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would be conquered only by the blood of the Church. But Paul had taken the steps which made persecution inevitable : on no vital point of teaching could he differ from John : their reply to every serious question regarding the relation of the Christians to the pagan world, its customs, and its rulers, was identical. When one sees this, it is disappointing to read in an article in this magazine <sup>1</sup> : " Had Paul the Aged survived to read the Apocalypse, it would have broken his heart. He was spared that piercing thrust, that ' wounding in the house of his friends ' (Zech. xiii. 6). " Such an exaggerated and ungoverned statement is a typical example of the way in which preoccupation with one single thought (even one true in itself and fruitful, as in this instance) and neglect of all other considerations may lead into the extreme of errors—an error that in this case ought to be vehemently combated as distorting the view of early Christian history.

W. M. RAMSAY.

## DIALOGUES ON THE CHRISTIAN PROPHETS.

### II.

*Riddell.* I am now at leisure, Mason, to hear another criticism from your fellow-traveller in the train, who did not think there ever were such people as the Christian Prophets.

*Mason.* No, Riddell, and I am not sure that he would think so even if he had heard your observations to me. I ought to have told you that he had got hold of some old Jewish Rabbi's statement, that all the Jews knew very well that there was not to be any Prophet more in the days of Messiah ; and this statement he flourished round his head in a sort of ferocious way of challenging the first man who should assert that there was a Prophet in the days of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> EXPOSITOR, August 1901, p. 117.

*R.* I am afraid your friend will hurt himself with his own sword. He seems to have forgotten how "the multitude said, This is Jesus, *the Prophet* of Nazareth, of Galilee." (Matt. xxi. 11).

*M.* No, no. The Master is a Prophet in a special sense. He is unique, and you must not complicate the question by making Him in any sense one of a class.

*R.* We cannot too carefully and reverently guard the Saviour's own person in our discussions, and I should be the last to wish to import into them any approach to that heated volubility which in ancient times is known to have blazed forth in physical encounters, *Tantaene animis caelestibus irae!* But while the Person of Christ is better left out of controversy, the position which He held among men is a lawful and profitable subject of inquiry, and as you and I are disciples, anxious to learn, we cannot do better than discuss whatever questions arise in the path of learning. I take it that you prefer *dialectic* to *eristic*.

*M.* I am no Platonist, Riddell, as *you* should be if your name is a token.

*R.* I only follow where the argument leads, as Plato says. I am sure you would not wish merely to score a victory over an adversary in discussion.

*M.* No, I only wish to get at the truth, of which no man has the monopoly.

*R.* Very good. Then you love dialectic, which is the method of conversation leading to the discovery of truth; and you dislike eristic, which aims at the victory in argument. But you have not yet delivered your vicarious shaft of criticism, or rather the attack with many bolts which I hope you are going to make.

*M.* You shall have it in somewhat blunt and cold delivery from me. Listen! The man in the train considered that your remarks were very *far-fetched*.

*R.* I can well understand that, for I was not born a

Prophet myself, and my language is that of a mere Gentile. Like M. Jourdain, in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who had spoken prose all his life without knowing it, I found after many years that, while I used my own language, the Prophets used a different language, a prose of their own, and at first I mistook it for mine.

*M.* And are you sure that you are not mistaken now?

*R.* Quite sure. I will give you an instance. When you and I talk of Babylon, we usually mean Babylon. But when I converse with the Christian Prophets, I mean Rome when I say Babylon.

*M.* Very strange. May I ask you why?

*R.* Because it is evident that the Mesopotamian Babylon is out of the question under that name. Babylon was a city (Rev. xviii. 10) whose judgment came upon her suddenly, and this judgment is described in the Revelation as it was then expected by the author.

*M.* "Then expected"—do you mean in the Old Testament times?

*R.* No: I mean by the author of the Revelation when he wrote, himself. He was not so devoid of originality as you would represent him to be. Being a Prophet, as I have already observed, he spoke in prophetic language; but however much he used the language of his predecessors, the language and the imagery of the Old Testament, he was alive to the needs of his own day, and he delivered his message to his fellow-creatures in what to them were unmistakable terms.

Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage and full of grief.

I am glad to find Dr. Milligan laying down that "nothing has been more conclusively established by recent Biblical inquiry than that even a prophetic, to say nothing of an apocalyptic, book must spring out of the circumstances, and must directly address itself to the necessities of its original

readers.”<sup>1</sup> “Those into whose hands it is first put must feel that they are spoken to. It may be designed for others, but for them it must be designed, or the very idea of revelation is destroyed.” That is good.

*M.* And does Dr. Milligan, whose name is not unknown, agree with you that Babylon is Rome?

*R.* No, there is a strange thing. He does not seem to be aware of such men as the Christian Prophets, nor of such a thing as Christian prophecy. And yet how could he hope to understand the book without understanding the author, and his point of view, and the class to which he belonged?

*M.* Probably he considered him as a class by himself.

*R.* At least the author of the Revelation—let us call him the Seer—must have held some relation to the Apostles of the Lord, for according to Milligan he was one himself—such is the inference which Milligan leaves his readers to draw. No writer, however great a genius, ever was a class by himself. Milligan considers that “Babylon” stands for the “faithless” or “degenerate” Church. He does not allow, however, that this is the Church of Rome.

*M.* Rather a fine point that. Is it that the Church of Rome is not “faithless” or “degenerate”? Or is it that the faithless or degenerate Church was the Church in St. John’s day? and if so, when did it become faithless and degenerate?

*R.* I am afraid I cannot enlighten you on this difficulty. I conjecture that he means that the whole of the passage about Babylon is a warning to the Seer’s generation; for he has said that the book “must directly address itself to the necessities of its original readers,” who are the members of the Seven Churches (Rev. ii. 3). He means that all Revelation xviii. is a warning for the men of the near future, and affects them closely.

<sup>1</sup> Milligan, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, 1892, p. 129.

*M.* Which, then, of the Seven Churches, on Dr. Milligan's hypothesis, do you think is chiefly meant? Ephesus itself? Smyrna? Which?

*R.* No, you do not get at it that way. Milligan says: "We must distinguish in the book between the whole Church as an organized body and the faithful remnant within the body, the Church within the Church, the "elect" within the "called." The Church as a whole degenerates. She repeats the experience of the old Theocracy, becomes false to the trust reposed in her, yields to the influences of the world; and eventually falls beneath judgments as much greater than those which overtook Israel after the flesh as the position she had occupied was higher, and the privileges she had enjoyed more exalted. You see how clear that interpretation would be to the reader then?"

*M.* I cannot honestly say that I do. You told me just now that Milligan's claim is that the Revelation "must directly address itself to the necessities of the original readers." And now you say he "distinguishes in the book between the whole Church as an organized body and the faithful remnant within the body, the Church within the Church." I confess I cannot see the clearness of that. You must be jesting, my dear fellow. Or can you assure me that the reader was led to make this wonderful distinction, and was certain to make it for himself? If so, we should see it stated clearly in the book of Revelation itself.

*R.* I only wish you to give your mind to this theory, which is entitled to consideration more than some others. Here is a Revised Version. Now kindly look into it with me and let us be quite candid. "A Church within a Church," "A faithful Remnant," "The elect within the called."

*M.* Rather a Plymouth-brethren notion that!

*R.* Yes, but it may be partly true, all the same. I am going to champion Milligan's theory just now. Let us look

and see if we cannot find the distinction laid down in the book. "Many are called, but few chosen." Those words of the Master were running in Milligan's mind when he propounded this view, but they do not occur in Revelation. They do not help us at present, because we may not assume, we may not even fancy, that they were delivered in the hearing of the author along with the Twelve Apostles: we may not even assume that he was one of the Twelve at all, as I shall presently hope to show you. Nor can we tell whether the Seer had those words of the Master before him in writing. They must be put aside just now, and our business is solely with the Revelation. "Remnant"—I see it in my Romans (ix. 27, xi. 5) A.V. and R.V. Yes, but that is St. Paul. Again I see it in Revelation (xi. 13, xii. 17, xix. 21, A.V.) three times, but none of these passages is of any avail for our purpose, and R.V. rightly translates "the rest" instead of "the remnant."

*M.* Altogether, you think there is no trace of the term "remnant" being used by the Seer.

*R.* I am sure of it. I am contending, you see, for Milligan, but I have to try to supply his theory with weapons of defence, or at any rate with means of mobility.

*M.* You will have to admit that if the Seer meant that when Babylon was destroyed, or rather "fell," a Remnant was saved or snatched out of it, a Remnant homogeneous with the fallen—homogeneous materially though not spiritually, and potentially though not morally,—he has certainly succeeded well in dissembling his meaning. If there is one feature more marked than another in his picture of the fall of Babylon, it is its entireness, its utterness. "In one day she shall be utterly burned with fire" (Rev. xviii. 8). "In one hour so great riches is made desolate" (*ib.* 17). The whole thing is swept away. "It shall be found no more at all" (*ib.* 21).

*R.* Are you not forgetting that the Seer has expressly

said first that something like a Remnant has been summoned to "come forth out of her, that they have no fellowship with her sins" ? (Rev. xviii. 4.)

*M.* No, I know that, but I cannot see how the Remnant are to know *when* to come out of her unless it be *now*, in an eternally everpresent *now*. If this degeneration of a Church—I beg pardon, of the Church—is to take place in the uncertain future, the Remnant would never know when to come out of her that they partake not of her sins. If they were summoned to come out of a city, or a state, or whatever could be called πόλις, I could easily understand the summons: it is immediate—"Up, get you out of this place; lest ye be consumed in the punishment of the city" (Gen. xix. 14, 15). That is how the two "men" or "angels" summoned Lot to leave Sodom, and Lot summoned his sons-in-law, and I think the parallel is rather suggestive.

*R.* It is indeed suggestive, but it does not happen to be exactly the origin of the words used; for they *have* an origin in the Old Testament, like nearly all the words in the Revelation. They come from Jeremiah (li. 45).

*M.* Let me just refer to that. Yes. It is there a summons to come out of a city, out of Babylon. I see that the whole chapter (Jer. li.) is the basis of this passage of Revelation.

*R.* You are right. It is so, but along with it there is inwoven the description from Ezekiel (xxvii.) of the lamentation or elegy over Tyre.

*M.* Another city, very different from Babylon—Tyre, the seapower of the West, as Babylon was the landpower of the East! But a city!

*R.* Yes. You are quite as critical as you can accuse me of being.

*M.* I was going to observe how remarkable it was that the Seer should resort to the descriptions of two of the



greatest cities of the world in order to draw forth imagery for something which Milligan says is "no pagan city of the past, no world-metropolis of the future." Instead of being a city, Babylon is for him a degenerate Church. Now, a degenerate Church is one of the most difficult things in the world for any one to be sure of. When is a Church degenerate? Or when is not a Church degenerate? The Jew of old would certainly consider that the Christian Church was degenerate. The highest Jewish authorities instructed their counsel, Tertullus, pleading before Felix, to describe the Christian Church as the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts xxiv. 5). That is at one end of the history, and here are we at the other end, in which a Roman Catholic writer does the Church of England the honour to write for Cardinal Vaughan, and Cardinal Vaughan to print, that "there may be heresies more fundamental than Anglicanism, there is none more contemptible." On the other hand, we have not forgotten that Protestant writers of various kinds have discovered in Babylon, not the then city, but the present Church, of Rome. Thus you will hardly get people to agree as to what is a degenerate Church; certainly, you will not find agreement between all the people who have ever left a Church because they considered it degenerate. In fact, it comes to this, that Milligan's term is wholly subjective as regards men.

*R.* But suppose it is so—he would say that God sees not as man sees.

*M.* Yes, but then the objection comes in that the book must, as he said before, "directly address itself to the necessities of the original readers," and so I take it that this obscurity, which is not only local and temporal of that age of the first readers, but universal and permanent, could never have been allowed in this book, let alone the obscurity in the supposed case of a Christian treating the

Jewish Church as degenerate. It would have been against the Seer's principles to allow it.

*R.* There is a good deal in what you say. But have you noticed some of the particulars in the description of Milligan's Babylon-Church?

*M.* Which do you mean?

*R.* Have you noticed how some of them suit the idea of a degenerate Church? Incense is mentioned for one!

*M.* My dear Riddell, you are trying it on! I am but a layman, but my Protestantism is not so obfuscated as not to see that where incense is mentioned (Rev. xviii. 13), a mention which might perhaps refer to the Church of Rome, there is mention of a score of other articles of merchandise which do not so refer, "oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep." These all apply to a city, but there never has been a Church, and there is never likely to be a Church, which deliberately entered the domain of commerce so far as to deal in the kinds of merchandise described in Revelation xviii. 11-13. The mediæval Church of Rome trafficked in livings and licenses and sees and cardinals' hats, but it never went to the length of constructing warehouses and shops, which the traffic as described by the Seer would require; nor, if it did, was it visited by a sudden overwhelming doom such that "in one hour so great riches is made desolate" (*ib.* 17). Milligan's picture would on such a hypothesis be over-drawn entirely.

*R.* I grant you, we could not allow that.

*M.* I must say that I like his interpretation less and less the more I consider it. The description suits a city, but does not suit a Church. No Church ever was, or ever will be, such that "in it were made rich all that had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness."

*R.* The Span—

*M.* The Spanish Armada will not do any more than the

*Mayflower.* My dear Riddell, you and I shall quarrel! You know that Rome was the seapower in the first century A. D. I am in earnest, and I draw your attention further to the fact that Revelation xvii. has many details which require equally with those of xviii. to be harmonized with the idea of a Church and cannot be harmonized. The woman Babylon (xvii. 5, 6) sitteth upon seven mountains. If the degenerate Church were the mediæval Church of Rome, there would be much to be said for identifying this with the Septimontium—the Seven Hills of Rome; but you recollect that Milligan has debarred himself from that explanation when he says, “Babylon is not the Church of Rome in particular.” Thus all these helps and hints which the Seer has offered him are in vain. The Seer says: “The angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery”—which means a thing formerly secret and now made plain to all—“of the woman and of the beast which carrieth her.” He further says: “Here is the mind that hath wisdom.” (In other words here is the clue.) “The seven heads are seven mountains: and there are seven kings: the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come . . . And the ten horns are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet.” But Milligan has no eye for these particulars, encouraging as they are meant to be to “the mind which hath wisdom,” and which would understand and apply the prophecy to itself and its own time. All that he says is: “The degenerate Jewish Church had then [in the life and death of Jesus] called in the assistance of the world power of Rome, had stirred it up, and had persuaded it to do its bidding against its true Bridegroom and King. An alliance had been formed between them; and, as the result of it, they crucified the Lord of Glory. But the alliance was soon broken; and in the fall of Jerusalem by the hands of her guilty paramour, the harlot

was left desolate and naked, her flesh was eaten, and she was burned utterly with fire. The quarrel of the fallen Jewish Church and the Roman power was *consummated* in the fall of Jerusalem. But the beginning of the quarrel took place *as soon* as our Lord was delivered up. St. John notes it in the words of Pilate (John xix. 22): 'What I have written, I have written.'

R. Thank you for the quotation from Milligan. You will observe that he does here, after all, identify the seven mountains with Rome on the seven hills. Whether the "quarrel" is the same as the degeneration, and thereby is said to have lasted forty-one years, I cannot tell. However he does admit the city of Rome.

M. Yes, I see he does, but why does he not carry out that idea which indeed is too self-evident for discussion? Why does he not say this is a city, the only one that ever was on seven hills? Why does he not advance to the identification of the seven Caesars and the ten aspirants to the imperial purple?

R. I am so much interested in your last remark that it almost puts me off my championship and defence of Dr. Milligan.

M. Be of good cheer, Riddell; play the man, and maintain your adopted cause. There you have the degenerate Jewish Church seated on the Roman beast; whether she rides it as Europa rode the Bull, or Ariadne the leopard, I leave it to you to decide. It is true that the degenerate Jewish Church is half a city in order to get in the merchandise; yes, and in order to get in the ships and the shipowners of the Jews, of whom we have not yet heard very much in the Old Testament, though to be sure there are "they that go down to the sea in ships." It is true that the seating of the Jewish Church upon the beast of Rome is a novel idea, but it may be a true one, as you observed just now. It is true that the degenerate

Jewish Church is not commonly said in the Old Testament, or commonly believed to be a "great city which reigneth" (or even "hath a kingdom," R.V. margin) "*over the kings of the earth.*" It is true that half the elaborate imagery, the carved work thereof, is broken off and thrown aside. But can you not speak out on behalf of your client and save what remains of his property from the devastation of hostile argument?

*R.* I was just thinking how many times I could recollect when the Jewish Church, however degenerate it might be, when it numbered a Gamaliel and a Saul of Tarsus among its members, had "guided the beast, Rome, in perfect harmony," to use Milligan's phrase, "with its designs."

*M.* How many times? or how few?

*R.* My Josephus does not record many.

*M.* Does any one else?

*R.* There is no other authority which could, except the Talmud.

*M.* Can you honestly say that you know of a single instance in which "the degenerate Jewish Church" "seated upon the Roman beast" "guided it in perfect harmony with its designs"?

*R.* The Sanhedrin took advantage of Pontius Pilate's weakness, as Roman Governor, or Procurator, under the Legatus of Syria, in order to compass the death of our Lord.

*M.* Quite so, and this one successful stroke on the part of the degenerate Jewish Church is to be exaggerated into a long course of successful policy. When did this policy begin? and when did it end?

*R.* You say "exaggerated"?

*M.* The grossest exaggeration. Milligan vouchsafes no historical support whatever for his statement. You, in his defence, can provide none.

*R.* Now let us see. From our Lord's ministry to the

fall of Jerusalem the High Priest was, as before, the political head of the Jewish nation as well as of the "degenerate Jewish Church." There were during those forty years fifteen High Priests, as you may read in Whiston's Josephus.

*M.* When each High Priest lasted less than three years on an average, and presided, while in office, over a distracted assembly like the Sanhedrin, and an unruly and agitated country like Palestine, having been appointed, and often deposed, by the Roman Procurator or by the Herods, is it conceivable that the Jewish Church over which they presided one after the other could be described as "sitting as queen" (Rev. xviii. 7)? The idea is preposterous. Joseph Caiaphas was the strongest and the longest of these rulers, and he is represented by St. John in the very year of the single recorded triumph of the "degenerate Jewish Church" as afraid of the Roman power—"the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (John xi. 48), and as acting so "that the whole nation perish not" (*ib.* 50). Caiaphas at any rate was not then conscious that his Church "sat as a queen." Again, can you tell me which "kings of the earth lived wantonly with" this Jewish Church (Rev. xviii. 9)? and where, and when?

*R.* Perhaps Milligan would say the Herods.

*M.* Are they to be called kings of the earth? I trow not; they were barely kings of Palestine. They were kings on sufferance of the Caesars, who valued them and kept them in place as a means of holding the key of the East, especially of Parthia, of which power Rome was very much afraid and had been for a century and more before 70 A.D. In this policy Rome was wise. But do you think they allowed them even a coinage? I have seen coins that were stamped in Jerusalem under Agrippa I., but do you think they bear Agrippa's head? They bear none.

Some minted in other cities of Palestine have the image of Agrippa, and others that of Caesar. "Whose is this image? They say unto Him, Caesar's." "King Agrippa" is a common superscription, indeed, and the title was shared by other vassal kings of Rome. "King Great Agrippa, friend of Caesar," is another. The image of Caligula, with or without his name, is also common. Rome took care to use the coinage as a reminder to the people of the nature of its rule. There was no fear of the Jewish Church boasting that it "sat as a queen." You will probably then admit that here is another exaggeration.

R. I am waiting till you have finished.

M. My criticisms are nearly at an end. But I cannot help expressing a doubt whether the notion of a degenerate Jewish Church was or ever could be present to the Seer.

R. Is not the verse "Rejoice over her, ye prophets" (xviii. 20), for instance, and "In her was found the blood of prophets" (*ib.* 24), rather like our Lord's lamentation, "O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets"?

M. No, they strike me as essentially unlike, in fact as unlike as they well can be, for two reasons: First, the Master is lamenting, and the disciple is exulting, or inviting to exult. Secondly, the Master laments over the city, and the disciple exults over what Milligan calls a degenerate Church, though he is evidently conscious that he glides into the description of a city, and tries therefore to guard himself by the following words: "Babylon is no pagan city of the past, no world metropolis of the future." After which Milligan does go on to use the word "city"! The description is too much for him after all! Now suppose he had only said throughout "degenerate Sion," he would then have used a term, "Sion," familiar in the Old Testament, though "degenerate" is not. "The virgin daughter of Sion" was, if I remember right, the commonest term.

R. Yes, but I fancy I see why Milligan did not use this term in his identification. The seer is about to describe in Revelation xxi., xxii. the new Jerusalem, the holy city, which certainly could not be called a renovated church; it is a new *city*. But there is an obvious difficulty in describing the "degenerate Sion" as destroyed in full detail, and then in the very next chapter but one describing the new Jerusalem or Sion, which is not left *in heaven* but is clearly said to "*descend out of heaven from God.*" Now if the new Jerusalem had been meant to take the place of the degenerate Sion, then it is impossible to suppose that this important fact should not have been stated. The last thing that we hear of this "degenerate Sion" is that it disappears like a millstone cast by a strong angel into the sea, "and shall be found no more at all" (xviii. 21). I confess I am rather surprised to be told that this disappearance is only for the space represented by two chapters of Revelation. On the whole I am satisfied that Milligan was prudent in using the term "degenerate Church" which at least draws a veil over this crude transition. But I fear that I cannot defend his main thesis very warmly again.

M. What passes me is how he could imagine that the Prophets could ever exult or rejoice over the desolation of their Church. The Seer, like other Prophets, only more than they, has used the language of his Church and his Church's prophets throughout the whole of his book, literally in almost every line; he has written as a member of that Church; he has complained of certain people at Smyrna, who claimed the proud privilege of being Jews when they were not; he has shown that the whole cast of his mind is Jewish—Jewish first and Christian next. How then could such an one ever rejoice or ask his fellow prophets (xxii. 9) to rejoice over the fall of his Church?

R. In point of fact you may go even further, and you



may demur to his Church being called a Church at all. We in these days speak of the Christian Church and of the Jewish Church in contrast with it. But this is a convenience of language and terminology. The Old Testament speaks of "people," "inheritance," "congregation," "assembly," as you may read in Hort's book, *The Christian Ecclesia*, but none of these words expresses what we mean by a Church. The Jewish Church is unique in history and very properly the word "Church" is not used once in the Old Testament (A.V.).

*M.* You surprise me. I have seen it so often on the headlines of my Bible that I can hardly believe it.

*R.* To return to Milligan's theory, for which I throw up my brief.

*M.* I will only give you one more exaggeration, which I now observe in it. Granting that it could possibly be said that in the Jewish Church was found the blood of prophets and of saints—I know what St. Matthew's Gospel says of Zechariah, son of Barachiah (Matt. xxiii. 35)—how could the next words be added—"and of all that have been slain upon the earth"? (Rev. xviii. 24). Truth is great and Justice is her sister. But, good heavens! what justice have we here? If that be the charge laid upon the unhappy degenerate apostate Jewish Church I can only say that my sympathy goes with it. It had not killed all that had been slain upon the earth. There was one power, and one only, of which the statement could be made with justice. That power was Rome.

*R.* I am sure Dr. Milligan would never have wished to be unjust to any one or to any body of men.

*M.* Of course not; but the effect of injustice, even in theory, eventually tells against its author. Fancy if the Seer of Revelation had been unjust to the Jewish Church. It is supposed by many, I am given to understand, that St. Paul was more than any of the Apostles opposed to the

Jewish Church, whose law, and the works of the law, he is supposed to have denounced in no measured terms. But I cannot forget the earnest and even enthusiastic accounts of that passage in the Romans (ix. 3): "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Messiah for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Messiah as concerning the flesh, who is over all. God be blessed for ever." And again (x. 2): "I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God; but not according to knowledge." Alas, he says in tones of regret, "They were hardened" (xi. 7), or "blinded." They were a "disobedient and gainsaying people." But St. Paul has no idea of the destruction and annihilation of the degenerate Church. Very different is his future for the Jews, whom he calls by their true name of Israel. "Did they stumble that they might fall? Perish the thought. Nay, by their trespass salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. And if their trespass is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?"

*R.* Yes, the contrast between St. Paul on the one hand and the Seer according to Milligan on the other is striking indeed. One wonders how they could, at that rate, have both been Apostles together. On matters of policy or behaviour one can understand a wide margin of difference, but on the question of relation to the people of God, to which by birth they both belonged, we cannot. St. Paul is pitiful, the Seer is truculent, and, with whatever limitations, revengeful. I agree with you there.

*M.* Moreover I notice that Milligan is very deliberate in his remarks on the importance of the picture of Babylon in relation to the book. In it, he says, and here I agree

with him, "one supreme aim of the Revelation of St. John is reached. To the interpretation of this picture the efforts of every student of the book ought to be chiefly directed. *Until we understand it all our labours in other directions will prove vain.*"

R. And now, my dear Mason, let me congratulate you on the attack which you have delivered upon a theory which still has considerable vogue and which you have dealt with on its merits. You have quite taken the argument out of my hands, and yet you have only filled them with another, though so far, perhaps, only of a negative kind; for in assailing Milligan's view you have, I think, come round to see that the only interpretation of Babylon is that it is a city, and that the only city which satisfies the conditions is Rome. This was the contention with which I began my observations to you to-day, and when we next meet, all being well, I will venture to supply, to the best of my power, the positive reasons in favour of that view. I am certain that they are conclusive, but you and I know that a man's certainty were but a breath in the balance when set against Truth.

E. C. SELWYN.

## STUDIES IN THE "INNER LIFE" OF JESUS.

### II. THE VIRGIN-BIRTH.

1. THE virgin-birth presents two closely related problems, the one critical, the other theological. Criticism must estimate the value of the evidence and decide whether we are dealing with fable or fact. Theology must investigate the significance for Christian faith of the fact, if it is proved to be a fact; but, if fable, theology need not concern itself with the matter any further, but may leave to criticism the task of showing to what local