentioned in Josh. xix. 15. The tradition grew, and the title Bethlehem-Nazareth was liable to misunderstanding, so much so that two places—Bethlehem and Nazareth—were quoted as claiming the honour of the birthplace of Jesus. "Bethlehem" by itself was supposed to mean the southern Bethlehem—*i.e.*, of Judæa—and hence we may date the rise of our narratives in Matt. ii. and Luke ii. 1-20, "so poetic and so full of spiritual suggestion." This reference to the poetic nature of the narratives may be left for subsequent consideration; but when

[1] This attempt at identification is drawn out by reference to the Old Testament and the Talmud and Matt. xxvi. 69 (*cf.* with 71; John vii. 41); but it is admitted that the proof is not beyond dispute.

we turn to the article "Nativity," in the same volume, by Professor Usener, we are told that the problem as to the birthplace of Jesus cannot be solved, but is rather complicated, by a reference to Bethlehem of Galilee, and that it is quite as certain that the Bethlehem spoken of in the Gospels as the birthplace was the Bethlehem in Judæa, as it is that Nazareth was universally accepted as the home of Jesus. This looks at first sight like a direct contradiction of the statement in the first-named article, but it becomes evident that it is not really so when we are asked in each case "to go behind our present Gospels," and when it is maintained that the opening chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke, as we have them, are composed of interpolations and additions; the oldest written forms of the Gospel knew, and knew only, that Jesus was born at Nazareth, as the son of Joseph and Mary, and Luke commenced his Gospel with the baptism and preaching of John. So flagrant were the contradictions between St. Matthew and St. Luke that the Apocryphal Gospel, the *Protevangelium Jacobi*, was composed at the end of the second century for the purpose of solving them! It is no wonder that Dr. Zahn should ask in surprise, "What judgment would these theologians form of the history so inconvenient to them if the two narratives had agreed entirely in every particular, and had only differed from one another in outward expression? They would unquestionably maintain that they were not two witnesses . . . but only one single witness for the existence of the myth at the time of the Evangelist who first recorded it, if, indeed, he had not invented it entirely himself" ("Das Apostolische Symbolum," p. 58); and he rightly reminds us that, as it is, we have two historical works, designed for entirely different circles of readers, and derived in this, as in many other points, from entirely different sources. If, indeed, anyone wished to see what part is played by the most arbitrary and subjective opinions in the modern criticism of the early narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, he could scarcely do better than read the three articles, "Mary," "Nativity," "Nazareth," in the same volume of the "Encyclopædia Biblica." Because, *e.g.*, in Matt. i. 18-25 no mention is made of Bethlehem, this section comes to us from a different and a later hand than that to which we owe chap. ii.; as so much has already been shown to be untenable in Luke i. and ii., "it will, perhaps, be the more readily conceded" that no historical value belongs to the episode of the shepherds, notwithstanding its great poetic beauty!

But to turn back for a moment from these reflections to the light which may be expected to dawn upon us from the

Bethlehem-Nazareth theory. If it is true, St. Luke is not only guilty, as we are so constantly assured, of a considerable historical blunder in his setting of circumstances, but also in a considerable geographical blunder, which, however, he shares in this case with the transmitters of "the earliest evangelical tradition." But some hypothesis, it is urged, is absolutely necessary, owing to those glaring contradictions of the Evangelists to which reference has already been made. The hypothesis in the present instance is based on another hypothesis—viz., that in the earliest form of evangelical tradition Jesus was said to have been born at Bethlehem-Nazareth = Bethlehem-Galilee, *i.e.*, the Bethlehem referred to above and mentioned in Josh. xix. 15, and possibly once elsewhere. There appears, however, to be no vestige of proof forthcoming as to why this should have been the belief, as is apparently maintained, of the earliest Christian circles. There was certainly nothing in the place traditionally to attract anyone to settle there, and so far as prophecy is concerned, it would probably be admitted that there was much more to point this early circle of believers to Nazareth, some six miles away from the Bethlehem in question. But then we are asked to take a further step, and to believe that this expression "Bethlehem-Nazareth" came to be misunderstood. At this we cannot well be surprised, and certainly its attempted identification with Bethlehem-Galilee somewhat confuses the ordinary reader to-day.

In consequence, however, of this misunderstanding, and as time went on, some said that Jesus was born at Nazareth, while others said that he was born at Bethlehem, the latter being taken to mean Bethlehem-Judah, as it had no explanatory addition. But if, as the same article maintains, it had been customary to speak of Bethlehem of Nazareth just as one might speak of Bethlehem-Judah, it is difficult to see why the distinction between the two should not have been maintained, or why the extinction of the "earliest Gospel tradition" should have been so easily effected. If it be urged that the reference to Bethlehem of Judah was the more likely to commend itself, since prophecy had fixed the birthplace of the Messiah in the city of David, we need not dispute it. But it must be remembered that in this same article we are asked to avoid exaggerating the influence of Old Testament prophecy on the traditional narratives of the life of Jesus, and that we are also told by the same writer (Art. "Joseph") that the author of the fourth Gospel apparently did not accept this tradition of Bethlehem-Judah, and that for him Nazareth marked the origin of Jesus. If, however, this fourth Gospel, as we are further asked to believe, was produced at some period shortly

before 140 A.D. (see Professor Schmiedel, "Encycl. Biblica," ii., Art. "John," 2551), it would seem, on this interpretation of St. John's words, that the tradition that the birthplace of Jesus was at Nazareth still had its adherents, and that it still formed part of the belief of a not unimportant section of believers. But if so, it is strange that before 132 A.D., at all events, Bethlehem of Judah and not Nazareth was regarded beyond all reasonable doubt in popular tradition as the birthplace of Jesus. "It is significant," writes Professor G. A. Smith, "that Bethlehem appears to have been chosen, along with the sites of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, for special treatment by the Emperor Hadrian. As he set up there (*sic*) an image of Jupiter and of Venus, so he devastated Bethlehem, and planted upon it a grove sacred to Adonis. This proves that even before 132 A.D. Bethlehem was the scene of Christian pilgrimage and worship as the birthplace of Jesus" (Art. "Bethlehem," "Encycl. Biblica," i.).[1] The truth is that Bethlehem of Judah became what it was, and what it is, for Christian hearts, not merely from the fact that prophecy had pointed to it, but from the additional fact that prophecy had been fulfilled in it.

But if St. Luke is guiltless of a geographical blunder in placing our Lord's birth at Bethlehem-Judah, we have still to consider the charge of an historical blunder in the setting of chap. ii. We naturally refer in the first place to Professor Ramsay's well-known and most valuable work, "Was Christ born at Bethlehem?" since it is not only recognised as indispensable in this inquiry by every English writer (*cf.*, *e.g.*, the commendation of the book and its results by Dr. Sanday in his famous article "Jesus Christ," Hastings' B. D., ii. 646), but is referred to as presenting us with the most likely solution of a difficult problem by Zöckler, in what we may call a corresponding article to that of Dr. Sanday in the new edition of Herzog's "Encyclopædia"; whilst H. Holtzmann, in his new edition of the "Synoptic Gospels" ("Hand-Commentar," i. 315), has discussed it from an adverse point of view. The word for "enrolment," Luke ii. 2, or its plural, was the word for the periodic enrolments which beyond all doubt were made in Egypt, probably initiated by Augustus. These enrolments were numberings of the people according to households, and had nothing to do with the valuation for purposes of taxation. But Egypt, says Holtzmann, is not Syria. In the first place, however, it is no unfair inference

[1] Even in the fourth century comparatively few pilgrims visited Nazareth, which is strange if it ever had any appreciable reputation as the birthplace of the Lord.

that such enrolments would not be confined to any one part of the Roman "world," in which Palestine was included, but that they would rather form part of a deliberate and general policy under a ruler so systematic as Augustus. In the next place, Professor Ramsay not only makes it very probable that such enrolments were actually extended to Syria, but he rightly emphasizes the peculiarly delicate and difficult position of Herod, which bound him not only to comply with the imperial policy, but also to regard the prejudices and suspicions of the fanatical people whom he ruled. From this point of view it is a very fair inference that whilst Herod would obey the orders of Augustus, he would nevertheless conduct the enrolment on national lines, that he would give it a tribal and family character, to bring it as far as he could into accord with Jewish sentiment.[1] Here probably lies the true distinction between the first enrolment, which was one of a series, and *the* enrolment (mentioned in Acts v. 37), which was conducted after the Roman fashion, and became the cause, not only of indignation, but of rebellion; here, too, is the probable explanation as to why Joseph and the Virgin Mother left their home at Nazareth for Bethlehem: no necessity for the journey would have arisen if the enrolment had been conducted on Roman lines, inasmuch as in that case only a recognition of existing political and social facts would have been involved. So far, then, is St. Luke from confusing this enrolment of Herod's with the subsequent enrolment of 6, 7 A.D.—as not only Schmiedel, but Pfleiderer, in the new edition of his "Urchristentum," would have us believe—a confusion which would involve a blunder of some ten years, that he carefully distinguishes between them, and explains at the outset that the Roman method was modified by the introduction of a numbering, not only of households, but of tribes. No doubt Professor Ramsay's theory is still not free from difficulties. It would seem, *e.g.*, that the first of the series of enrolments commenced in Syria about 9 B.C., a year which would be considerably at variance with the common reckoning of the year of our Lord's birth. Professor Ramsay, however, supposes that the enrolment which ought to have been made thus early, or at latest 8 B.C., was delayed for a couple of years on account of the peculiar circumstances of Herod, and the peculiar temperament of the people whom he was called upon to govern.

And here, in connection with recent important literature, it may be noted that Mr. Turner ("Chronology," Hastings'

[1] *Cf.* to the same effect as to Jewish national feeling the remarks of B. Weiss in the last edition (1902) of his famous "Leben Jesu," i. 231.

B. D., i. 404) is in agreement with Professor Ramsay in the belief that St. Luke may well have been quite correct in his mention of a census (ii. 1). There is no improbability, he thinks, in the hypothesis of a census in Judæa somewhere within the years 8-5 B.C. Statistics of the resources of the Empire were, as he points out, a favourite study of Augustus, and if Herod (as, apparently, other client Kings) was bidden to supply them, he may well have been mindful of the susceptibilities of the Jewish nation, "and so, in avoiding the scandal caused by the later census (Acts v. 37), he avoided also the notice of history." But whilst Mr. Turner thus admits the probability of the census in Luke ii. 1, he regards the Evangelist as in error in the name Quirinius. He fully allows that Quirinius may have been twice Governor of Syria, not only at the great census (Acts v. 37) which he conducted, but also at an earlier period. But then he points out that this earlier period could not have coincided with the date of our Lord's birth, as Quintilius Varus came into office in the summer of 6 B.C., and was, apparently, still in office at the time of Herod's death, 4 B.C. But does St. Luke say that Quirinius was Governor, *i.e.*, Legate, of Syria? The term he uses is quite indefinite, and Professor Ramsay reminds us that it may simply mean "acting as leader," and may imply that whilst Varus in 6 B.C. was controlling the internal affairs of Syria, Quirinius was holding an extraordinary military command by his side, which might also have involved the control of foreign policy, just as Vespasian conducted a war in Palestine by the side of Mucianus, the governor of Syria, and was called by Tacitus *dux*—a title to which the word used by St. Luke of Quirinius might well correspond. Holtzmann dismisses this explanation of Ramsay's somewhat contemptuously, but he has nothing to say with regard to the analogous cases of a temporary division of duties in Roman administration, or to those quoted by Monsieur R. S. Bour, who is essentially in agreement with Ramsay in the proposed solution.

Since the publication of Professor Ramsay's book we have had, in the fourth volume of Dr. Hastings' "Dictionary," Dr. Plummer's article "Quirinius." In agreement with much that has been said above, Dr. Plummer points out that the word employed by St. Luke in ii. 2 is quite compatible with the belief that Quirinius held some military post in Syria even before Herod's death, and that he may have had some share in the census which was proceeding at the time of that event. In this connection he further points out that Justin Martyr refers to Quirinius at the time of the Nativity by a word equivalent to one holding the office of *procurator*, and not

by a word signifying *legatus*, as Quirinius afterwards became in 6 A.D. The only other place in which St. Luke uses the word employed in the phrase, "when Quirinius was Governor of Syria," is of a *procurator* (St. Luke iii. 1); and this fact adds weight to the supposition that whilst at the time of the enrolment Varus was actually *legatus*, Quirinius may have held some such command as that indicated above. But in any case, as Dr. Plummer wisely adds, if Christians were bent on inventing a reason for the birth at Bethlehem, it is not at all likely that they would have had recourse to Roman and heathen sources. It may further be observed that when we consider the proofs of St. Luke's correctness elsewhere throughout his two books, it is only fair to judge any difficulties which may remain in connection with the statement under consideration in the light of that correctness, especially when we remember that we are dealing with a field of history in which, as Bishop Lightfoot so well put it, there was beyond all others room for mistake and blunder—the administration of the Roman Empire and its provinces—and when we further bear in mind that for the age of Augustus our authorities are specially obscure and defective.

When we look into the narrative as it stands, whilst there is very good reason to believe that we owe its charm and simplicity, its modesty and reserve to the Virgin Mother herself, or possibly, as Dr. Sanday suggests, to one of the group of women mentioned in Luke viii. 3, xxiv. 10, it may be noted in passing, although it would be precarious to lay too much stress upon it, that the narrative is marked in some places by the language characteristic of a medical man (see, *e.g.*, the instances endorsed by Dr. Zahn, "Einleitung," ii., p. 435, amongst others cited by Hobart). And if this is so, it is a fair inference that we are not only concerned with a careful and cultured writer, who had made it his business to trace the course of all things accurately from the first, but that he did not hesitate to include among these things the incidents connected with the birth of the Baptist and of the Christ, although by his very profession he would be inclined to accept some of those details with considerable reserve, unless he had some due assurance of their truth. The remarkable chapter in which Professor Ramsay endeavours to show that Mary herself is the primary authority throughout would only lose by quotation, and it should be studied in its entirety. The same view has, of course, been held by various scholars previously, but it may well be doubted if it has ever been previously presented with so much beauty and feeling. It is easy to assure us that the attempt to derive these fine touches belongs to homiletics rather than to historical research, but even if we may hesitate to endorse Professor Ramsay's condemnation

of the man who fails to catch the tone of a mother's heart in Luke ii. 19, 51 as one who deliberately shuts his mind against all literary feeling, we can fully agree with him that the historian who wrote like that believed that he had the authority of the mother herself (see the arguments to the same effect in Zahn, "Einleitung," ii., p. 404).

But if it is a woman who speaks to us in these chapters, it is also a Jewish, or rather a Jewish-Christian, woman, one who stands, as it were, upon the borderland between the Old Dispensation and the New, full of the hopes and blessings of Israel, and yet inspired with a grander vision of hope and blessing for the world. The language in which she gives expression to her hopes is not only moulded upon the Old Testament Scriptures, but it approaches, like the other canticles in the first two chapters of St. Luke, very nearly in style and phraseology to the Psalms of Solomon—*i.e.*, to a writing which comes to us as expressive of Jewish thought and feeling from some half-century or so before the Advent. But whilst this Jewish thought and feeling are thus assured, and this would be equally the case if we endorse the attempt to trace them back to the Greek-Jewish prayers of the Hellenistic synagogues—there is still considerable weight in the judgment: "a little less and these songs would be purely Jewish, a little more and they would be purely Christian." We are assured by Dr. Harnack that these songs are to be attributed to the genius of St. Luke; but if so we can only say that, apart from the improbability that the Greek Luke could have composed them (as Dr. Zahn so strikingly reminds us, "Einleitung," ii., p. 404), the third Evangelist may or not have been a painter, but that he was most certainly a poet, and that, too, a poet whose genius has achieved an influence which no other member of the world's list of poets has even distantly approached. It is not a theologian, but the French sceptic Renan, who can tell us of these canticles, which thus find a place in a book which he described as the most beautiful in the world, that never were sweeter songs composed to put to sleep the sorrows of poor humanity. It may here be well to note in passing that a determined effort has been recently made by Dr. Harnack and other writers to refer the *Magnificat* not to the Virgin Mother, but to Elizabeth.[1] But apart from all questions of textual criticism, it still remains true that the words of the *Magnificat*, "the lowliness of His *handmaiden*," are most fitly and naturally connected with the words of Mary to the angel, "behold the *handmaiden* of the Lord"; so, too, the words, "shall call me blessed," with

[1] The arguments for and against this attempt will be found well marshalled in the article "Magnificat" in the new edition of Herzog.

the words of Elizabeth, "*blessed* is she that believed." Dr. Harnack suspects that the canticle was in the first instance attributed to Mary because the words, "all generations shall call me blessed," were considered inappropriate as referring to Elizabeth, and he sees, therefore, in these words only an imitation of the words of Leah (Gen. xxx. 13). But who can fail to contrast the limited scope of Leah's rejoicing circle with the ever-widening circle of "all generations" which shall call Mary blessed?

But a still bolder attempt is made to account for other words which are spoken by the Mother of the Lord. Only two verses even in Luke i., so we are told by Professor Schmiedel (Art. "Mary," "Encycl. Biblica," iii.), contain the idea of the Virgin birth clearly and effectively, and in the same volume (Art. "Nativity") we are informed by Professor Usener that to Hillmann belongs the merit (!) of having conclusively shown that the only verses in the third Gospel in which the supernatural birth of Jesus of the Virgin Mary is stated are incompatible with the writer's representation of the rest of chaps. i. and ii.; these verses disturb the tradition: they are the fetters laid upon us by long habituation to a sacred tradition! What, then, is to be done with them? These two verses, Luke i. 34, 35, must be removed; they are interpolated by a redactor, they are an alien and irreconcilable trail into Luke's work, if it is to be regarded as an artistic unity! It is nothing to these writers that not a single shred of documentary evidence is quoted in support of this arbitrary treatment of the text: it is nothing to them that some of their own section of advanced critics are not agreed as to whether even in these two verses something should not be retained; the doubt of Mary is psychologically incredible, and the angel's answer illogical, so even Harnack asks us to believe (see Moffatt's "Historical New Testament," xxxviii., second edition).

If this is not subjective criticism, is there any criticism which can more justly be called by that name?

One thing at this point may surely be said, that if the early Christians had wished to create "clearly and effectively" (so Schmiedel) the idea of the Virgin birth, they would not have put such a restraint upon their inventive powers as to confine themselves to two verses, the introduction of which is so confusing and ineffective in the critics' judgment. Such a restraint would have been "psychologically incredible" when we contrast it with the inventive flights of an Apocryphal Gospel like the *Protevangelium Jacobi*, with its repeated and lengthy references to the details of the Virgin birth.

R. J. KNOWLING.

(To be continued.)

ART. III.—PROPHECY IN OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

IN a previous article the manner was discussed in which the Evangelists interpreted and applied the prophecies in the Old Testament in relation to our Lord; and the purpose of the present article is to consider the prophetic, or rather the predictive, character of our Lord's own teaching. He is the supreme example of the double aspect of the prophet's office, both in interpreting and enforcing Divine and eternal truths, and also in predicting the future. In the former of these two prophetic capacities, He illuminated, with the Divine light, the depths of the ancient law, bringing home to men's consciences, in the Sermon on the Mount, and in parables, like that of the Pharisee and the Publican, its profound moral and spiritual penetration, and their miserable failure to fulfil it. But we are concerned here with the other aspect of His prophetic office—that of prediction—and it will be found very impressive to observe how large, and even paramount, a place is held in His teaching and His work by this predictive prophecy. His Advent was heralded by prophecy, and His own first word was a prophecy—viz., that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The preaching of John the Baptist may, indeed, be instructively considered from the same point of view. He, too, was pre-eminently a prophet, in the sense of a preacher and interpreter of righteousness; but he was also, in a most conspicuous and striking degree, a prophet in the sense of foretelling future events of the most momentous nature. His declarations respecting our Lord foretold His character, His office, and His death with inspired prescience; but, apart from this, his mere declaration that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that, with it, the judgment of the Jewish nation was approaching, is sufficient testimony to his inspired vision. He based the whole of his preaching on that solemn prediction, warning the people that the axe was now laid to the root of the tree, and that One was coming immediately after him, in whose presence he would become insignificant, whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor. His preaching was not a merely general warning of the certainty of the just judgment of God upon national and personal sin; it was a specific prediction that a certain Person was immediately at hand who would Himself enforce those judgments, and who would set up a kingdom which would be that of God Himself—a kingdom, not of earth, but of heaven. There is no clearer, or stronger, instance of definitely predictive prophecy than the fact that, before our Lord had been so much as heard of,

John the Baptist should thus have predicted His immediate coming, and the great spiritual, moral, and national revolution which was to ensue.

Now, our Lord takes up this prediction of the Baptist and makes it His own. When He had heard that John was cast into prison He departed into Galilee, and "from that time He began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His own exhortation to repentance, like that of John, does not rest simply upon general moral and spiritual considerations, but is founded upon the declaration, the prophetic declaration, that a new kingdom is about to be set up; and He calls upon men to change their minds in view of that imminent fact. As the subsequent history has shown, that prophecy corresponded to a great and momentous reality. From the time of our Lord's departure from earth, or from within a few days after His Ascension, a new authority has existed in the world, a new personal authority, that, namely, of our Lord Himself, acknowledged as the Son of God, acting, by various agencies, in the Church or the Churches which are called by His Name. This, it is important to remember, constitutes the grand distinction between the state of the world before Christ and the state of the world after Christ—a distinction conspicuous to outward observation as well as to spiritual insight. Since that time there have always been great societies in the world looking up to Jesus Christ, not merely as their Guide, but as their Lord and Master, regarding themselves as bound, in all things, by His authority as revealing to them the will of God and the laws of heaven; they have asserted that authority against the authorities of this world, and have made the laws of this world's authorities bend to it; they speak of Him in their Creed not only as their Master, but as their Lord, and they believe that everything they do, and everything that is done in the world, is subject to His judgment, and will ultimately receive His sentence. It is, therefore, in a proper sense a kingdom in which men and women recognise that they are subject to Jesus Christ, as to a King whose laws are supreme, in life and in death. According to His own illustration, He has gone into a far country for a while, and men may for a time forget or disregard Him, without being immediately recalled to His allegiance by force; but He, and He alone, is their eternal King and Lord, and they will some day have to answer to Him. Our Lord, as has been said, claims this office of King, because He is the Son of God, to whom the Father has entrusted all rule and all authority and power; and, in this respect, He assumes a position which is not so much as claimed by the founder of any other religion. Such, then, in its ele-

mentary conception, is the great institution which was about to be set up, and which John the Baptist and our Lord predicted. They announced the coming of a new authority, the advent of a new King, the creation of a new Society, the revelation of a Judge and a judgment not hitherto known, and they called on men to accommodate themselves to this supreme and imminent reality.

This was the central truth of our Lord's teaching. In this great central prediction everything else was included, and to this, as we shall see, everything returned. But He proceeded to delineate the nature and the general history of this kingdom in a number of parables, which, as uttered beforehand, constituted a most remarkable series of predictions, which have received in history an ever-increasing verification. Take, for example, those which are collected in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew. It is there described how the chief means for the spread of the kingdom is the Word, which works in men's hearts like a seed which grows in one soil and not in another, but where it takes good root brings forth abundant fruit. We are told that "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and when the blade was sprung up, then appeared the tares also," and the householder gives orders that the wheat and the tares shall grow together until the harvest; so that the Society, which is to be known as the Kingdom of God, is, until the end of the world, to include bad men as well as good. Again, the kingdom of heaven was to be "like a grain of mustard-seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but, when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof"; that is, its beginning was to be slight, and its growth gradual, but its ultimate extent immense. Again, it was to be like leaven, gradually permeating the whole mass of human life. These and similar similitudes exactly describe what has been the character and the mode of growth of the Church in all ages; and if we were not so familiar with them, we should be the more impressed with the Divine foresight, which, instead of anticipating for the Divine kingdom either rapid progress or perfect results, predicted its slow growth by the humblest of means, and the imperfection with which its ideal would be realized, until the day came for its final and complete realization. The life of that earthly society, which acknowledges Christ as its King, has been, throughout history, exactly what our Lord predicted it would be, and the Church is thus, even in her defects and disappointments, a witness to the truth of her Divine Lord.

But our Lord's preaching contained other predictions of a still more specific and far-reaching character. In the first place, as is acknowledged even by modern critics who do not fully acknowledge His Divine nature and authority, He clearly predicted to His disciples both His death and His resurrection. These predictions were not, indeed, put prominently forward in His general teaching; and it obviates many difficulties to bear in mind that they could not have been so put forward without reducing His work among the Jews to an unreality. He came to His own people, making a real appeal to them to receive Him, and He exerted all His power, wisdom, and grace to win their hearts to Himself. It is evident, from His intimations to His disciples, that He knew it would be all in vain; but if He had said so to the Jews, to whom He appealed, He would have rendered the appeal unmeaning. In the end, when all hope is gone, He does say as much, even to them; but not until every motive and every warning is exhausted, and He is obliged to declare, in bitter grief and tears, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This is the explanation of the circumstance which, though often much exaggerated, is to a considerable degree true, that the atoning death of our Lord does not receive so much prominence in His teaching as in that of the Apostles. He could not give it that prominence without openly and constantly assuming that the appeals He was making to His people would be in vain, and that they would reject Him and put Him to death. When they had done so, when the dreadful event was accomplished, then it stood out in its awful reality and supreme significance, and the vision of that Blood of Christ, which the Apostles themselves had seen, occupied the centre point of their vision, and was interpreted to them by weighty, though reticent, predictions of their Master. If the prediction of His death had thus to be guarded and, so to say, confidential, the case could not but be the same with His predictions of His resurrection. If, indeed, He predicted His death at all, it would seem essential that He should also have predicted His resurrection. That death, without the resurrection, would have been a message of despair, alike in the prospect and in the retrospect, and to both our Lord's saying eminently applies: "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe." The Apostles could not but believe in One who had thus calmly predicted two events so utterly incredible to them as His murder and His resurrection, and whose predictions, in each case, had been so exactly fulfilled.

But though there was thus a certain reserve in our Lord's predictions respecting Himself, He expanded more and more

clearly, and more and more fully, as His ministry proceeded, His prediction that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, particularly in its relation to the Jews. Gradually, as their resistance to Him deepened, He explained to them more distinctly the meaning of His precursor's declaration that "Now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Here, again, it is in His parables that we find some of His most remarkable predictions respecting the fate which was in store for the Jews. Such, for instance, is the parable of the householder, who let his vineyard out to husbandmen, and went into a far country, and sent his servants to receive the fruits of it; and last of all he sent his son, but "they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance; and they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him; when the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto Him: He will miserably destroy those wicked men; and He said unto them: . . . Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." We are told that when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard these parables, they "perceived that He spake of them." So, again, in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son; but the guests refused to come, and the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them; but when the king heard thereof he was wroth, and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city. Even among the parables which, in their more general meaning, are precious to all Christians, as containing the very essence of the Gospel, such as that of the Prodigal Son, several have a clearly predictive character in reference to the Jews and the Gentiles. Even if our Lord had not uttered more direct predictions respecting the fate of the Jews and of Jerusalem, these parables alone would have been a marvellous record of supernatural foresight and prophecy. But I need only remind you briefly of the clear and terrible prediction He uttered, towards the close of His ministry, respecting the doom which was to fall upon the Temple and the Holy City. His disciples came to Him, we read, to show Him the buildings of the Temple, and Jesus said unto them: "See ye all these things. Verily, I say unto you there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"; and soon afterwards His disciples came to Him privately, and said unto Him: "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of their coming and of the end of the world?" In answer to

this question, He delivered a prophecy which, although in some respects, to be presently noticed, very mysterious, predicted, in the most unmistakable manner, the fearful scenes of the destruction of Jerusalem which ensued about forty years later. "When ye shall see," He said, "Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee unto the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance . . . for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Attempts to post-date either the Gospels, or these portions of them, so as to reduce these references, as a whole, to vaticinations after the event, have failed, and they stand upon the page of Jewish history like the words of warning written by the finger of God upon the walls of the palace of the King of Babylon.

But they were not uttered as mere displays of our Lord's prophetic power, but with a momentous moral and religious purpose. They were intended to direct the thoughts and hopes of His disciples, and of the Church, to the course and the method in which the kingdom of God, which our Lord had from the first announced, would be developed and manifested. It is a characteristic feature in these predictions that they are wrapped up in a prophecy which looks far beyond them, to the final coming of our Lord in His full power and glory. It is this which constitutes that mystery in the discourse to which I have referred, and no interpretation has fully succeeded in dissipating this mystery. Endeavours have often been made, for instance, to apply the whole discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the abolition of the Old Covenant; but although those events were undoubtedly of far more momentous importance in the Divine economy of history than we sometimes realize, it is quite impracticable to explain some of the language as referring to them only. We cannot possibly, for instance, regard as fulfilled in those events such language as this: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet,

and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." It is manifest—and the consideration is one of importance in reference to the whole subject of prophecy—that we have here precisely the same phenomenon as in Old Testament prophecy—viz., a combination of the immediate and of the distant future, so entwined with one another that it is difficult to disentangle them. It is the same phenomenon, for instance, which perplexes us in some of the prophecies of Isaiah, where the happy prospect of a return from the exile seems swallowed up in the far larger and grander visions of the final redemption of mankind.

But in the case of this grand prophecy of our Lord's, we may, perhaps, see more clearly both the nature, the reason, and the purpose of His method. It would seem clear that the main and ultimate scope of the prophecy is to direct His disciples and His Church to be living perpetually in a state of watchfulness, and consequent preparation for His return, and for the final realization and coming of His kingdom. He said to them again and again that the time of the final return could not be revealed to them. "Of that day and that hour," He says, "knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." He even disclaims any knowledge of it Himself. "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one," as St. Mark records it, "no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." He repeated the same warning after the Resurrection. "It is not for you," He said, "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." That is a great mystery; but there could be no stronger assertion of the principle that the time of our Lord's final coming is absolutely shrouded from all but the Father's own knowledge. This being so, it became impossible for our Lord to say that the final manifestation of His kingdom would not occur at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It was impossible, it was forbidden even to Him, to declare before the event, that that which was immediately imminent was only the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the final revelation of His kingdom was reserved for a subsequent time. For all that was revealed, the two events might have fallen together in the same great catastrophe, and it was therefore impracticable to make a sharp chronological line of distinction between them, when looking forward to both. The destruction of Jerusalem was one great step in the manifestation of the Divine kingdom. It was the final doom of the past; and for all that men, or angels, or even the Son knew, it might have been the final doom of the present. The consequence is that the two momentous events

are seen in vision as inextricably blended. The grand result of the discourse is that both events would happen, though whether they would happen together or at an interval of time, long or short, no one, not even the Son, could tell. The principle will apply to the prophetic visions of the Old Testament. From the prophets, too, the times and the seasons were hidden, but they were granted a vision of the glory of the ultimate future, and at the same time of nearer events which were steps towards its realization. They saw them both, but they could not tell whether, in point of time, they were closely associated, or separated by a long interval, and they described them as they saw them, in the projection of one plain and prophetic revelation.

But to us, the course of events has now separated the catastrophe of the Jewish nation from the remainder of the predictions in this solemn discourse of our Lord, and it remains to us the great prophecy in which the whole of His message is summed up. He began, as you have been reminded, by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He concludes in this discourse, uttered at the very foot of His cross, by warning us that that kingdom, which has already come in so remarkable a degree, that realm in which He is acknowledged as the sole King and Lord, and of which we are professed members, will certainly come still nearer to us; and though He cannot tell us the day or the hour, yet the day and the hour will come when He will reveal Himself in His full majesty and power to enforce, fully and finally, the laws of His kingdom; when the Tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people; . . . but the fearful and the unbelieving and the abominable shall have their part in the second death. He tells us that that great consummation will come with consequences of awful convulsion, physical, moral and political, of which the convulsions which accompanied the overthrow of the Jewish nation were a type; and He calls on us, by virtue at once of the certainty of the result and the uncertainty of the time, to be perpetually on the watch for Him, and to be in a state of preparation for His coming. "Be ye also ready," He says, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Such, then, in conclusion, is the nature and office of prophecy, as exemplified in its highest form in our Lord Himself. It is the very basis on which He builds His work, it is the ultimate and supreme motive on which He relies. "Repent," He says at the outset, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Watch," He says at the conclusion

of His ministry, "for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." The fact is, that what our Lord has done, in respect of the motives to be brought to bear upon our characters and upon our conduct, may be illustrated by the famous phrase that He "called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old." He announced a kingdom, present in some degree now, but hereafter to be revealed in infinite glory, in which everyone will be judged according to the moral and spiritual laws He proclaimed; and He warns us that our relation to that kingdom is of such momentous importance as to overshadow every interest and every desire of this world. That prophecy is the fulcrum, with which He would lift the heavy weight with which our souls are bound to this earth; and the experience of human nature tends to show that no other leverage is adequate to lift the burdens which hold us down. In the other great religions of the world also it is the future which is the motive power. Perhaps the chief weakness of the Jewish religion lay in the remarkable fact, that its laws were not enforced by the sanction of a future life. Why that sanction was withheld from them has been the subject of great debate; but perhaps the reason is a more simple one than has been generally supposed. The future life could not be disclosed by the true religion, until the Judge and the Saviour had been revealed, on whose mercy, as well as on whose judgment, that life is mainly dependent. Any attempt to depict that future without placing in the forefront the Saviour, for whose sake forgiveness is bestowed upon us, and by whom, at the same time, our judgment is pronounced, would have been necessarily misleading; it must either have obscured the Divine justice or the Divine mercy. But from the moment when the Saviour's death had made atonement for us, and the Saviour's resurrection and ascension had assured us of His office, as our Lord and Judge in that eternal realm—from that moment the vision of the eternal future, the everlasting kingdom of our Lord, lay open to human eyes, and its prophetic revelation by Him furnished, to all who followed Him, a motive of transcendent power. So, accordingly, St. Peter, who had heard this great discourse, summed up the Gospel in his old age. "Blessed," he exclaimed, "be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. . . . Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

HENRY WACE.

ART. IV.—ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL AND MODERN CRITICISM.—I.

THE third Gospel appears now to occupy the place at the centre of the fray between contending schools of thought which twenty years ago was tenanted by the Gospel of St. John. The higher criticism of the New Testament has more or less reluctantly accommodated itself to the position that it is the beloved disciple who has given us the fourth Gospel. The fashion now is to disparage and set late the Gospel of St. Luke. The tide has been stemmed to some extent by the labours of Dr. Ramsay, who has satisfactorily solved some of the chief "secular" difficulties in Luke's record—notably that connected with the census of Augustus in ii. 1, 2. Most sober critics now admit that the Acts was written throughout by the author who had previously written the third Gospel, and that this writer is that companion of Paul's missionary journeys who had such exceptional opportunity for compiling both in the two years (*circa* A.D. 58-60) when he was lingering in Palestine during Paul's detention at Cæsarea. But, still, it is deemed necessary to scout the idea that Luke "published" shortly after that time. Why? Partly because of an arbitrary theory that records of Christ's life were not written while the Apostles were still teaching; partly out of deference to great German scholars who deny that Jesus could have uttered detailed prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, such as we find in Luke xix., xxi. Orthodox English writers appear to play with this negative postulate without considering either its full significance or the aspersion it casts on Luke's character as a capable historian. "The greater precision," says Dr. Stanton (in Hastings' Dictionary, *s.v.* "Gospels"), "with which the siege of Jerusalem is referred to than it is in Matthew and Mark (Luke xix. 43, xxi. 24) seems to show that in this Gospel the original form of the prophecy has been somewhat lost owing to the knowledge of the particular circumstances of the event." Not at all—until it is proved *on other grounds* that Luke did write after the event. As a fact, the scene of the detailed prophecy of Luke xix. 41-44 has no parallel in Matthew and Mark. Unless the whole episode is fictitious, it is presumable Christ, when weeping over Jerusalem, spoke as Luke records, and if we accept prophecy at all, we shall scarcely pretend to rule it shall not be "precise." I need not show that insinuations such as this may be given a wide extension by the general reader. Why should not the somewhat precise prediction of John Baptist's future work be equally coloured by the event? May not this florid recorder

of prophecies have similarly embellished his account of Christ's birth and resurrection? Where shall we stop?

Dr. Ramsay has recorded his own complete conversion from the conclusions of Baur, Zeller and Renan, "that Luke was an able and beautiful, but not very well-informed writer, who lived . . . when all actors in those events had died, and when accurate knowledge of facts was difficult." It is much to be regretted that one who has so ably vindicated the accuracy of Luke still makes him publish late what it is admitted he compiled early. In discussing Luke's peculiar mode of dating in chap. iii. 1, Dr. Ramsay appeals to the manner of reckoning prevalent in the time of Titus, who, like Tiberius, had been "associated" with his imperial predecessor. He thinks Luke's unusual computation shows that the Preface at least must have been put—possibly as a finishing touch—when Titus was sole Emperor (A.D. 79-81). Here, at least, we have a good scholarly illustration instead of mere assumptions. But it is unconvincing by itself as an argument against the early date, and its insufficiency for chronological purposes is, in fact, admitted by Mr. Bebb in Hastings' Dictionary, *s.v.* "Luke." No one, indeed, more clearly than Dr. Ramsay connects this Gospel with first witnesses whom Luke might well have found in Palestine in A.D. 58-60, but who after the fall of Jerusalem must, if surviving, have been widely scattered. Thus, of Luke's Preface he says most truly,[1] that "an author who begins with a declaration such as that had either mixed freely with many of the eye-witnesses and actors in the events which he proceeds to record, or he is a thorough impostor." Again, on Luke i. 2 he remarks: "It is plain that the historian either believed his statements to be based on the authority of the Virgin Mary herself, or has deliberately tried to create a false impression that such was the case." I gather, then, Dr. Ramsay admits that Luke was getting the information used in his two books in A.D. 58-60. But surely we may infer also from the Acts that Luke was in those days actually noting down minute occurrences in his journeys, just as a man would who meant to shortly publish his compilations. Now Acts abruptly ends with Paul at Rome "in his own hired dwelling," *circa* A.D. 63. In whatever way we explain its precipitate close, the natural inference is that it came out at that period, and that the Gospel had been published somewhat earlier. We surely need strong proof to make us think Luke delayed giving his compilations to the world for some twenty years.

Professor Sanday has, I think, then, fairly summed up the

[1] Ramsay, "Was Christ born at Bethlehem?" chap. i.

only substantial arguments against the old belief that Luke wrote not long after his two years' stay in Palestine. "There are two objections: (1) That the process described in the Preface implies a longer period than would fall within the year A.D. 63—it is probable that the common basis of our three Synoptic Gospels was itself not committed to writing so early; and (2) that there is a rather strong presumption that the Gospel was written after, and not before, the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70."[1]

Of (2) I have said something already. With both (1) and (2) I propose to deal hereafter, noticing at the same time some flimsy subsidiary arguments that are added in Hastings' Dictionary, *s.v.* "Gospels," "Luke." It will be sufficient to say here that the theory of oral Gospels prevailing for some forty years in a land where people could write, appears the most unsatisfactory of all solutions of the Synoptic problem, and that as such data as we find in Matt. i. 1-17, Luke i. 46-55, 68-79, ii. 29-31, must have been found in early literary documents, the records which forms the "common basis" might well have been in writing too at an early date. But I must confine the rest of this paper to a graver matter. Side by side with this idea of late date there have come abroad ideas of Luke's inaccuracy in at least one important Gospel episode. A writer who I had fancied was singularly successful in recovering the exact context of many of our Lord's sayings, and often indicated frankly when he had no chronological data,[2] is now presented as perpetrating a blunder which even in A.D. 80, I cannot think the Christian Churches would have tolerated. To both Dr. Sanday and Mr. A. Wright, the "first" miraculous Draught of Fishes of which Luke tells us appears fictitious. Both suggest it is a distorted replica of the miracle recorded in John xxi., which Luke has antedated two years or so, and forced into connection with Peter's summons to attend our Lord as an Apostle.[3] Luke thus, in fact, stands charged with two delinquencies: (1) Grave misstatement of the circumstances of the final call of the leading Apostles, and (2) utter misapprehension (in A.D. 80) of a manifestation of the Risen Master which appears to have been much discussed (John xxi. 23) in Christian circles.

It is but fair to the Evangelist to say that most of his readers will find such a blunder a thing of unique enormity. Most Christian students find that with the aid of a little

[1] Professor Sanday, "Inspiration." Bampton Lectures, 1893.

[2] *Cf.* Luke's expressions, *e.g.*, in v. 16, 27, vi. 1, 12, 17, vii. 1, 18, viii. 1, 22, 26, 28, xi. 1, xiv. 1, xviii. 1, xx. 1.

[3] Sanday, "Fourth Gospel"; Wright, "Composition of the Four Gospels."

imagination and common-sense they can attain a sufficiently satisfactory solution of discrepancies in the Evangelists.[1] They, of course, admit in such studies that, whatever one's idea of inspiration, the Gospels cannot be acquitted of occasional inaccuracies. They recognise too, that, in Matthew Christ's utterances are often ranged in view of subject, and not historical sequence. But arbitrary arrangement, and such mistakes in detail as occur in all human narrations, are on a very different footing, one feels, from blunders such as these. But we must be fair to the modern critics too. Dr. Sanday further says that "we might even be tempted to suppose" Matthew's account of Peter's walking on the water is a similar replica of that volatile episode recorded in John xxi.—Peter's actions in Matt. xiv. 28-31 being, in fact, merely an embellishment of his "casting himself into the sea," to go to Jesus, in St. John's story. Both critics, too, tell us that there were not two "cleansings of the Temple" as we had always supposed. Mr. Wright's ideal "oral tradition" had somehow misdated the incident which Christendom has usually associated with the first day of Holy Week. The poor Synoptics in utter indifference to chronology, all three of them, endorsed the mistake. St. John in his Gospel corrected it, but, somehow, without in the least inducing the Church to understand his object. For, says Mr. Wright, "St. John places the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of the ministry; the Petrine memoirs place it at its close. . . . I maintain St. John is to be followed."

When the writer after this feat magnanimously cedes us the historicity of both the Miracles of Feeding, one cannot help reflecting how much of this "high" criticism depends on the survival or loss of a few accidental words. But for the record of Christ's having casually mentioned two distinct feedings in a certain speech, one may take it for certain this critic would have his neat little theory of conflicting traditions which had again biparted a single incident. In that case he would have been by his own admission wrong.

But I think there will be no need to justify Luke when, as here, he is supposed to blunder in such good company as that of Matthew and Mark. Let us, then, rivet our attention on the charge personal to our Evangelist. I shall try to discuss it as if the Gospels were ordinary literature and the Church any ordinary association of men united for a common object. I set aside for the time all those conceptions of

[1] The incident of Luke vii. 36-50 is, of course, quite distinct from that of John xii. 1-8, and as the difficulties here lie in the accounts of Matthew and Mark, there is no need to touch on them in this paper.

inspiration which, certainly, from the third century onwards coloured the Christian view of the Gospels, and implanted a belief that (whatever their sources were) the Evangelists were guarded by God from serious error. Most of my readers are familiar with the two episodes in question. Dr. Sanday "strongly suspects," and Mr. Wright "thinks it not improbable," that Luke has misplaced and misrepresented that recorded for us by St. John. Both critics try to palliate the gravity of the charge. But I certainly feel that, if their hypothesis be well founded, I can say no more in these papers about the capability of St. Luke. An Evangelist may make what claim he pleases to have "traced the course of all things accurately from the first." The assertion will go for nothing with most men if they find him so inaccurate where his statements can be checked.

Three distinct occasions should be recalled by my readers in considering this hypothesis.

1. Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20: Matthew and Mark have tersely recorded a call of the two pairs of fisher brethren (Simon and Andrew, James and John) from their professional work to be with Christ as fishers of men. Luke says nothing of this call. They leave their work and follow Jesus. From this point let us follow Mark's story (Mark i. 21-34); Matthew's having only some of the incidents, and being diversified by the long section of the Sermon on the Mount. Mark continues, "And they go into Capernaum." He tells how in that town Jesus teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath, causing astonishment at the "authority" He claimed. In the synagogue Jesus relieves a demoniac of an unclean spirit who recognises His power, and the fame of the deed is widely circulated. He then goes into Peter's house and cures his mother-in-law of a fever. When evening comes the sick and demoniacs are brought to Him and healed, the devils not being allowed to express their recognition of Him.

Now, all these facts Luke, who begins this section, "And *He* came down to Capernaum," relates (in iv. 31-41) in the same order, and with such close *verbal* agreement with Mark that his narrative must have come either from Mark or, as I think is much more probable, from Mark's source. In either case, he must have known that those Apostles were with Jesus. Obviously, too, when he says that Jesus "entered the house of Simon" (iv. 38) he knows of Peter as already an acquaintance of our Lord, and presumably taking Him to his house. The only rational explanation of the omission of the former call, and the altering "they" to "he," amid so much close correspondence, is that it is deliberate. Luke knows that, although these Apostles had been summoned from their work

to attend Jesus, they did not really make their final renunciation of "all things" for His sake till after that visit to Capernaum and on the occasion of the miraculous Draught of Fishes. He chooses, naturally enough, to concentrate our attention on the final and more memorable call, which he is going to give in v. 1-11. Is it an unlikely thing that Jesus should once and again have invited these men to temporary companionship, to test them before they were summoned to leave everything for Him? No one who accepts the fourth Gospel need think so. For John informs us of the fact that these same persons had on a yet earlier occasion gone from John Baptist to Jesus as temporary companions, and had accompanied Him in His Passover visit to Jerusalem (John i. 37 *et seq.*). They had again taken up their vocation as fishermen before Jesus summoned them to keep company with Him on the occasion of the visit to Capernaum. But what decided them finally to become His permanent disciples at the sacrifice of all worldly ties was the day of the miraculous Draught of Fishes. Put in this way, I see no more difficulty in the final call given in Luke v. than in either of the other calls—John i., Mark i. From Luke, in fact, we learn that those fishermen were appealed to, not twice, but thrice, before they made their great sacrifice for the sake of Christ. And why not?

2. Luke v. 1-11: But now for Luke's story in its connection with the miracle. Our Lord had been preaching in the synagogues of Galilee, presumably unattended by these men. He appears on the banks of the lake, and a crowd gathers round and presses to hear Him. He sees two empty boats, and enters the one which is Simon's, and, asking him to thrust out a little way, addresses the people from it. When He has ceased He bids Simon cast for a draught. Simon, remarking that he had fished all night in vain, obeys in deference to Jesus. The draught is so successful that the nets break, and the other boat—that of the partners, James and John—has to be hailed to land the immense haul. Simon Peter, appalled, prostrates himself, crying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" The others share his amazement. Jesus says to Simon: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men alive." The group bring their boats to land, and leave "all things" and follow Jesus.

Observe the departures from that call related by Matthew and Mark, which was evidently known to Luke. That call presented a picture of one boat with the sons of Zebedee in it mending their nets; of Simon and Andrew working a seine net from the shore; of the Master approaching unattended, and saying: "Come ye after Me, and I will make you fishers of men." St. Luke's incident, with its thronging

crowds now incited to hear Jesus, the two empty boats with their owners washing their nets on shore, and Simon summoned to push the boat off that Jesus may preach unmolested, is an entirely different scene. Even the metaphor used by Jesus after the miracle is not quite the same as before, but seems adapted to the peculiar circumstance. For in ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν ("It is men whom you shall catch alive") there is surely a reference, not to fishing in the open sea, but rather to Peter's present problem—how to retain two boatloads of *living*, leaping fish. And what of Peter's words? If ever utterance was true to the speaker's temperament, it is that, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" It is just that curious blend of modesty and audacity which we know to be characteristic of the man. It is the terse, brusque way of speaking which we hear again in—"Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not happen to Thee." "Lord, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles." "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Can we suppose that all this is merely the effect of an "oral" mirage, which reflects features on one side from episode 1, and on the other from the distant episode 3, and yet produces such a lifelike scene?

3. John xxi.: Some two years afterwards Jesus appears in the resurrection body to seven disciples, who, after the first Eastertide, had resumed for a time their vocation on the Sea of Galilee. Andrew, whom we may detect in Luke's group, though his name is not mentioned,[1] is certainly not present now. The hour is that of hazy dawn. In Luke's story it was seemingly evening; at least Peter's aorist, "We *toiled* all night," taken with the incident of protracted preaching to an unoccupied crowd, suggests that conclusion. An unrecognised Person bids these seven, after another night's fruitless toil, cast the net "on the right side of the boat," and again there is a large haul of fish. The sign convinces John that it is the Lord. And why? Of course, because Jesus had worked a like miracle in his presence under like circumstances in the early days, and because Luke's impugned story is strictly true. Never, in fact, is the repetition of a miracle more intelligible both in purpose and in actual result.

Instead, however, of breaking nets and two boats full of live fish, we have now one[2] boat, and some of its crew

[1] The omission proves nothing more than in Luke iv. 38. Luke there gives us, "When Jesus was come into Simon's house," for Mark's "They come into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John."

[2] John vi. 22-24 shows that there is no distinction in his use between πλοῖον and πλοιάριον.

rowing, some tugging at the net; and it is distinctly said that this net was landed on shore with one hundred and fifty-three big fish, and was not broken. After this there is not a shred of resemblance between the two stories. Peter, who on the first occasion had cried, "Depart from me," is seen here leaping into the water to go to Jesus. On the other hand, instead of hailing Him as "Lord," he with the others refrains from all greeting or questioning to corroborate the conviction that it is Jesus. When discourse actually begins, the Saviour does not repeat the former metaphors. Nothing is said about fishing for or capturing men. It is Peter's work of tending the Church in his official capacity that is to be impressed. And so thrice in varied form we have the charge to feed the flock.

Possibly the reader is now satisfied that the historicity of that first Draught of Fishes is likely to survive the strong suspicions of Luke's critics. I shall instance hereafter other cases where this Gospel tells us fresh matter in regard to Peter and John, which the critics have not assailed. They convince me that Luke had access in his travels, not only to John in Palestine, but also to Peter himself, whose presence at Rome in A.D. 61-64 is well attested. Meantime, I venture to point out a kind of consideration which our critics with their microscopic analysis constantly overlook, despite their theory of exclusively oral teaching. As this evangelist wrote —if St. Luke wrote about the year A.D. 80—so must he have been for many years teaching and speaking. Further—assuming John xxi. to be true history—not only St. John, but six others, had during a half-century been telling that Resurrection story which is now preserved in the Fourth Gospel. That it was left to St. John to enshrine it in an authoritative form in no way argues any conspiracy of silence until St. John wrote. We are left in no doubt in this matter. For St. John tells us that the discourse of our Lord on the occasion was talked about among the early Christians, and he corrects a misunderstanding of our Lord's expressions relative to himself (John xxi. 23).

Then, too, there was Peter, who had lived a noteworthy life from the beginning of the Gospel onwards, and been martyred in Rome, probably in the summer of A.D. 64. Were these early Christians quite uninterested in him? On the contrary, much sympathy, degenerating to party feeling, undeniably centred about that great personality in very early times. What follows? Why, if Luke came forward in A.D. 80 with his garbled story about Peter's antecedents, there must have been many who would know better and resent the innovation. If he showed he had antedated the familiar Draught of Fishes

after the Resurrection, a whole generation of Christians would have criticised the gravity of the error. If he stated that the two sons of Zebedee had witnessed that first draught, St. John himself was alive for some years longer, and could hardly have refrained from demanding the elimination of the legend. The critical conception may be that for half a century these early Christians neither knew nor cared whether their Master worked a peculiar miracle before or after His resurrection, or both, or even whether His ministry lasted one year or three. Common-sense, on the other hand, suggests that with the lives both of Jesus and His Apostles they had made themselves familiar, and that the Evangelists wrote for men who they knew could supply a great deal where they were silent.[1] Their omissions and alleged discrepancies are interpreted now as if the Churches had no common historical retrospect, and nurtured their faith merely with a congeries of conflicting traditions. Is it not possible that these features are rather to be judged by an ideal of closely-united communities, who talked about their Master's doings repeatedly, and even critically? That St. John deliberately omits what he knew had been well told before in authoritative form is the explanation of his omissions, and that he corrects one misapprehension in chap. xxi. 23 implies that he would have corrected others if they had obtained credence. That the accounts in the Synoptics differ *inter se* and by comparison with St. John is again and again due to reluctance to describe an episode which the writer had not investigated to its source.

ARTHUR C. JENNINGS.

ART. V.—THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM (MATT. II. 1-17).

THE same old story again! What new ideas is it possible for any to advance on this well-worn subject? Is it capable of affording anything more than the merest conjecture as to what the nature of the phenomenon was? And is our firm belief in the truth of the Divine narrative to be called in question by criticism tending to subvert our ideas of that marvellous apparition?

These are questions which will naturally occur to the minds of most readers, but which may at once be set at rest by an

[1] *E.g.*, Matt. xxiii. 37, Luke xiii. 34 are meaningless, unless these writers know of repeated visits to Jerusalem. Similarly, Luke ix. 9 implies some knowledge of the incidents that brought the imprisoned Baptist to death.

appeal to them to study the text once more, carefully. And in order to set about this study methodically, it may be as well to be quite sure what it is we want to know, and it will appear that the inquiry narrows itself down to three important questions, which it should be our endeavour to answer satisfactorily. First: What was the nature of the phenomenon? Second: How many times did the Wise Men see it? And third: What was the cause of their joy when they saw it last?

At first sight it appears that the answers are obvious; it was a star—they saw it all the time, surely?—because it led them to the spot where the infant Saviour was. Still, though the first and third have been answered with concise truth, the second question has not, and it is our object to enlarge upon all three in detail, and to give what we think is the correct solution of the entire narrative. Let us, therefore, take each of these three questions separately, with the narrative before us. The Revised Version gives it thus (vers. 1, 2): "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we saw His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." To anyone who has lived in an Oriental country where astrology is practised, however imperfectly, the conviction is overwhelming that the apparition supplied an astrological inference, and this we should try to understand. The Hindu *jotishi* practises astrology, and though he readily admits that his ability cannot compare favourably with that of his forbears, yet he maintains that the fault does not lie in the science, but in his imperfect procedure in deducing the prediction. We have, on many occasions, had interesting conversations with these Brahmin astrologers, and have invariably been assured that the journey of the Wise Men, the story of which is thoroughly grasped and appreciated by them, could not have been other than based upon astrological deduction. It is difficult, we admit, for a Western mind to understand this, because of our general ignorance of what we call an exploded science, but if from the Divine narrative the astrological aspect of the phenomenon is admissible, let us not lightly repudiate it, simply because we are not conversant with what rules the daily routine and life of millions of His Majesty's subjects at the present day.

It is noticeable that Kepler originated the idea of the apparition being nothing more than the ordinary astronomical phenomenon of a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the month of May 7 B.C., while Ideler suggested the theory of a unique phantasm. The writer of the

article on the Star of the Wise Men in the "Concise Dictionary of the Bible," edited by Dr. Smith, dismisses Kepler's idea, rather summarily we think, simply because he considers it inconceivable that solely on astrological grounds men would be induced to take a seven months' journey, whereas men have been known in modern times to undertake as great, if not greater, journeys under similar influences. And he sweeps away Ideler's suggestion on the ground that it can stand no astronomical test, whereas Ideler's "beautiful phantasm," if not astronomical, must have been, we may reasonably suppose, chimerical, and as nearly approaching the miraculous as his critic could have wished. There is no doubt that Ideler's "beautiful phantasm" was a highly imaginative one, undeserving of serious consideration; but Kepler was on the right track, according to the Hindu astrologer at any rate. Again, the same critic describes both Kepler's and Ideler's theories as based on astronomical phenomena, and merely alludes to the astrological theory as untenable; but that is no reason why it had no influence on the Wise Men's journey, for there may be claims which should give it an impartial hearing, however absurd the theory seems, at first sight, to our minds. We shall have occasion again to call attention to this critic's final objection at the close of our argument.

Now, some reader may exclaim: "Ah! you want me to believe in astrology, do you?" Not at all, friend, but we wish you to understand that the Wise Men did, and that Herod knew they did. Take the meaning of the two first verses again. Certain Magi came to Jerusalem after Christ had been born, during Herod's reign, saying that they had seen a star in the east, under whose influence they came (on) to Jerusalem to worship Him, and desiring to know where He was. Before proceeding further, let us be as sure as we can that this is the meaning. The Revised Version has correctly given *saw* as the rendering of the Greek aorist *εἴδομεν*, but we venture to think that (we) *are come* is not absolutely the correct rendering of *ἤλθομεν* (also aorist). It would, perhaps, be more correct to say (we) *came*, having obvious reference to the act of leaving their country, rather than of arrival in Jerusalem. Then, they said they saw "His star," *ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ*, in the east, an expression over which there has been some discussion. Does it mean they saw it in their Eastern country, or in the eastern part of the sky? There is no reasonable doubt about *ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν* meaning *from the East*, or the general direction, including several regions, from which the Magi came; but because the article is used in the second expression *ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ*, many have considered it to mean *in the eastern part of the sky*. Now, when we remember that

the first expression is used *of* the Magi, and the second *by* them, it would seem that the passage means that they came from Eastern parts to Jerusalem, saying they had seen "His star" in *the* Eastern country, with reference to their own; for it would have been surprising if, supposing the Magi intended to signify their own country, they had done so under the first form. We might, therefore, render *ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν* by *from Eastern parts*, and *ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ* by *in the Eastern country* (we come from); for we submit that by leaving out the English article in the first, as we ought, we can better elucidate the proper meaning of the second expression. In any case, however, we take it, the inference is strong that they saw a star, which they, as Magi (astrologers), interpreted as pointing out the exact date of the infant Christ's birth; and if this is not quite clear from the second verse, it certainly is from the seventh, and is still more strongly emphasized in the sixteenth. These Magi came to Jerusalem to find the King of the Jews, whom a celestial phenomenon had shown them to have been born on a certain date. That is practically, in so many words, what the narrative tells us did happen. Why should we not accept it? Now, was that phenomenon a star? It says so, and it was, inasmuch as *ἀστήρ* is the general name for every celestial phenomenon, though some have also questioned the truth of this. For instance, Dr. Carr, the learned annotator of the Cambridge Greek Testament, observes that the theory of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, supported by Alford and originated by Kepler, forces the meaning of the word *τόν ἀστερα*. But, in all courtesy, we would point out that this is but an instance of the modern misconception of astrology, which had essentially to do with planets and not with stars, as we now differentiate the terms. And if comparative etymology serves any purpose at all, the root *ἀστρ* is the origin of *τερας*, which presents no difficulty in understanding the meaning without forcing it. Besides, the Sanskrit word (same root) *staras*, whence *tārā*, signifies star principally, but is also synonymous of sign or constellation, or any celestial phenomenon, and is, as often as not, used to denote the astrological conjunction indicative of an event—just as we, too, make use of the word, in a phrase of no modern origin in our own language, to signify the benign or malign planet under which our lines have fallen, and, just as also modern astronomers have applied the term *asteroid*, deliberately, to a minor planet, without forcing the meaning. So we must bear in mind that astrology has only to do with what used to be known universally as the seven planets passing through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. These seven planets were the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, and no computa-

tion could be undertaken without them, for no other part of the universe but that traversed by these seven planets had anything to do with astrology. No meteor, no comet, no variable star, no fixed star of any kind irrelative of a planet, could supply the astrologer with any data on which a calculation could be made, although extraordinary phenomena were ominous of something indefinite impending, but about which nothing certain could be said unless they accompanied definite predictions inferred from the planets. And it is so to this day. The Persian, the Arab, the Hindu, and the Chinese astrologers acknowledge no other planets, and it is upon these seven, and these seven alone, that they base all their profession. They assert that whatsoever happens on earth is written in the heavens by means of these seven planets, and only needs to be read and interpreted aright. To the ancient astronomer the Earth was unknown as a planet, nor were Uranus, Neptune, nor the minor planets discovered. And as it was, so it is now. But a little further acquaintance with the Brahmin astrologer and his methods may not be uninteresting. On the question being asked him what "his star" could have been, the *jotishi* will invariably answer that it had most probably to do with the appearance of Brihaspat (Jupiter), one of the benign planets, and indicative of sovereignty; for it is not so difficult, once the event has taken place, to trace what might have predicted it. But he is sceptical over the theory that Saturn can have entered into the calculation of the auspicious event, being the most malign of the planets, even neutralizing whatever good a benign planet may portend, if in the same field—though under exceptional circumstances the ascendancy of a benign planet may be established. We neither agree nor disagree with him, but if we question his procedure he will tell us that the belt of the Zodiac traversed by the seven planets is carefully divided into many separate fields, some of them having reference to particular countries, but generally with reference to some abstract substantives—good or bad—and it is under certain complicated rules that planets passing through these fields, and in conjunction with them, portend events or fix the times for important undertakings. Given an inquirer's horoscope, the *jotishi* discovers, or professes to discover, the correct date of a required event or serious undertaking indicated in a certain quarter of that horoscope. This may not always come off on the date fixed, but our *jotishi* is in no wise disconcerted, because, for aught he knows, there may have been some error in the drafting of that horoscope; and should he even be quite satisfied of its accuracy, his own deductions from it, based upon what planetary phenomena occur at the time, may

not be faultless. He has done his best, and no more can be said. But we have every reason to believe, apart from the Hindu's admission, that much more was known of this science formerly than now, and it has been pretty well acknowledged that the Magi of Persia formed no insignificant cult of its exponents—nay, it has even been claimed for them that Daniel the prophet was the head of their order. Be this as it may, we are constrained to believe that those Magi who visited our Lord were divinely permitted on this occasion to deduce the correct date of His birth from an observation at the time of one planet or more in a particular position. This belief would enable us to answer, then, the first question thus: The nature of the phenomenon was astronomical—*i.e.*, the star which the Magi saw was a planet in a particular aspect, which their astrological science enabled them to interpret as fixing, in that aspect, the date of the birth of the King of the Jews.

Now for the second question—How many times did they see it? The narrative is explicit enough in informing us that they saw it twice: once in their own country, when they found out what it meant, after which it ceased to have the same interest for them, and once on their way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. But there is no hint given us that it *led* them from their own country to Jerusalem. Indeed, apart from the fact of their having used it as the datum of their knowledge of the precise time of Christ's birth, it would seem that ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ, if it referred to the eastern part of the sky as conveying a notion of guidance, must be a misapprehension, because the Magi were going all the time westward to Jerusalem. If it is urged that they may have seen it in the west also, or that they only marched when the star was in the west, not only is the astronomical theory admitted, but their description of it as ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ could have had no significance. The only justification of the sense of ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ being *in the eastern part of the sky* is that the Indian Brahmin certainly recites a deeply reverent and more lengthy form of incantation at the rising of a planet than he does on observing it any other time; and it is also at the hour of early orisons that a sight of its rising is most propitious as an omen, otherwise there does not appear to be any significance in the expression. It is almost inconceivable, however, to what an extent this misapprehension of the star guiding them to Jerusalem is entertained, and this misapprehension could never have been suggested by any other part of the story than the description of its appearance as an index to the very house where our Lord was. As it was at that time an index, the idea has degenerated into a misconception of its

nature from the time the Magi left their country for Jerusalem, and has caused a widespread notion to be entertained that it led them all the way. But there is not the slightest reason in the narrative for such a misconception, and we may safely, therefore, answer the second question thus: The star was seen by the Magi twice: once in their own country, where it afforded them data for an astrological inference, and, though they might have seen it over and over again since that time, it had no further interest for them till they saw it a second time on their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. That is what we gather from the story as it is related by St. Matthew.

And now we come to the third question, the answer to which is the most interesting of all—namely, What was the cause of their joy when they saw it last, *i.e.*, on their approach to Bethlehem? The inquiry into the solution takes us back to another question—What could have induced them to leave their own country merely to visit the King of the Jews, the exact date of whose birth they had ascertained from a planet? And here we must refer again to our Hindu *jotishi* and his methods of procedure, for though what we have already seen of them is not calculated to inspire us with much faith in him, yet if a part of his procedure is borne out by what we may discover in Scripture elsewhere than in this story it should not be rejected, but taken seriously for what it is worth. We find that the Sanskrit term *mahūrat* is the equivalent of *astrological verdict;* but there is another word, *shagun*, meaning *omen*, without which no *mahūrat* is considered to be complete. These two are, in fact, inseparable, for though the calculation may be made and the verdict given out, the success of the undertaking, or its entire fulfilment, depends upon some accompanying omen. Sometimes these two components are difficult of differentiation, but the expert can always distinguish them. Everywhere among astrologers it is the same, and it is averred by them to have always been so. In this light it is not difficult to imagine what may have induced the Magi to set out for Jerusalem. Not only did they discover the exact date of birth, but that discovery must have been accompanied by some essential sign or omen, signifying that they were not only to know of His birth, but that they must set out to see Him, and that at once. This may appear to be an easy way of settling the question, in order to justify their journey, for that something induced them goes without saying. Still, we would invite the attention of the critical reader to the story of Joseph in Egypt, for an instance of omen completing verdict. When Joseph had heard Pharaoh's dreams he interpreted them as

signifying seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. That was the verdict of the dreams; but there was something more that Joseph made clear to Pharaoh, which left no doubt in the latter's mind. He pointed out that the *doubling* of the dream was an infallible sign of fulfilment, and necessitated the commencement of operations at once. That omen completed the verdict in the same manner as the Hindu's *shagun* completes his *mahūrat*. And it is not inconceivable that an accompanying dream may have been the means of inducing the Magi to set out on their long journey, for it was by a dream Divinely sent that "they departed to their own country another way" from Palestine.

But, whatever the means, there must have been some strong inducement closely connected with the interpretation of the astral spectacle, though distinct from it, that caused them to undertake that long journey; but, personally, we are inclined to think that it may have been a reduplication of the planetary conjunction under certain conditions quite understood of our own astronomers. And though this may be mere conjecture, it certainly would throw a flood of light on the sight of the star being a source of "exceeding great joy" in its aspect of an index to the house where our Lord was, especially if it appeared at that time as a triplication of the phenomenon some months after they had seen the reduplication. This inductive theory may be most interesting, and may well repay inquiry, but it is not our object at present to dwell upon it. Let us resume the story from where we left off. On reaching Jerusalem they were disappointed to find that the very inhabitants of that capital and royal city knew nothing of the birth of the King of the Jews whom they had come all that way to see. They had naturally presumed that at Jerusalem, if anywhere, that King of the Jews would be found as the acknowledged Head of His people, but it was not so. What can we learn from their disappointment? It is a legitimate inference that no star guided them to Jerusalem. But to proceed. Herod was much disturbed by their inquiry—a state of mind he would scarcely have fallen into had he underrated their professional ability—but on being satisfied by those whose office it was to know that the predicted Messiah was not to be born in Jerusalem, he, for a certain subtle reason, put a leading question to the Magi, the answer to which he arranged should not be divulged to any but himself. Having elicited from them in secret what was of supreme importance to himself, the exact date of the Child's birth, he directed them to Bethlehem with the assurance that he would himself come to worship the young Child on learning from them of His identity.

Now, we may appropriately ask, If the distance to Bethlehem was so short from Jerusalem (only about six miles), where was the necessity for a supernatural guiding light? We may reasonably conclude that they were shown the road and told the distance at Jerusalem, and they must therefore have been well on their way before they noticed anything extraordinary. We venture now to offer the solution of the mysterious phenomenon, though, after all, we are distinctly told it was the same star they had seen *in the east*, whatever the latter expression means. It so happens that Bethlehem is built on a slight eminence, and it also happens that, although it is situated somewhere about south by west of Jerusalem, where one would ordinarily expect the road thence to enter it from a north by east direction, a divergence occurs which causes a considerable part of the final approach to be made from almost due west! This is, indeed, a key to the solution of the indicative nature of the star. It must have been near this divergence of the road that the travellers began to notice a singular significance about their old friend. They had probably seen it rising and moving in its usual course, but at, or near, that turn on the road it appeared above a certain part of Bethlehem, and the nearer they approached the clearer index of that part it became, because the town, as it were, rose higher to meet it, until it almost touched the roof of a particular house. Let us for a moment picture to ourselves that scene, and try to understand what the conditions necessary to such an aspect of a planet, otherwise familiar to their gaze, must have meant to them. They could not have seen it thus except at that particular time; they could not have seen it thus except at that particular place. Surely we can judge, without exaggeration of sentiment, of the effect of these essential circumstances on the feelings of such a class of men, whose journey to Bethlehem was not of their own choosing, nor one of stellar guidance, under the explicit testimony of the narrative. And if, by the inductive process of reasoning that we have before hinted at, it happened to be the time of the triplication of the conjunction they had seen in their own country, then "the star which they saw in the east" (ver. 9) must have had a very special significance, which they, of all men, could not but realize. If anything conveys vividly to our minds the reason of the "exceeding great joy" they felt on seeing the star, then, it is the circumstance of their recognition of it in the entirely new aspect of an omen of success after all the disappointment they had gone through, and fairly proves that they had not seen it as a guide or indicator before. And how else but as such an omen of success could they have interpreted the sight of it in its present position, or how tell that the house

it stood over was the one the Saviour was in before they entered it? They felt that there was no further need now of public inquiry, and being thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the star, what is more probable than that they took the bearings of the house, found it, and found in it the King of the Jews they sought? Surely we may also imagine, what is not told us, the first question they must have put to the mother—When was this Child born?—to leave no doubt in their minds that He was indeed the King of the Jews they sought, albeit known only to themselves as such. The very circumstance of the means by which they found the house seems to point out conclusively that it was unobserved of other eyes, which, on the road or in the town, we cannot but think it must have been were it other than the ordinary heavenly body it was. That it was a planet the astrological deduction of exact date of birth is incontestable proof, and as it was a planet how are we to conceive that they should see it in a supernatural or unusual, or, may we say, Will-o'-the-wisp-like appearance, and yet recognise it as the same they had seen in their own country months before? Does not this view of their situation entitle us now to answer the third question? We can do so thus: The cause of their "exceeding great joy" was that they looked upon the same star on their approach to Bethlehem in the aspect of an omen of success, after their disappointment at Jerusalem, under circumstances of time and place. And now let us turn our attention to the concluding words of the article on the Star of the Wise Men in the "Concise Dictionary of the Bible." To save readers the trouble of looking it up, we will quote the relevant passage: "(*b*) On December 4, B.C. 7, the sun set at Jerusalem at 5 p.m. Supposing the Magi to have then commenced their journey to Bethlehem, they would first see Jupiter and his dull and somewhat distant companion 1½ hours distant from the meridian, in a S.E. direction, and decidedly to the east of Bethlehem. By the time they came to Rachel's tomb the planets would be due south of them, on the meridian, and no longer over the hill of Bethlehem. The road then takes a turn to the east, and ascends the hill near to its western extremity; the planets therefore would now be on their right hands, and a little *behind* them: the 'star,' therefore, ceased altogether to go 'before them' as a guide. Arrived on the hill or in the village, it became physically impossible for the star to stand over any house whatever close to them, seeing that it was now visible far away beyond the hill to the west, and far off in the heavens at an altitude of 57°. As they advanced the star would of necessity recede, and under no circumstances could it be said to stand 'over'

any house, unless at the distance of miles from the place where they were. Thus the beautiful phantasm of Kepler and Ideler, which has fascinated so many writers, vanishes before the more perfect daylight of investigation."

Such is an expert's view of Kepler's theory. It is correct throughout, on the supposition that the Magi started from Jerusalem at sunset. But supposing they arrived at Rachel's tomb (in a country of short twilight) at sunset, what then? Why, the circumstances would have been more in their favour of seeing the "star" over Bethlehem. Although the above objection quite attains its purpose in shattering Kepler's theory, as far as the visibility of the phenomenon during the hours of darkness was concerned, we conceive it was just possible for them to have seen Jupiter, at any rate at, or even a little before, sunset, over Bethlehem, under favourable conditions of atmosphere. But this is not our contention. We do not say that it was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn—indeed, as we have before said, we have some astrological authority for doubting the latter's part in the phenomenon; nor do we say it was a conjunction of planets at all, though it may have been. But it may have been simply a planet in a certain part of the Zodiac, in which certain part, under certain conditions well known, they may have seen it for the third time after several months. For by astrological conjunction we not only mean that of planets with planets, but of planets with certain zodiacal stars which they are said to govern in their path—such as, for instance, *a* Virginis, or *a* Tauri (Spica and Aldebaran). Indeed, there was an ancient tradition among the Jews that Spica should have something to do with the coming of the Messiah in some way. As for Aldebaran, it is interesting to record that a Muslim doctor interpreted the name to the writer as "the star of the Wise Men," without in the least referring to the Magi or Wise Men who visited our Lord. But he pronounced the name with the accent on the ultimate and not the penultimate syllable, under which latter quantity the writer has seen it interpreted as "the hindmost, and was given to him because he seems to drive the Hyades and Pleiades before him." And as Persian plurals are often applied to Arabic substantives, it may be so in this (ultimate accent) case, and would not be inappropriate. The writer has no way of proving conclusively what the meanings of some of the old Arabic names for the fixed stars are, but he may be excused if he digresses from the subject to say that he is morally convinced of having at last found out the meaning of *Thubán, a* Draconis. Let us quote what is said to be its meaning as generally accepted: "It is now

a small third magnitude. It is named *Thuban*, from the Arabian *al-Thúbán*, the dragon." But this may not be an absolute authority, and it is quite possible that Thuban, having subsequently been included in Draco, may have lost its first significance and come to be identified with the meaning "dragon" because it bore its primal letter *a*. *Tanīn*, however, means dragon, but this is β Draconis, now the lucida of the constellation. It is in the head of Draco, and very properly called al-Tanīn. But we have reason to demur to *Thuban* meaning dragon: (1) Because we have not found a native expert who interprets it as such. (2) Because a division of the equatorial Polar Circle into centuries of time gives us Thuban as the Pole star, as nearly as possible in our chronology of the date of the Flood. Now, the Arabic word for storm, flood, inundation, is *tufán*, and it is the equivalent of the Flood, either alone, *par excellence*, or in the compound, *tufán-ul-Nuh*, Flood of Noah. We are therefore constrained to believe that Thubān is nothing more than a corruption, or adaptation of Tufán, the Pole star of the time of the Flood.

But to return and conclude. It will be admitted that to anyone approaching Bethlehem from the west, as the Magi did, a rising planet may be seen shortly after, over Bethlehem, though on the first part of the road from Jerusalem it appears to have no relative position to it. This was, we venture to think, what the Wise Men saw, knowing it to be the same they had seen before and by which they had discovered the date of our Lord's birth. But the sight of it over Bethlehem had a peculiar significance to them under the conditions of time and place, which they could not but interpret as a sure omen of success. The reader may, indeed, without much stretch of imagination, understand the relative position of the planet to the Magi over Bethlehem, as we have endeavoured to picture it, but he can hardly realize it as the writer does, having had the opportunity of seeing the planet Mars, at a time when it was of unusual brilliancy, shining over the summit of an Indian temple, under somewhat similar conditions to the Star of Bethlehem.

One word more. We must give the Hindu *jotishi* his due. It is wonderful how he appreciates and realizes this story, which he follows step by step without difficulty, because it is related in a manner which appeals to his understanding of the phenomenon, without telling too much, and with every detail of which he is familiar in the course of his profession. The writer owes a debt of gratitude to a poor Brahmin for the elucidation of this Divine narrative, the solution of which he

once thought to be an unfathomable mystery; and in every subsequent reference to others who had never heard it before the details were corroborated in precisely the same manner, a reproduction of which he has here endeavoured to give.

J. HARVEY
(*Late Inspector of Schools, Delhi Circle, North India*).

ART. VI.—THE SECESSION OF FRENCH PRIESTS.

THIS remarkable movement, which began about seven years since, is still making decided progress, and is watched with great interest from all sides, by both friends and foes. We often hear exaggerated statements of the number of perversions to Rome in England. The Italian mission is no doubt increasingly active, although its chief success is, unhappily, being achieved within the pale of our own Reformed Church by the spread of medieval doctrines and practices amongst ourselves. On the other hand, there is too little known about the secessions that are taking place from the ranks of the Roman clergy in France, not merely of obscure country priests, but in not a few cases of men of rank, high position, learning, and attainments, who have everything to lose and nothing earthly to gain by the change. The subject is so important, and so much has been advanced for and against, that it has seemed well to collect information from reliable French sources as to the origin and progress of this work, and especially to apply directly to Monsieur Bourrier, its principal director, for a statement of its present position and prospects. Thus, we hope to lay before the readers of the CHURCHMAN a fairly correct estimate of the facts of the case.

It was in August, 1895, that M. Bourrier, who had been for twenty years a distinguished priest in the Diocese of Marseilles, sent in his resignation to his Bishop and seceded from the Church of Rome. In his faithful, bold, and yet respectful letter to his diocesan, he stated that during the previous ten years of his ministry he had been struggling with his conscience on account of the errors and superstitions with which Rome has overlaid the simplicity of the Gospel. At last he felt that he could resist no longer. "I leave," he wrote, "the Church of Rome not by the gate of scepticism and infidelity, but because of my faith in Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and my unique Mediator." The Bishop's reply was worthy of his high office, and reflected credit on himself and M. Bourrier. Some time afterwards the latter was appointed pastor of the

French Reformed Church at Sèvres, near Paris, a position which he still holds. There he has been the wise counsellor and faithful friend of an increasing number of his clerical brethren in various parts of France, whose eyes are being opened, like his own, to the corruption of the system in which they have been educated, and who have been led to inquire after a purer and more scriptural faith. These earnest men were for a time received as guests into his presbytery. But as their number increased he opened at Sèvres a "Maison Hospitalière" as a quiet retreat, where they could lodge, study, and commune together, until they could find suitable employment, religious or secular, in which to serve God with liberty of conscience and for the good of their fellow-men. It must not, indeed, be assumed that all these seceders have already become enlightened Christians. Some, by a natural reaction, are feeling their way through doubts and difficulties about even the fundamentals of religion, and others still cling to some of the errors of Rome. It is with such very much as it was in their earlier days with our own and the Continental reformers. Like the blind man of Bethsaida, they see men as trees walking. But they are all, we are assured, honest inquirers, whose moral character is above suspicion. Stringent investigation is made into their antecedents before their admission to the Society, and if these should prove unsatisfactory the door is shut against them. No opportunity is given for making a gain of religious profession by those loose hangers-on that are to be found in every religious community. A certain proportion of them have held high positions as curés in town or country, or as professors in Roman Catholic colleges or seminaries, and their prospects would have been bright if they had stifled their convictions. Such was M. Jannsens, once the Director of the Grand Seminary of Oran, who seceded in September, 1899. He had belonged to the congregation of the Lazarites, had studied at Dax, and had been made Professor of Logic and Philosophy in his college, as well as Central Procureur of the Roman Catholic Missions in China. Being asked, on his arrival at Sèvres, "Have you preserved something of your faith?" he replied: "My faith is Jesus Christ, my last, my unique, dogma—the Christ of the Gospel, my only support and my only consolation." "But," he was further asked, "what about the Mass and the Confessional?" "I believe," he said, "too much in the divinity of Christ to need to touch His Body on a consecrated stone. In my heart my soul is in contact with His Soul. That is a Mass." Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed. "As to confession, I have confessed —abbés, priests, even Bishops. Can you understand me?

Let us say no more about it." To the question whether he would attach himself to Protestantism he replied: "We shall see later on; for the moment I desire to be a good and true Christian, and to earn my bread by the sweat of my brow." His subsequent history we have been unable to follow. This candid and original confession of faith augured well, though it may not be strictly orthodox and in accordance with our own standards. That he had laid hold of Christ as his Divine and all-sufficient Redeemer seems very evident, and that he had counted all else but loss for Him. We may regard him as a type of a class of men who deserve and claim our deepest sympathy and respect.

In October, 1897, appeared a very distinct and explicit declaration of faith, signed by twenty-six priests, or monks, protesting against the errors of Rome, and expressing their attachment to the Gospel. In it they did, indeed, decline to call themselves either Catholics or Protestants, but simply said: "Let us be Christians. Titles," they added, "are little worth, and prove nothing. Conversion is everything, and it is the heart which God requires." Again, in January, 1899, some of the members issued an appeal to the public, announcing the formation of a "Society for the Evangelization of France." Its aim and object were to raise funds for holding meetings and giving lectures through the country, in which Romish errors should be exposed and the opposite truths be set forth. In some quarters there has been a call for yet bolder steps in the same direction by forming Churches separate from Rome under liberated priests. This, however, does not appear to be M. Bourrier's own aim. He seems to rather hope against hope for reform in the Church; and in the meantime, before taking more decided steps in the work of evangelization, to wait until his brethren, or, at least, many of them, shall be better prepared for this difficult work by a careful theological training and by taking a Bachelor's degree.

Such are some of the chief features of the movement in the past. Before we pass on to inquire into its present aspects it may interest our readers if we briefly relate the history of one of these good men known to the writer. M. C——, having been trained in a Roman Catholic Seminary for priests and ordained, was for some years a Roman Missionary in the Ile Ste. Marie, near Madagascar. Whilst travelling between the islands he was shipwrecked. His health suffered in consequence, and eventually he was obliged to return to France, and became curé of a parish near Paris. During his residence there convictions of the falsehood of Romish doctrine, which had arisen in his mind during his earlier days, became so deep and strong that he felt that he could no longer retain

his position as a priest. He became acquainted with M. Bourrier, and with his help and that of other enlightened Christians, and through more careful study of God's Word and the teaching of His Holy Spirit, he was led to a clearer knowledge of the truth. Not satisfied with the orthodoxy of the French Reformed Church, and regarding the Church of England as more Scriptural in doctrine and more primitive in order, he came to this country. Here he resided in some of our parishes with the clergy, studying our language as well as theology, and observing our parochial system and its working. The Bishop of Salisbury took him by the hand, having received from him a public abjuration of his errors, and having ascertained the validity of his Orders. Through his influence he was sent back to Madagascar as a missionary clergyman of our Church, where he laboured for a while. Owing to circumstances not known to the writer, he has now given up his work there and embarked in business. This unsatisfactory change of plans may have been partly due to the pressure of family need, and partly to an unsettled state of mind induced by the unhappy divisions in our Church. However this may have been, those who knew him well could not but regard him as a sincere searcher after the truth, even if he had not fully grasped it. During his stay in England he wrote a series of letters to a secular journal of the district where he had formerly laboured, stating some of his personal reasons for the secession, to which the convictions of his conscience had compelled him. The most urgent of these he avowed to have been connected with the Confessional, which from the beginning had caused him the greatest distress. "In it," he wrote, "it has not been possible for me to see anything else but an institution simply human—tyrannical, profoundly immoral, contrary to private well-being and public order." These allegations he went on to justify in very clear, forcible, and yet judicious terms. "It is," he declared, "first of all simply human, and nowhere to be found in the Gospel, for the New Testament of Christ never requires from sinners a detailed avowal of their faults. The Apostles and their successors have received no authority to do so." He proceeded to expose the immorality of the Confessional, and dwelt in a very telling manner on the fearful harm to which candidates for the priesthood are exposed when, towards the end of their course, they are in a special manner prepared to administer the Sacrament of Penance. At an age when the passions are strong it is highly pernicious for young men, who are bound by a vow of celibacy, to have laid before them in detail the vile things which they will meet with in their after-life. "In most of the seminaries," he added, "the pupils

attend those lectures in a white surplice, as an emblem of purity. When they have entered on their office as confessors, their own personal virtue is continually imperilled, and the temptation to eat of the forbidden fruit is extremely subtle. The confessor is at the mercy of all, and an anonymous letter or an atrocious slander may bring down upon him the condemnation of the Bishop. Or it may be that the habit of hearing the histories of human falls and frailties completely enfeebles (*atrophie*) his conscience and deprives him of the power of distinguishing good from evil." Nor did he consider that the mischief is confined to the confessors. He pointed out in very clear, though delicate, terms the grievous harm it causes to the confessed, especially the young, whose downfall may be often traced to this practice. "It is also," he wrote, "the cause of discord in families. Its political influence is no less detestable, for it is the laboratory of the most unhealthy propaganda."

Other evil results he dealt with in a manly, true, and healthy tone we need not here refer to. He wrote throughout as a pure-minded, true-hearted servant of God, evidently untouched by the defilement which he so deeply deplored. At the same time, he drew his statements from a painful knowledge of the Confessional from within, as actually taught and practised in the Church of Rome. If its advocates amongst ourselves had seen as much and passed through the same perilous ordeal, they would hardly be so desirous of promoting it amongst the members of our Protestant Church, and of urging its habitual use. This young priest fully approved of the position of our Church respecting it, as forbidding it as a compulsory or habitual practice, and yet allowing it in exceptional cases for the relief and guidance of troubled consciences. Its systematic adoption he found to be an intolerable burden, and a subtle snare to both confessors and confessed. His own case has, indeed, proved of late a disappointing one; under more favourable circumstances it might have been very different. Still, it may serve as a type of the experience of many of those earnest, though often partially enlightened, men, and of the immense difficulties with which they have to contend.

This movement may not be always carried on upon lines of which we, as Evangelical Churchmen, can thoroughly approve. It is earnestly to be wished and prayed for that some bold, specially-gifted, spiritually-minded Reformer, possessed of a full and firm grasp of Gospel truth in all its proportions, and knowing how to present it effectively before the minds of his fellow-countrymen, may be raised up in God's Providence within the pale of the French Catholic Church, to direct and control all these discordant elements, and to guide unstable

though earnest souls into the paths of Scriptural teaching and primitive practice. Such a leader has not yet appeared, nor do we at present feel hopeful that he will be found. Meantime we are most thankful to learn from M. Bourrier that his good and great work is progressing more and more.

It is a significant fact that the Roman ecclesiastical authorities are awaking to the gravity of the position. For instance, the Bishop of Nancy, in a recent pamphlet, alluding to the large number of seceding clergy, wrote: "The situation remains absolutely alarming (*absolument effrayante*)." Amongst the most distinguished of the seceders is the well-known and much-respected Abbé Garnier, late Private Secretary to the Archbishop of Algiers.

The *Européen*, an international journal of mark, in April last interviewed M. Bourrier, and published a report of the facts and figures which he then supplied. On that occasion he stated that during the last six years about six hundred priests had joined his Society. Some had become doctors in law or medicine, many journalists, whilst others were employed in offices or the Civil Service. A few were even working as simple labourers, "finding it more honourable to wear a blouse than to hide their hypocrisy under a cassock." Twenty-five, after studying Theology in the Protestant Collège at Paris, have been admitted as Pastors into the "Église Réformée de France."

Attempts, we learn from M. Bourrier, have been made by the Roman authorities to deny the correctness of these figures, and to reduce the number of seceders to eighty-four; but it would appear that they have not taken into account very many priests who, having been absent on leave through illness or for family reasons, in order to avoid persecution or bringing reproach upon their relations, have withdrawn from their Church quietly, without any open declaration. This would seem a very probable and natural account of the matter, and M. Bourrier writes with perfect assurance of the correctness of his estimate.

At the same time, he and some of his associates are doing important work through their journal, the *Chrétien Français*, and promoting reform in the Church. "We believe," he says, "that the Church of Rome is capable of reform, and the new School, which we represent, rejects all extreme external authority. We think that God alone is infallible, and we proclaim liberty of inquiry." Opinions will differ as to the spirit and value of that journal. The Anglo-Continental Society, in their Report for 1901, go so far as to say that "it has become objectionable by its tone of violent abuse. Complaints were made, and we were compelled to say publicly that

we repudiated any connection with such literature." It is only fair to reproduce these strong words. They would certainly not have been applicable to the journal, as it was some two years ago. In any case, it is, we understand, widely circulated, and a great many priests who have not seceded are subscribers to it, directly or indirectly. Even Bishops condescend to read it, and M. Bourrier told his interviewer that, moved by the exposure of abuses in its pages, they are anxious to remove them. Some are making the curricula in the seminaries for priests more liberal, whilst others are even boldly attempting to purify the dogmas of their Church. So far as these things are so, they are indications of a healthy movement towards liberty and truth.

In the course of the interview M. Bourrier declared that he and his coadjutors wished to found a National Church, without any direct acts of schism; and he urged that if the Bishops and curés were appointed by the civil Government, if University degrees were required from all, and if the religious associations were abolished, before long a much higher class of clergy would be introduced into the French Church than those that conduct the "Croix" newspaper and advocate anti-semitism. These views are, we fear, far too Utopian. We should rejoice, indeed, in even their partial fulfilment; but Rome still boasts her infallibility, and is the determined enemy of liberty and progress. Very plausible are the occasional Papal allocutions to the contrary. Nevertheless, until her whole moral, doctrinal, and spiritual constitution be changed, we see very little prospect of such internal reforms. The best hopes for the future of France, under God, lie, we rather think, outside that corrupt system, in the wider diffusion of Gospel truth through such agencies as this work of the priests, the McAll Mission, as well as the orthodox Protestant Communions. "If our work," said M. Bourrier, "continues its propaganda for some years, the religious question will have made considerable way."

But we regret to have to notice another even more serious objection to M. Bourrier's movement raised in the report to which we have referred. It is that "his alliance with Unitarian Protestants has been so marked as to seriously compromise his movement." This statement has since been explained by the secretaries, in a letter to the *Times* of August 25 last, to mean that he had "accepted compromising patronage from Protestants who were known to hold Unitarian views." There is, we venture to think, an important difference between these two statements, and that letter called forth a satisfactory reply from M. Bourrier on September 4. He then wrote: "The *Chrétien Français* does not accept patronage

from anyone. The work has two objects. First, it gives aid to those unfortunate priests who, tired of eating the bread of falsehood and hypocrisy, want to clear their consciences and earn an honest living. For this philanthropic and eminently Christian cause I have welcomed aid from all the generous and disinterested hands that have been held out to us. They include Catholics and Protestants—men of all shades of religious belief except the Anglo-Continental Society. I will never deny these generous friends or be sectarian enough to refuse their help, for in the matter of charity I recognise but one orthodoxy—that of love and pity for the suffering and the sorrowful. As to our religious principles, I have explained them a hundred times and over in the press and on the platform. I have even explained them at length to the committee of the Anglo-Continental Society in a meeting of three hours' duration, at which three Bishops were present. . . . I am not disposed to begin over again."

We certainly fail to see any ground for complaint in his accepting gifts for such a purpose from those whose religious views differ *toto cœlo* from his own, nor was he committed to their grievous errors by so doing. The same thing is done every day amongst us with regard to philanthropic and even religious work. No doubt it is most difficult in France to avoid all co-operation with "Liberal Protestants," though they are, in fact, Christian Rationalists—more advanced on down-grade lines than even many English Unitarians. It would seem that, whilst M. Bourrier receives contributions from such men, he in no way accepts their unchristian doctrine. We rejoice, therefore, that he has so far made clear his position, and it would be manifestly unfair to judge his proceedings by the far more favoured circumstances of us English Churchmen. It may be well to add that he has assisted financially fifty-six priests and found employment for a hundred. His Society is directed by a numerous and influential committee, including the head of the Faculty of Law at Nancy, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Paris, etc.

With respect to all these questions, it is most important to remember that many of these seceding priests have but lately emerged from the darkness and thraldom of Rome, and though convinced of its errors, have not yet thoroughly embraced the positive truths of the Gospel. We must put ourselves into their place, and allow for the many mistakes into which in their early inquiries they may fall. The fact that many have given up their sacred calling and entered secular life may be accounted for by their not feeling fully

qualified to pursue their ministry on entirely new lines or discovering that their original vocation was a mistake. Such men, we would repeat it, deserve our deepest sympathy, and often need actual and substantial help if they are to follow up their earnest inquiries into the truth and to earn an honest livelihood. To guide and assist such inquirers is surely a noble work, in which we heartily wish M. Bourrier and his associates God-speed. We may not approve of all that they write or say or do; but when we consider the godless condition of France and the increasing superstitions of Rome we must welcome every Scriptural effort to rescue those who are struggling with such tremendous difficulties, and to promote the evangelization of that unhappy country.

W. BURNET.

ART. VII.—THE MONTH.

AS was apprehended when our last number was issued, the venerable Archbishop of Canterbury has passed to his rest. A singularly noble and strenuous life of devoted service to God and man has thus been brought to an honoured close. The work which Dr. Temple has done for the Church of England, and through the Church for the whole country, is of inestimable value. His actual labours in the cause of education, his work at Rugby, in the dioceses of Exeter, London, and Canterbury, his devoted services to the cause of temperance, were herculean; but they all fall short, perhaps, of the blessing he has conferred on us by his grand example. There are those who doubt whether he did not carry too far his appreciation of the unique value of self-sacrificing work, when he allowed himself to shut his eyes to lawlessness in the Clergy, provided he was satisfied that they were labouring devotedly in the cause of their Master. But, at all events, he has impressed upon us all by example, as well as by word, the obligation and the nobility of practical work. He followed, indeed, with appreciation and power the intellectual movements of his time. His contribution to "Essays and Reviews" was at least an evidence of that disposition; and his subsequent Bampton Lectures, delivered amidst all the pressure of episcopal duties, were perhaps a still more conspicuous illustration of it. But all else seemed subordinate in him to a passion for doing his Master's work, and making his Master's will better known and obeyed. "Why call ye

me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" are words which well describe his spirit. That spirit will long live among us, and will help to raise us all above the unhappy controversies of the moment to high aims and spiritual ideals.

Dr. Davidson, the present Bishop of Winchester, has been designated as his successor, and will enter on his office with the confidence of the Church at large, and amidst good hopes as well as prayers. He has hitherto been found equal to every duty to which he has been called; and no better testimony could well be given to any man. He has filled posts, especially in relation to the Court, which required the greatest discretion and practical capacity; and there is certainly no man on the Bench who is so well acquainted with the affairs of the Church, and with the personal forces which are at work in it. As a Bishop he has been laborious, earnest, sympathetic, and at the same time firm; and his Charges have exhibited sound learning and spiritual wisdom. He is still in the prime of life, and if his health is spared he may hope to occupy the See of Canterbury long enough to carry through a deliberate policy, and to settle some controverted questions. It is to be hoped, both for this reason and from his general character, that he will allow himself ample time for deliberation before taking decisive action; and he may rely upon full patience being extended to him, and upon the most favourable construction being placed upon his acts and words. He enters on his office at a very critical time; and the prayers of the Church were never more urgently needed for the Divine support and guidance of her rulers.

The Education Act is now law, and it will soon be seen how it is likely to work, or to be worked, in practice. In spite of some extreme voices, there are indications that the chief leaders of public opinion in all parties will accept it frankly, as the settlement, for some time at least, of the questions at issue, and that a sincere endeavour will be made to develop the practical assistance which it undoubtedly offers in the work of elementary education. The moderate and hard-working Clergyman will find it a material help to him, and no hindrance. Some of the Laity of his parish will henceforth be under a loyal obligation to join him in the work of his schools; and if he commands their confidence, they will be only too glad to leave the religious instruction of the children in his hands. It would be for the first time in English history if a measure adopted by Parliament after prolonged deliberation were not fairly worked, so as at least to show the best results that can be produced under it. In the course of the next few weeks the Bishops and Clergy, as well as the lay bodies who are concerned in the matter, will be

carefully considering the Act; and this practical consideration will no doubt prove the best means of allaying prejudices and removing difficulties. In various directions education must be a prominent question during the present generation: the welfare of the country depends on it to an incalculable extent, and if men address themselves to it with goodwill its practical difficulties will be overcome.

*** Our Reviews this month are, to our regret, unavoidably postponed.